



## Colorado Chapter

### HB09-1070

### Prohibition of Certain Lands from Inclusion in Urban Renewal Areas

#### Previous Colorado APA Position on Blight Designation:

Colorado APA opposes the designation of agricultural lands as blighted except in limited circumstances such as when a small agricultural parcel is surrounded by blighted areas so that the inclusion of the agricultural parcel would further the intended purposes of Urban Renewal. In most circumstances applying a "blight" designation to greenfields encourages sprawl and ignores the intended use of urban renewal tools, which were created to allow the redevelopment of urban slum areas.

Colorado APA agrees with the above-stated concept, which is consistent with positions taken on prior urban renewal bills. However, there are some concerns that should be addressed in order to create a bill without considerable unintended consequences. These concerns are noted below.

#### Comments and Concerns Noted:

- 1 By reducing the number of blight factors, it will be harder to designate land as blighted in order to make it eligible for urban renewal. This could nullify the use of urban renewal financing tools on land that is truly infill property. It is unclear whether these changes would address concerns that designation of agricultural land as blighted encourages sprawl.
- 2 In particular, deletion of 2.b and 2.c from the definition of blighted, leaves these criteria as just classic urban redevelopment criteria.
- 3 While including provisions for vacant land can serve to narrow the use of "blight" to exclude agricultural lands, the definition, as written, of "Vacant Land" is too broad, particularly if the real focus is on agricultural land. As defined, legitimate land, such as a vacant lot in a declining area, could be excluded for inclusion in urban renewal areas.
- 4 Overall concern was expressed that the bill as written might discourage the designation of Urban Renewal Areas and the use of Urban Renewal tools.
- 5 In the interest of accuracy it was noted that US EPA does not designate brownfield sites. A suggested wording change is to state "defined by the US EPA," rather than "The area is a brownfield site as designated by the US EPA." EPA has a definition of Brownfield-  
<http://www.epa.gov/swerosps/bf/glossary.htm>.

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