COLORADO
WATER CONGRESS
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SB23-186

SHORT TITLE: Oil and Gas Commission Study Methane Seepage Raton Basin

LONG TITLE: Concerning methane seepage in the Raton basin of Colorado, and, in connection therewith, requiring the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission to complete a study and establish a new regulatory category

SPONSORS: Senators R. Pelton and F. Winter/Reps. T. Winter and Wilford

COMMITTEES: Senate Transportation & Energy Committee and Senate Appropriations Committee

PURPOSE OF THE BILL: To study methane seepage in the Raton Basin, the best management practices for capturing the methane and associated water and evaluate quality of water and its suitability for use.

PROPONENTS OF THE BILL: Legislators from SE Colorado

POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS: Agriculture, oil and gas industry, COGCC, local governments in SE Colorado, Colorado Energy Office

BACKGROUND: Historic coal and coalbed methane production in SE Colorado particularly in the Raton Basin is associated with continuing seepage of methane and water. Produced water from coalbed methane wells has previously been applied to agriculture; however, CDPHE has objected to this use on the basis of salts and constituents in the water being potentially harmful to cattle and certain crops.

Is this bill necessary this year? There is no deadline.

How does the bill change current law? The bill directs the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) in the Department of Natural Resources in consultation with local governments to conduct a study on capturing methane seepage in the Raton Basin and using water resulting from such capture. The COGCC must submit the completed study to the General Assembly by December 1, 2023. The COGCC in consultation with the Colorado Energy Office must also implement a regulatory category for methane capture in the Raton Basin

Does the bill affect the prior appropriations system? No

How is the bill implemented? The COGCC will conduct the study and report back to the General Assembly.

Fiscal Impact: The fiscal note indicates a cost of $424,500 to complete the study.