

Paper: Fort Morgan Times

Date: Tuesday, February 10, 2009

Bill to protect landowners in railroad relocation dies

DENVER - A bill from Sen. Greg Brophy, R-Wray, and Rep. Cory Gardner, R-Yuma, to protect homeowners from land grabs due to the relocation of railroads in Eastern Colorado died in committee on Tuesday.

"I am very disappointed that the four Democrats in the committee failed to see the importance of protecting the rights of landowners," Brophy said in a news release. "I will continue in my efforts to protect private property rights for the people of Colorado."

Relocating the railroad has landowners worried about their property values dipping, adverse affects on the economy and deterioration of land, according to the release. The bill would have prevented railroad companies from condemning private property and required railroads to give full compensation, including court fees, to landowners for any land lost.

"Property rights represent the foundation of our country," Gardner said in the release. "It's a shame that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle can't grasp the significance of this problem."

Brophy and Gardner said they recognize this problem for landowners in Colorado and will continue to work toward solutions. Although the measure was defeated, Brophy and Gardner said they plan to strategize new methods to ensure property rights are protected.

"My biggest concern is protecting property rights," said Brophy, "My second goal is to make sure landowners are fairly compensated if the railroad ultimately takes their land."