

Political Spotlight: Ballot Initiative #256 or Amendment #24

The Responsible Growth Initiative, also known as Initiative 256, will appear on the November 7th Colorado ballot as Amendment 24. This initiative could have very broad and far-reaching affects, and every responsible Colorado state resident should consider the amendment carefully and vote. We strongly urge our readers to read the initiative carefully and engage other citizens to do so. It can be found on the internet in its entirety at <www.coloradansforresponsiblegrowth.org> or <www.voteno24.com>.

According to the 1997 Colorado Census of Agriculture report, Colorado farmland has been disappearing at a rate of 140,000 acres per year since 1987 or roughly 16 acres per hour. There are many causes for this decline, including urban growth.

Supporters of the initiative have become frustrated with the failure of state legislators to take action on the issue of Colorado's rapid growth in the last decade. In the 2000 session of the Colorado General Assembly, only 2 bills were passed out of 30 under consideration dealing with growth and its manifestations. The Citizen's Growth Initiative will appear as Amendment 24 to the state constitution. Those against the initiative say that a constitutional amendment is unreasonable and an inappropriate way to solve problems associated with growth. They predict that unforeseen problems or ramifications of the amendment will be difficult to correct without another statewide vote to reverse the amendment.

The debate on this issue has taken a central stage this fall and much literature will circulate that supports or criticizes the amendment. For the benefit of our readers, we invited representatives from two groups to explain their viewpoint on the amendment. We have printed their replies unedited on page 3 and 4 of this issue.

Greg Bledsoe represents the Colorado Livestock Association <www.coloradolivestock.org>. The mission of CLA is to represent, inform and advance Colorado's livestock industry.

Elise Jones is the Executive Director of Colorado Environmental Coalition, a 35 year old state-based citizen's group committed to protecting Colorado <www.ourcolorado.org>. Elise is one of the named initiators of the amendment.

We encourage you to read their remarks and contact each with your questions. Each vote counts.....Make sure your vote does.