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The struggle between the Republican-controlled House and the Democratic-controlled Senate at both the state and federal level may result in gridlock for energy issues this year.

In Colorado, Frank McNulty was elected as Speaker of the House (R-Highlands Ranch). First elected to the house in 2006 and a lawyer by profession, McNulty understands and uses political strategies effectively. The Republican-majority in the House determined the composition and focus of House committees. McNulty has been using this to advantage—sending bills to committee as a way

to keep them from advancing.

For example, our Representative Ed Vigil, introduced a bill directing the interagency farm-to-school coordination task force to study the feasibility of developing a farm-to-school program pilot in the Valley. The bill was sent to the ag committee; we do not expect it to resurface.

Similarly, other bills, such as HB11-1083—which adds hydroelectricity and pumped hydro electricity generation to the list of technologies the PUC may give consideration to when considering acquisitions for regulated utilities—has been sent to committee.

On the Senate side, we are monitoring a number of energy-related bills. We do not expect to see SB11-030, a bill requiring utilities to disclose to consumers the fuel source and associated costs to consumers, to go further. Of this, we are glad. Consumers may already find out the generation port-

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folio of their power provider. Estimating costs at the bill level would be misleading.

We are keeping an eye on several other bills including:

- SB11-045 which creates a statewide transmission siting authority to replace the existing permitting authority of local governments;
- SB11-058 which reverts the PUC to least-cost methods when reviewing utility rate applications and;
- SB11-071 which repeals major provisions for Renewable Portfolio Standards since the passage of Amendment 37.

For better or for worse, our guess right now is that none of these bills will go anywhere. However, we are monitoring them all because we have found that legislators sometimes overlook unintended consequences of energy-related bills.

Our industry is complex. Chances are, those who claim to have simple solutions aren't

telling the whole truth.

For example, some claim the Valley could produce enough solar power for our needs without outside generation. That is false. Until researchers develop utility-scale storage technologies, solar—by definition—won't provide power at night. Our power peak typically occurs at dusk in summer months.

Likewise, claims that the Valley would have to carry the entire cost of a transmission line to meet our power needs are also false. These costs would be spread among all of Xcel's Colorado customers and all of Tri-State's member coops.

Dig deep on energy-related issues. The simple truth may not be as simple as some would like you to believe.

**SAN LUIS VALLEY
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