

Rep. Jerry Sonnenberg (R-Sterling) won't give up.

Sonnenberg tried to persuade the House Local Government Committee last week to support a bill that would partially redistribute oil and gas severance taxes to communities that support oil and gas production. He got a "no" from the committee, but that isn't stopping him from pushing the issue further.

House Bill 13-1064 is in response to voter decisions in several Colorado cities to ban hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. Last November, Boulder, Fort Collins, Lafayette and Broomfield voters all decided to ban the extraction process in their communities.

Currently, communities impacted by energy development, processing or conversion of mineral and mineral fuels get grants and loans from the state's Local Government Severance Tax Fund.

Under the bill, communities that ban fracking would see those funds frozen at the level they received at the time of the decision to ban fracking. Any new revenues would be distributed to communities that already receive severance tax monies but do not ban fracking.

"It's about doing the right thing with those severance tax dollars, sending it to communities that need to mitigate those costs from energy production," Sonnenberg said during the hearing last week.

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