

HB19-1204

Prohibit Camping (in) Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Economic Analysis

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This bill states that its purpose is to

This bill addresses the protection of the common goods of water supply, soil, and public health by attempting to remediate the negative externalities caused by camping in environmentally sensitive areas. By prohibiting camping in urban areas which are environmentally sensitive, the bill makes that land excludable in order to protect the environment. This turns what was once a common resource into a private good, which is rivalrous and excludable.

Although not saying explicitly, this bill will force people who are homeless to leave areas

There must be enough ecological damage to warrant the prohibition. Not only does the government have a legitimate purpose in protecting the common goods within the urban environment, it also has a purpose in protecting the public

Research done by Foster, et al, in the Epidemic Intelligence Service has shown that close living quarters of homeless encampment

defined and do not have clear solutions

areas, it will lead to restoration and protection of said areas, but this bill will not keep homeless encampments from forming in the same place after the clean-up has occurred or in other unprotected areas due to their nature.

to efficiently stop homeless encampments from forming. The bill increases the workload for the Department of Public Health and Environment by requiring them to provide technical support to local public health agencies in order to meet all requirements of the bill. These added requirements could lead to inefficiency due to the fact that their workload could be focused in another way that will be more effective in protecting the water, soil, and public health through projects that decrease the amount of homeless people in Denver directly.

According to the most recent annual survey by the U.S. Conference of Mayors (National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty), major cities across the country report that top causes of homelessness among families were: lack of affordable housing, unemployment, poverty, and low wages, in that order. The same report found that the top four causes of homelessness among unaccompanied individuals were: lack of affordable housing, unemployment, poverty, mental illness and the lack of needed services, and substance abuse and the lack of needed services, in that order.

I would suggest that efforts for decreasing the negative externalities associated with urban camping are focused towards a more permanent solution which helps homeless people get back on their feet and into a stable and legal living condition, considering the factors of why people are homeless in the first place. So plans should be made by the government to solve to most common factors of affordable housing and unemployment.

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