



**Southwest Energy Efficiency Project**  
*Saving Money and Reducing Pollution through Energy Conservation*

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **GOVERNOR OWENS VETOS ENERGY EFFICIENCY LEGISLATION** ***Consumers and businesses will lose over \$500 million in energy bill savings***

*(Boulder, CO)* -- The Southwest Energy Efficiency Project (SWEEP) condemns Governor Bill Owens for vetoing House Bill 1147. This legislation directs all investor-owned natural gas utilities in Colorado to implement energy efficiency and conservation programs for their full service residential and business customers. Larger customers that purchase natural gas from a wholesale gas provider are exempted.

“This legislation would have helped consumers and businesses lower their natural gas use and utility bills,” stated Howard Geller, Executive Director of SWEEP. “We estimate that consumers and businesses in Colorado would have saved of over \$500 million as a result of this legislation. Consumers and businesses collectively will pay more for natural gas as a result of Governor Owens’s veto.”

House Bill 1147 had broad support from consumer groups and businesses, as well as bipartisan support in the Colorado legislature. The lead sponsors were Representative Tom Plant (D-Nederland) in the House and Senator Steve Johnson (R-Ft. Collins) in the Senate. The legislation was actively supported by Xcel Energy, the main natural gas utility in Colorado. Xcel Energy implements effective gas conservation programs for its customers in Minnesota, its home state.

“At a time when natural gas prices are very high and many families are stretched to the limit by their utility bills, it makes sense to help consumers and businesses lower their energy use,” stated Rex Wilmoth, Executive Director of the Colorado Public Interest Research Group (CoPIRG). “It is sad that Governor Owens would not get behind a policy of helping consumers and businesses conserve energy.”

SWEEP and CoPIRG will be recommending adoption of the legislation again next year. “We are optimistic this practical, broadly supported policy will become state law once Colorado has a new and hopefully more consumer-friendly Governor,” Geller added.

**About SWEEP:** The Southwest Energy Efficiency Project (SWEEP) is a public interest organization dedicated to advancing energy efficiency in Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming. For more information, visit the SWEEP website at [www.swenergy.org](http://www.swenergy.org).

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