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**Contacts:**

Kevin Bommer, executive director, [kbommer@cml.org](mailto:kbommer@cml.org), (303) 562-0442

Kristin Kemp, engagement and communications manager, [kkemp@cml.org](mailto:kkemp@cml.org), 303-249-2231

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## **CML Applauds Governor Polis' Veto of SB26-184**

DENVER, COLO. - Wednesday, June 3, 2026 – Today, the Colorado Municipal League (CML) today applauded Governor Jared Polis' veto of Senate Bill 26-184, "Firefighter Cancer Benefits and Workers' Compensation," calling it a necessary step to protect Colorado taxpayers and preserve the collaborative approach to firefighter benefits that has served the state well since 2017.

"We are grateful that Governor Polis recognized the serious fiscal and procedural concerns that SB26-184 posed for Colorado's municipalities," said Kevin Bommer, CML Executive Director. "This veto is not a rejection of firefighter protections. It is an affirmation that burdensome unfunded mandates are unacceptable and that protections for our firefighters already exists in the Firefighter Cancer Benefits Trust (Trust) that CML helped create."

"CML is a proud founding partner of the Trust, created in 2017, precisely because we agreed that the workers' compensation system is complicated and unpredictable," Bommer said. "The Trust was built on collaboration and mutual understanding. SB26-184 would have threatened its long-term sustainability by driving up costs and potentially discouraging municipal participation." CML remains committed to working with the General Assembly, firefighters, and public employers to strengthen participation in the Firefighter Benefits Trust and ensure that Colorado's firefighters continue to receive the protections they have earned — through a process that is fair, fiscally responsible, and inclusive of all stakeholders.

CML opposed SB26-184 on two fundamental grounds. First, the bill's laudable goal was not aligned with necessary funding. Without providing any new funding, reimbursement, or transitional support, the bill would have dramatically expanded the cancers presumed to be occupational diseases and raised the bar for taxpayer-funded employers to overcome that presumption to an impossible level. With the state estimating costs of approximately

\$1 million per workers' compensation cancer claim, the fiscal impact on Colorado's approximately 12,000 locally employed firefighters would have been exponentially greater than the \$2 million annual cost that led the General Assembly to explicitly exempt the state's own 160 firefighters from the bill's coverage.

Second, CML raised serious concerns about the process by which the bill advanced. SB26-184 at the end of the session was introduced without warning and without any attempt to engage municipalities, fire districts, insurers, or the communities who would finance its costs — and it advanced to final passage in just over two weeks. Legislation with this level of consequence for public budgets deserves a collaborative process that includes all affected parties.

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*[Colorado Municipal League](#) (CML) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization established in 1923 and represents the interests of 270 cities and towns. For more information on the Colorado Municipal League, please visit [cml.org](#), call 303-831-6411 or stay connected on [Facebook](#), [X](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#).*