



2016 STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

BOULDER COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



*DeLonde Barn at Caribou Ranch near Nederland
Photo Credit: Michael Lohr, Parks and Open Space*

CARIBOU RANCH
Boulder County Parks and Open Space

The 2,150-acre Caribou Ranch is located 1.5 miles north of the town of Nederland, in western Boulder County. Purchased by Boulder County in 1996, the protection of this montane forest open space property provides for the conservation of significant wildlife habitat, plant communities, and historical resources and numerous recreational opportunities, including hiking, horseback riding, winter sports, fishing, wildlife viewing, and environmental education. The historic sites located on Caribou Ranch are a highlight for the visiting public, and include the Switzerland Trail Railroad, Blue Bird Mine Complex, and DeLonde Barn and Homestead. Artists selected for the Parks and Open Space Department's annual Artist-in-Residence program reside at the DeLonde Barn during the months of July, August, and September.

Learn more at:

www.BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org

CONTACTS

BOULDER COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Cindy Domenico

Deb Gardner

Elise Jones

PO Box 471
Boulder, CO 80306
303-441-3500

COMMISSIONERS' DEPUTY

Michelle Krezek
mkrezek@bouldercounty.org

PO Box 471
Boulder, CO 80306
303-441-3500

COMMISSIONERS' LEGISLATIVE POLICY TEAM

Mark Ruzzin, Senior Policy Analyst
mruzzin@bouldercounty.org
303-441-4567

Megan Davis, Policy Analyst
mdavis@bouldercounty.org
303-441-3562

Leslie Irwin, Policy Analyst
lirwin@bouldercounty.org
303-441-3546

Pete Salas, Diversity Liaison
psalas@bouldercounty.org
303-441-4574

PO Box 471
Boulder, CO 80306

Legislative Agenda on the Internet:
www.bouldercounty.org/dept/co/pages/policy.aspx

CONTRACT LOBBYING ON BUDGET ISSUES

Policy Matters

Tanya Kelly Bowry
tanya@policymatters.com

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BOULDER COUNTY AT A GLANCE

THE PEOPLE

- Population – 309,874
- Median Age – 35.7 years
 - Youth under 18 – 29%
 - Seniors – 13%
- Ethnicity
 - White not Hispanic – 79%
 - Hispanic/Latino – 13%
 - Asian – 4%
 - African American – 1%
 - Am. Indian & Alaska Native – 0.4%
 - Two or more races – 3%
 - Other – 4%
- Poverty increased over the last decade –
 - Individuals – 14% 2013; 10% 2002
 - Families – 11% 2013; 5% 2002
 - Children – 13% 2013; 10% 2002
 - Young children (under 5) – 17% 2013; 15% 2002
- Housing – Historically expensive housing market and rental market with low vacancies. In Boulder, 59% of renters spend more than 30% of their income on rent (national average is 52%).
- Immigration – Approx. 33,000 foreign-born residents

THE LAND

Public land divided among local, state and federal managers, including the United States Forest Service, Boulder County Open Space, the City of Boulder and State Parks.

- 753 Square Miles
- 40% Private Ownership
- 60% Public Ownership
- Boulder County Open Space
 - 50,000 + acres county owned & managed
 - 29% agricultural

Sources: U.S. Census, Community Foundation Serving Boulder County Trends Report, Colorado Dept. of Local Affair, and college and university websites.

THE GOVERNMENT

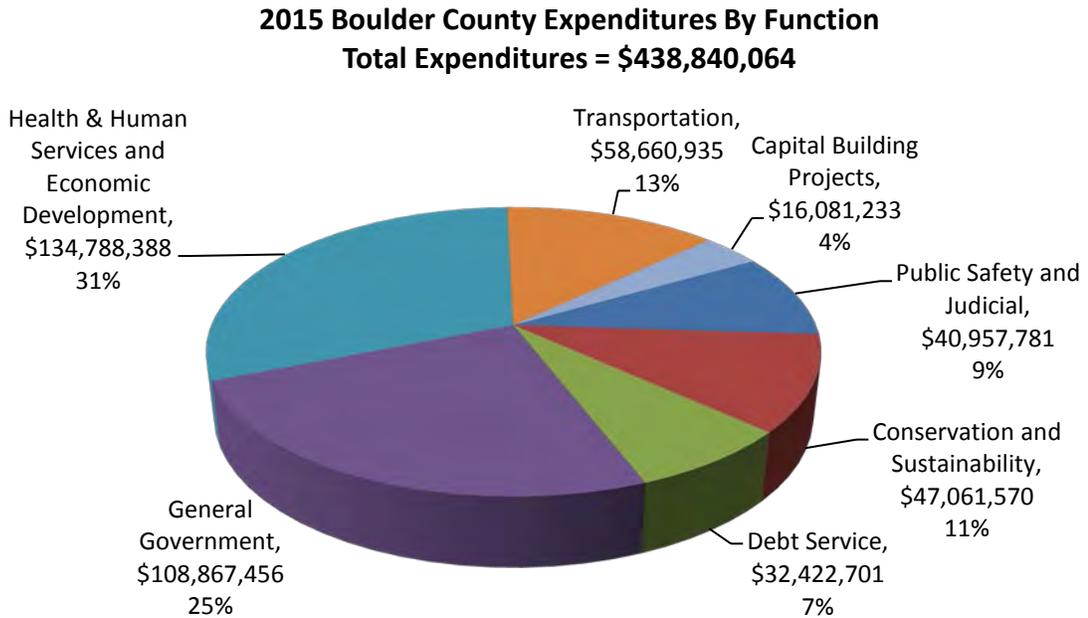
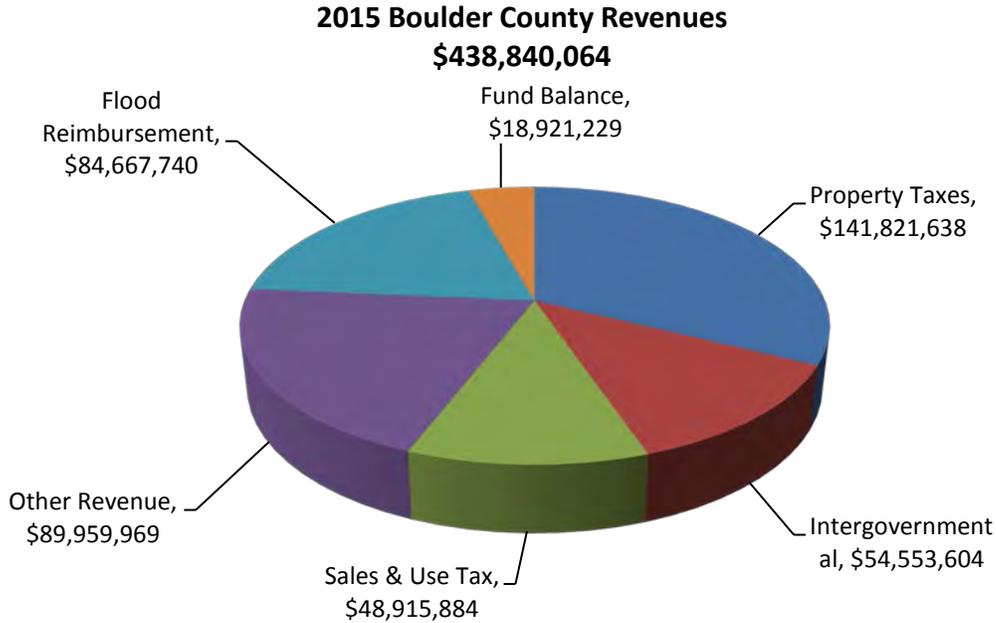
- Founded in 1861
- 11 Cities and Towns
- 4 School Districts – 59,000 Students
- 3 Airports
- 3 Members on Board of Commissioners
- 7 Elected County Offices
 - County Assessor
 - Treasurer
 - Sheriff
 - Coroner
 - District Attorney
 - Clerk and Recorder
 - Surveyor
- 3 Higher Education Institutions
 - University of Colorado, Boulder – Approx. 30,000 students
 - Front Range Community College – Approx. 4,900 students
 - Naropa University – Approx. 1,000 students

EMPLOYMENT SECTORS

- Unemployment Rate – 3.2% in Aug. 2015
- Employment Sectors:

Prof., Scientific & Tech. Services	15.4%
Education Services	12.6%
Health Care and Social Assistance	12.0%
Manufacturing	10.2%
Retail Trade	9.7%
Accommodation and Food Services	9.4%
Information	4.9%
Public Administration	4.4%
Admin., Support, Waste Mgmt, Rem.	4.0%
Wholesale Trade	3.3%
Finance and Insurance	2.9%
Other Services (except Public Admin.)	2.8%
Construction, Trans., & Warehousing	2.3%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1.8%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1.4%
Other	2.9%

COUNTY BUDGET AT A GLANCE



Other Revenue include specific ownership taxes, motor vehicle fees, recording and filing fees, Treasurer’s fees, building permits, various other fees, rents, and charges for services.

Intergovernmental Revenues are primarily federal and state pass-through monies for social service programs, state-shared monies for roads, state lottery proceeds, other various government programs, and grant programs.

LETTER FROM THE COMMISSIONERS

December 2015

Dear Boulder County Stakeholder:

Thank you for your interest in Boulder County’s 2016 State Legislative Agenda. The legislative agenda identifies core county legislative and state budget priorities in need of support from our state legislative delegation.

The Boulder County 2016 State Legislative Agenda was developed over the course of the summer and fall of 2015 through engagement with county departments, partners, legislators, and other stakeholders. It will be used by the county’s elected officials and staff to inform any county positions that may be taken on active state legislation.

It is our hope that this legislative agenda will serve as a reference tool for our Boulder County state legislative delegation when they consider legislation that may impact the county and those that we serve. We also present this legislative agenda as an informative guide for our residents, partners, and staff to assist in understanding Boulder County’s positions on the wide variety of public policy issues that impact our work.

In closing, we’d like to take this opportunity to thank the members of Boulder County’s state legislative delegation for their hard work, and to express our deep appreciation for their service on behalf of the residents of Boulder County and all Coloradans. Their collective effort to understand Boulder County’s positions on issues and advocate on behalf of the county is invaluable. Just as invaluable is the collaborative partnership that we have with our delegation members. We look forward to working with them during the 2016 state legislative session.

Sincerely,



Boulder County Board of County Commissioners



Cindy Domenico



Deb Gardner



Elise Jones

LEGISLATIVE PRINCIPLES

Boulder County's State Legislative Agenda adheres to the following Legislative Principles, which serve as a guide in the development of the positions the county takes on state legislation.

Environmental Sustainability: Boulder County supports an environment that is sustainable for generations to come, and we are committed to protecting and enhancing our environment. To that end, Boulder County advances multi-modal transportation networks and alternative modes of transportation, compact land use development, energy efficiency and renewable energy, conservation of resources, and healthy land, air and water. We will continue to make decisions and promote policies that support our ability to use only the resources we need and to protect our environment through conservation, energy efficiency, waste diversion and other means.

Lands and Natural Resources: Boulder County looks to manage public lands and natural resources for the future, through pursuit of initiatives that improve the quality of life for our residents while balancing the multi-faceted needs and rights of community stakeholders. To that end, Boulder County works to preserve open spaces for recreation use, wildlife habitat, and sustainment of our agricultural heritage; manage our wildland urban interface area for both fire preparedness and healthy forests; protect water sources and ensure a sustainable water supply; and efficiently regulate extractive industries such as mining and oil and gas development to protect air and water quality, reduce impacts to residents, and support industry viability.

Service Integration and Collaboration: Boulder County strives to ensure effective use of taxpayer funds through efficient service delivery and integration of programs and services. To increase efficiency and effectiveness, Boulder County engages in and strongly supports collaborative efforts within county departments, with external partners in the local community, and with the state and statewide organizations.

Economic Opportunity: Boulder County seeks to increase economic opportunity and improve equity and self-sufficiency for all residents. Boulder County's efforts to create and sustain a high quality of life play an important role in attracting and retaining employers, and the county will continue to support local economic development activities that enhance individual and community economic vitality. An economically robust community must provide pathways to living-wage jobs for all residents, through means such as employment readiness, job training, and self-sufficiency programs.

Health and Human Services: Boulder County is dedicated to supporting and sustaining healthy communities that strengthen individuals and families while promoting human dignity and positive outcomes for the future. To that end, Boulder County advances a high quality of life for all residents by protecting vulnerable populations, ensuring the well-being of seniors, providing access to affordable health insurance and health care to all, maintaining safe and affordable housing for residents, and improving access to effective and efficient public benefits and services that support healthy lives for our clients.

Local Control: Boulder County believes that the authority to address issues that pertain to the county must reside firmly with the county, where state or federal authority does not already exist. Local governments are best suited to identify solutions to local issues particularly as regards the services we provide and the land use decisions that we make. Local authority also includes the flexibility to determine use of funding and precludes unfunded mandates from the state or federal government.

Fiscal Responsibility: Boulder County recognizes the importance of a state government that operates in a fiscally responsible way and advances the economic vitality and well-being of all Coloradans. We appreciate the transparency in the state budgeting process and the opportunity to provide input, and we seek collaboration with the state, especially with regard to decisions and processes that affect our organization or our constituents. Boulder County believes it is important to address the state revenue structure that negatively impacts the state's economy, including the Gordian knot of TABOR, Amendment 23 and the Gallagher Amendment.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES AT A GLANCE

Following are Boulder County's legislative priorities for the 2016 legislative session, including references to bills that are expected to be introduced in the General Assembly. Additional bills are likely to be introduced in each of these priority areas throughout the course of the legislative session. Boulder County staff will be active in any legislation introduced in these areas, and we ask for our legislators' support for these bills that are important to us and our constituents.

Hospital Provider Fee: Support conversion of the Hospital Provider Fee to an enterprise fund.

Anticipated legislation:

- *Create new hospital provider fee enterprise*

Adult Protective Services: Support statutory changes necessary to implement mandatory reporting for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Anticipated legislation:

- *Modifications to Human Services code and criminal statutes per SB 15-109 Task Force recommendations*

Child Welfare: Support changes to the children's code to allow more kin to access the relative guardian assistance program.

Anticipated legislation:

- *Inclusion of allocation of parental responsibilities (APR) and expanded relationships with child in Relative Guardianship Assistance Program*

Urban Renewal: Support changes to state statute governing the use of tax-increment financing to ensure faithful implementation of HB 15-1348, the Urban Redevelopment Fairness Act.

Anticipated legislation:

- *Technical fixes to HB 15-1348*

Public Health: Support legislation to provide public-private parity in bearing the cost of food safety programs in Colorado.

Anticipated legislation:

- *Retail Food License Fees*

SCFD: Support legislation to place a Scientific and Cultural Facilities District tax reauthorization ballot measure before district voters in 2016.

Anticipated legislation:

- *SCFD Tax Reauthorization Ballot Measure*

Affordable Housing: Extend the low income housing tax credit beyond 2016.

Anticipated legislation:

- *Extension of HB 14-1017 creating state low income housing tax credits*

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy: Support legislation and other policy approaches to advance an aggressive energy efficiency and renewable energy agenda for Colorado.

Oil and Gas Authority: Support legislation to preserve and expand local government authority to regulate the land use activities of the oil and gas industry.

BUDGET PRIORITIES AT A GLANCE

In the development of the FY 2016 - 2017 state budget, Boulder County asks for the support of the General Assembly in providing adequate appropriations for the following important program areas.

State Budget and Fiscal Stability

Hospital Provider Fee: Support conversion of the Hospital Provider Fee to an enterprise fund.

Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Recovery

Wildfire Mitigation Funds: Support funding for wildfire mitigation efforts through the reauthorization of the Department of Natural Resources' Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant Program.

Human Services

County Administration Workload Study: Support funding to update the 2007 County Administration workload study to reflect the increased caseloads and system and business process improvements.

Child Welfare Staff Increases: Support increased funding for additional caseworkers to meet the needs identified through the 2014 Child Welfare workload study.

Adult Protective Services Funding: Support full funding for the implementation of SB 15-109, mandatory reporting for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Alternative Transportation

Multi-modal Investments: Support state funding for the Safe Routes to School program.

Public Health

Family Planning Funding: Support state funding for the Family Planning program.



2016 STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



Notes:

**BUDGET
PRIORITY**

Positions marked with this box indicate a position related to the State Budget.

**HIGH
PRIORITY**

Positions marked with this box indicate high priority legislative positions, which also can be found on the “Legislative Priorities at a Glance” page.

one

COMMUNITY JUSTICE AND SAFETY

To promote the safety of children, families and vulnerable adults and strengthen community justice services.

INCREASE FUNDING FOR CHILD WELFARE TO HIRE MORE CASE WORKERS AND SUPERVISORS, AS IDENTIFIED IN THE 2014 CHILD WELFARE WORKLOAD STUDY

**BUDGET
PRIORITY**

The August 2014 child welfare workload study conducted by the Colorado Office of the State Auditor found that the estimated amount of time required to complete mandated child welfare activities and meet program objectives exceeds the amount of time available from the current number of Colorado child welfare caseworkers. The study estimated that 574 additional caseworker full-time positions plus 122 related supervisory positions are needed to handle current caseload levels. The workload study did not include all counties in its analysis, nor did it assess the anticipated caseload increases that will result from the January 2015 launch of the statewide child abuse and neglect reporting hotline. In 2015, the Colorado General Assembly supported additional funding for 100 new child welfare caseworkers across Colorado, providing an incremental step toward addressing the shortfall. However, with new initiatives that aim to better protect children and families and historic underfunding, the system remains understaffed. Boulder County supports increased funding for child welfare personnel to reduce the child welfare case to caseworker ratio, reduce the unsustainable workload, and improve morale among the caseworker workforce. Investments in child welfare are investments in the health of Colorado families and the safety of children. Additional resources will support system reforms that provide front-end, early intervention services for families, to address needs before more costly interventions like out of home placement are necessary.

SUPPORT INCREASED FUNDING FOR MANDATORY REPORTING FOR ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

**BUDGET
PRIORITY**

**HIGH
PRIORITY**

Mandatory reporting for elder abuse became Colorado law in July 2014, and with the passage of SB 15-109, mandatory reporting for adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) will be required beginning July 2016. Since the implementation of mandatory reporting of elder abuse alone, Boulder County has experienced a nearly 20 percent increase and counties across the state have seen a 47 percent increase in call volume for Adult Protective Services – the anticipated increase and accompanying state budget increase was 15 percent. Boulder County supports ongoing monitoring of the impacts of mandatory reporting on Adult Protective Services and Aging Services to ensure that current resources can keep pace with the demands of incoming reports. In addition, Boulder County requests that full funding be made available for the implementation of mandatory reporting of IDD so that we can ensure the safety of all the populations served by adult protective services. Funding should support increased caseloads – at the nationally recommended caseload to caseworker ratio of 25:1 – so that counties can ensure that at-risk adults and seniors have access to services to keep them safe. Boulder County also supports legislation that will allow for the effective implementation and any system changes necessary for implementation of mandatory reporting for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

SUPPORT FULL AND ONGOING FUNDING FOR THE BOULDER COUNTY IMPACT PROGRAM

For more than a decade, Boulder County’s Integrated Managed Partnership for Adolescent and Child Community Treatment (IMPACT) Program has provided high-need, high-risk youth with mental health, juvenile justice, and child welfare services. IMPACT has achieved proven results by reducing out-of-home placements, psychiatric hospitalizations, and commitments while increasing the numbers of youth residing in family and kinship environments. Because of this shift in placements, the program has achieved significant cost savings that have been reinvested in additional community-based, wrap-around programs. In 2015, the state legislature recognized the effectiveness of the 1451 CMP program and provided a \$2.5 million investment in the program, through SB 15-241. Boulder County supports ongoing funding for the 1451 CMP program, and urges an SB 241 implementation strategy that honors the collaborative nature of the program, the ability of programs to meet the needs identified in local communities as determined by local collaborative partners, and flexibility in demonstrating both outcomes for clients and program outcomes.

SUPPORT INCREASED SERVICES FOR YOUTH AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE AND ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE FUNDING IS AVAILABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Colorado is working hard to increase permanent placements for youth in the foster care system to prevent them from aging out of the system without any family or relationship supports. And yet, approximately 30,000 youth exit the child welfare system nationally each year without adequate support systems, permanent connections, and skills necessary to successfully transition to adulthood. Recent studies have determined that on average, for every young person who ages out of foster care, taxpayers and communities pay \$300,000 in such social costs as public assistance, incarceration, and lost wages to a community over that person’s lifetime, resulting in an estimated \$8 billion in social costs to the United States every year. Youth who have aged out of the child welfare system experience lower high school graduation and GED completion rates, greater reliance on public assistance, and increased rates of unemployment, homelessness, mental and physical health problems, unplanned pregnancies, incarceration, human trafficking, and victimization. Boulder County supports efforts to increase services and resources for youth aging out of the child welfare system.

SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATEWIDE CHILD WELFARE 2.0 PLAN AND OTHER NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED BEST PRACTICES FOR CHILD WELFARE

The state and counties have developed several collaborative reform efforts designed to improve outcomes for children and families in the child welfare system and to increase community engagement in creating healthy and stable families.

**HIGH
PRIORITY**

These include initiatives such as Colorado’s Child Welfare Training Academy to provide professionally-trained case workers throughout the state; Colorado’s C-Stat management strategy to provide analysis of child welfare system performance and to highlight areas in need of improvement; and the Child Welfare Practice Model, which has led to quality improvements in child protection services. These are all part of the Governor’s Strategic Plan to redesign the state’s child welfare system – Child Welfare 2.0, Keeping Kids Safe and Families Healthy. Colorado has also effectively implemented national best practices, such as Differential Response and Functional Family Therapy, and has followed national trends to provide more engagement in child welfare cases with kin. Through these initiatives and practices Colorado continues to improve child abuse and neglect prevention efforts, better support families and family-like relationships, and improve outcomes for children and youth in the child welfare system. Boulder County supports these and other best practices that will improve outcomes for children and families in Colorado.

SUPPORT A STRATEGIC AND FOCUSED APPROACH TO UPDATING, RATHER THAN REWRITING, THE CHILDREN’S CODE TO ACHIEVE IMPROVEMENTS IN CHILD WELFARE PRACTICE

Over the past five years Colorado has made great strides in strengthening its child welfare system, shifting practice toward early intervention and prevention supports for families. The system has significantly improved its proactive work to support family stabilization, in-home services, and the safe reduction of out-of-home placements for children in order to support better outcomes. While rules and policies have been put in place to govern the new practices, the Colorado Children’s Code – the section of state statute which addresses child welfare services – has not been updated in over a decade. Boulder County supports a strategic, surgical approach to changing the child welfare statute in support of improvements in child welfare practice. Any update process should be led by county human services directors, child welfare practitioners, and county attorneys, in partnership with the Colorado Department of Human Services and other advocates directly involved with the child welfare system.

SUPPORT SENTENCING REFORM THAT REDUCES RECIDIVISM THROUGH ALTERNATIVE SENTENCING AND EXPANDED EFFORTS TO DIVERT OFFENDERS FROM INCARCERATION, INCLUDING DRUG AND ALCOHOL TREATMENT COURTS

Boulder County supports legislation to advance problem-solving courts such as drug and alcohol treatment courts, family courts, veterans’ courts, and other alternatives to incarceration, both to divert offenders from incarceration and to reduce recidivism and criminal justice costs to state and local government. Community-based sentencing offers the best opportunity for integrated treatment programs and wrap-around services to reduce recidivism and associated costs. Drug and alcohol courts and other problem-solving courts are particularly effective for reducing incarceration and recidivism.

SUPPORT PROGRAMS THAT REMOVE BARRIERS AND PROVIDE A COORDINATED RESPONSE TO OFFENDER REENTRY FOLLOWING INCARCERATION IN JAIL, PRISON, OR JUVENILE DETENTION

Prisoner reentry is a complex issue, with the transition from jail or prison to the community being challenging not only for offenders but also for their families and communities. Offender reentry efforts should seek to promote offender success in the community and reduce recidivism. Reentry programs traditionally have focused on a specific area such as employment, job training and placement, housing, access to services, or substance abuse treatment. However, given the complexity of challenges faced by returning offenders, a reentry program focused on a single area may not adequately address the issues faced by this population. An integrated approach to problem solving is crucial, with comprehensive, collaborative case management based on a continuum of service, from jail “in-reach” through successful reentry. Boulder County supports increased coordination between agencies and service providers to ensure successful reentry of offenders.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION AND FUNDING FOR EXPANDED PROGRAMMING TO DIVERT MENTALLY ILL OFFENDERS FROM THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM, INCREASE REENTRY SUCCESS, AND REDUCE RECIDIVISM

In 2008, the Metro Area County Commissioners conducted a gaps analysis around services for individuals with mental health issues who are involved in the criminal justice system. The GAINS report produced from this analysis included several priorities for improving the overall system of care to reduce recidivism, improve outcomes for clients, and reduce costs to the criminal justice and prison systems. Boulder County considers the following recommendations as high priorities for meeting these goals: 1) Increase access to stable, affordable housing; 2) Improve continuity of care between jails, prisons, and community corrections to provide better discharge planning (such as “bridge” medications and continuous enrollment in public medical benefits); 3) Provide funding for creation and operation of triage facilities to direct mentally ill clients from the criminal justice system into treatment

opportunities; and 4) Ensure that behavioral health integration between public health, criminal justice, and mental health is supported in these practices and settings.

SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROMISING PRACTICES AND EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMS AND DECISION-MAKING MODELS FOR JUVENILES TO PREVENT REPEAT CRIMINAL OFFENSES AND PROMOTE HEALTHY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Researchers who study correctional interventions with juvenile offenders conclude that without some form of service or human intervention, there is unlikely to be much effect on juvenile recidivism from punishment alone. To address this conclusion and as a step to help ensure service effectiveness, programs should be based on solid research and evidence of effectiveness – in other words, be evidence-based and guided by positive outcomes. Implementation of such programs can lead to higher accountability and improved outcomes such as increased court appearance rates and reduced recidivism. Care should be taken to design programs to avoid unnecessary and burdensome reporting and oversight. With the recidivism rate for juveniles reaching as high as 90%, Boulder County supports the implementation of evidence-based decision-making models and innovative, promising practices for juvenile offenders.

OPPOSE EFFORTS TO REDUCE REGULATION OF THE BAIL BOND INDUSTRY AND TO IMPEDE OR DIMINISH THE ROLE OF PRETRIAL SERVICES PROGRAMS

As a private industry operating within a public court function, the commercial bail bond industry should continue to be regulated to protect public safety and individual rights as well as to guard against consumer abuse. In determining which clients to assist with release from jail, the commercial bail bond industry bases decisions primarily on monetary considerations rather than risk of flight or re-offense. Pretrial services agencies, on the other hand, base their decisions and recommendations on likelihood of court appearance and community safety, which are paramount concerns to the people of Boulder County. Pretrial services programs such as those offered in Boulder County have been proven to be safe and cost-effective alternatives to jail for many individuals awaiting trial. Pretrial services entities foster judicial discretion to make fair and safe bonding decisions based on a comprehensive assessment of each defendant, and pretrial services staff ensure defendants access mental health, substance abuse, and other services more quickly, thereby reducing costs associated with jail incarceration and potential future crimes. Defendants supervised by the Boulder County Pretrial Services Unit have an overall court appearance rate of 90.6% for all court appearances throughout the process. There is no reported court appearance rate for the commercial bail bond industry. Efforts to reduce appropriate regulation of the bond industry or to impede or otherwise diminish the role of the pretrial services program in Boulder County will be opposed.

SUPPORT FUNDING FOR FULL AND TIMELY IMPLEMENTATION OF SB 13-251, THE COLORADO ROAD AND COMMUNITY SAFETY ACT

Adopted by the General Assembly in 2013, the Colorado Road and Community Safety Act allows the state to issue a driver's license, minor's driver's license, instruction permit, or identification card to a noncitizen resident of Colorado. In order to qualify for these documents, an applicant must present proof of Colorado residency, Colorado income tax returns, a federal individual taxpayer identification number, and proof of identity issued by the applicant's country of origin. Since the act's implementation in 2014, the state has been overwhelmed with demand for these important documents, such that without additional funding thousands of Colorado residents will be denied these licenses, permits, and identification cards for years. Boulder County supported SB 251 in 2013, and supports state funding so that the bill can be implemented in a timely fashion and Colorado residents can receive documents in a reasonable timeframe.

two

EDUCATION

To support educational opportunities as a pathway to self-sufficiency.

SUPPORT ACCESS TO QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AS A SELF-SUFFICIENCY WORK SUPPORT AND TO IMPROVE SCHOOL READINESS

Many early childhood programs are child-focused, and while important, may not provide the hours of care and support and flexibility necessary for working parents to advance their careers. Programs like the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP), Early Head Start and Head Start provide child care assistance and child development to families that may be working, searching for employment or in training programs, and are working toward self-sufficiency. Preschool programs, which improve access to early childhood education for some families, don't always accommodate working parents and families. A true two-generation program recognizes that a child's success depends as much on his or her opportunities as it does on their parents' opportunities. Boulder County supports efforts to increase access to early childhood programs that support parents' efforts to move out of poverty and become more self-sufficient while providing school readiness for the child.

three

EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME STABILITY

To increase employment opportunities, improve economic equity, and promote self-sufficiency.

SUPPORT ACCESS TO QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AS A SELF-SUFFICIENCY WORK SUPPORT AND TO IMPROVE SCHOOL READINESS

See full policy statement in the Education section.

SUPPORT LOCAL INPUT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEGISLATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION OPPORTUNITY ACT

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is the 2014 Congressional reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act. A collaborative effort between the federal, state, and local governments, local Workforce centers provide employment and training services to those job seekers most in need, including veterans, unemployment insurance recipients, older workers, low-income youth, and individuals with disabilities. There are several new provisions in WIOA that will require significant discussion and vetting among the local Workforce providers and partners, including human services departments. As an example, WIOA adds new provisions that further integrate the work of human services programs such as TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) with local Workforce programs, providing more seamless services for clients, greater efficiency among work support programs, and better employment outcomes for individuals receiving public benefits. Boulder County supports local government involvement in the timely adoption of legislation to implement the stated purposes and intent of WIOA.

SUPPORT STRATEGIES THAT ADDRESS WAGE STAGNATION AND THE WAGE GAP FOR LOW INCOME WORKERS IN COLORADO, INCLUDING INCREASING THE MINIMUM WAGE, PROVIDING PAID SICK LEAVE, AND OTHERS

One-fourth of Americans have jobs that pay so little they are not able to support their families without public benefits. American's wages continue to lose ground to the cost of living and inflation, eroding the ability for families to become self-sufficient. In Colorado, the costs of meeting basic needs, such as housing, food and transportation, are beyond the means of those earning the minimum wage. For a family with one adult and one child, the living wage in Denver is \$20.95 per hour, and even for two adults without dependents the living wage is \$14.14. In Denver, the minimum hourly wage necessary to afford the median price of rent (at 30% of gross annual income) is \$35 per hour, and in the least expensive rural areas of Colorado, it is \$24 per hour. Colorado's constitutionally-established minimum wage will be only \$8.31 per hour in 2016. Increasing the minimum wage and providing paid sick leave as a work benefit are two strategies that Boulder County supports to address wage stagnation and the wage gap for Colorado's low-income workers.

SUPPORT LEGISLATIVE AND OTHER EFFORTS TO INCREASE AWARENESS OF RETIREMENT PLANNING OPTIONS

Employer-sponsored retirement investment plans have been a tool Americans have traditionally used to build their retirement savings. But today, more than half of all American workers do not have any type of employer-sponsored retirement plan. In Colorado, 64% of workers age 25-34, 50% of those age 35-39, and 74% of low-wage workers, regardless of age, are not offered a retirement plan through their place of employment. Sound financial planning for retirement years improves the self-sufficiency of our senior population and reduces the demand for public benefits and senior services. While HB 14-1377, to create the Colorado Retirement Security Task Force, failed to pass in 2014, Boulder County supports such efforts to explore public policy options for increasing the number of Colorado workers who are investing in a retirement plan.

SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORK FORCE THROUGH ON-THE-JOB TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES AND ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Experiential opportunities provided through on-the-job training and educational opportunities for internships or job-shadowing allow job-seekers to build skills and employment histories while also helping employers lower personnel costs. Relevant work experience is crucial to unemployed workers, those entering the workplace for the first time or after an absence, and workers seeking to change fields in order to earn sufficient wages. High-demand professions such as health care provide opportunities for living wage employment, and training in those fields will help meet the need for workers while facilitating access to these well-paying jobs for lower-income individuals. Boulder County supports these important programs that benefit both job-seekers and employers.

SUPPORT ACCESS TO QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AS A SELF-SUFFICIENCY WORK SUPPORT AND TO IMPROVE SCHOOL READINESS

Some early childhood programs are child-focused, and while important, may not provide the hours of care and support and flexibility necessary for working parents to advance their careers. Programs like the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) and Head Start provide child care assistance and child development to families that may be working, searching for employment or in training programs, and are working toward self-sufficiency. Preschool programs, which improve access to early childhood education for some families, don't always accommodate working parents and families. A true two-generation program recognizes that a child's success depends as much on his or her opportunities as it does on their parents' opportunities. Boulder County supports efforts to increase access to early childhood programs that support parents' efforts to move out of poverty and become more self-sufficient while providing school readiness for the child.

SUPPORT POLICIES THAT REDUCE THE CLIFF EFFECT FOR PEOPLE MOVING OFF PUBLIC BENEFITS TOWARD SELF-SUFFICIENCY

A cliff effect occurs when workers that receive public benefits experience a sudden termination of these benefits when their wages increase by even slight amounts. This creates a disincentive for those working toward self-sufficiency to earn more income, as increased income might not cover child care costs or the costs of other work supports. Boulder County supports the policy changes and funding necessary to address the cliff effect through implementation of a tiered approach to elimination or termination of public benefits, whereby workers receive incrementally less public benefits as they earn incrementally higher wages. Other strategies may include the availability of non-public benefit resources and supports for families who are nearing self-sufficiency.

SUPPORT CHANGES TO COLORADO’S CHILD SUPPORT SYSTEM AS IDENTIFIED THROUGH THE CHILD SUPPORT COMMISSION

Child support is a critical economic support for single parent families, which make up the largest population of families in poverty in Colorado. The Colorado Child Support Commission conducted an extensive review of the child support system and statutes, and has identified a number of areas where outcomes for Colorado’s minor children can be improved by changes in the language and/or intent of current state statute. The Commission’s recommendations include establishing a new collection remedy for insurance settlement liens for unpaid child support; adjusting the credits for parents supporting multiple children; changing the cost-test for medical support to reflect the changes in health insurance per the Affordable Care Act; and limiting the retroactive modification of child support. Combined, these statutory changes will improve the processes for child support administration and will provide fairness to both custodial and non-custodial parents in the child support system.

four

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

To protect and enhance the health of the environment.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION AND OTHER POLICY APPROACHES TO ADDRESS THE AIR AND WATER QUALITY IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH OIL AND GAS OPERATIONS

See full policy statement in the Oil and Gas section.

SUPPORT STATE REGULATION AND OTHER POLICY MEANS TO PROTECT AIR QUALITY

Outdoor air quality is a serious concern in Boulder County. Boulder County is included in the nine-county Denver Metro area that currently exceeds the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) health standards for ozone. Impacts from increased ozone, and the pollutants that form ozone, lead to or cause poor air quality, decreased visibility, damage to crops, and increased acid rain in Rocky Mountain National Park. Under the Clean Air Act, the EPA establishes air quality standards to protect public health, with special attention to the health of "sensitive" populations (children under 10 years, adults over 65 years, and asthmatics). Poor air quality has significant public health and environmental impacts, from increasing doctor and hospital admissions, to compromising the unique value of our parks and open space lands, to negative effects on wildlife and habitat. Boulder County supports state legislative, regulatory, and other efforts to protect public and environmental health by reducing the emissions of harmful pollutants.

SUPPORT STATE REGULATION AND OTHER POLICY MEANS TO PROTECT WATER QUALITY

Protecting the quality of Colorado's water is vital to its environment, economy, and people. In 2016 the state and federal governments and other public agencies will conclude a number of policy-making and regulatory efforts – from new municipal separate storm system and sediment rules, to state gray water implementation rules, to a new definition of waters of the U.S. – that could impact Boulder County and all Colorado local governments. During these processes Boulder County will advocate for legislation, regulations, and other policy approaches that focus on the critical goal of protecting water quality.

five

FOOD AND NUTRITION

To support access to healthy food and nutrition for individuals and families, and promote healthy eating and active living opportunities within communities.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION AND INCREASED FUNDING TO EXPAND HEALTHY EATING AND ACTIVE LIVING PROGRAMMING

Healthy eating and active living have been identified as priorities in many public health improvement plans. Although Colorado remains one of the healthiest states in the nation, the rates of obesity for children and adults are climbing. Fostering health and well-being from the earliest stages of life helps build a lifetime foundation for overall health. Healthy eating and active living will reduce heart disease and cancer, which are the two leading causes of death in Boulder County. Boulder County supports healthy eating and active living policies that will increase physical activity, improve access to healthy foods, increase alternative transportation utilization, and increase breastfeeding initiation and duration.

SUPPORT THE EXPANSION OF PROGRAMS THAT INCREASE ACCESS TO HEALTHY, LOCALLY GROWN FOODS, SUCH AS THE DOUBLE SNAP PROGRAM

Boulder County's Harvest Bucks Program provides customers who rely on the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) with an incentive to purchase locally grown, healthy foods from farmers' markets. The Harvest Bucks Program not only increases low income residents' access to healthy, local produce, but it also supports our local economy and farmers. This program exemplifies an equitable three-tiered approach to sustainability: socially, by providing underserved residents with the opportunity to take part in the local food culture; environmentally, by increasing the viability of our small acreage fruit and vegetable farmers; and financially, by increasing the purchasing power of underserved residents so that they can access locally-grown produce. This program has effectively increased SNAP sales at the Boulder and Longmont farmers' markets by over 100%, excluding the matching Harvest Bucks. Boulder County supports policies that seek to expand implementation and increase funding for this program locally and statewide.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION AND OTHER EFFORTS TO REDUCE THE CONSUMPTION OF SUGAR SWEETENED BEVERAGES

Scientific evidence demonstrating the negative health effects of sugary drink consumption is growing. Drinking just one sugary drink a day increases a person's risk for type 2 diabetes by 25%, for childhood obesity by 55%, and for death from heart disease by 30%. In Boulder County, 14.5% of Latinos have been diagnosed with diabetes as compared with 4% of non-Latinos. And sugary drinks are linked to dental extraction surgeries in very young children: Children's Hospital Colorado is performing 3,000 surgeries each year to address rotten or infected baby teeth at a cost of \$10-15,000 per surgery. Boulder County Public Health is taking a number of steps to reduce the consumption of sugary drinks, including actively supporting public education about the negative health impact of these beverages; developing workplace policies for healthy meetings and replacing sugary beverages in vending machines and concessions; and

supporting public policy strategies to reduce the risks associated with the consumption of sugary drinks. Colorado and 38 states and the District of Columbia apply sales taxes to sugary drinks sold through vending machines. Boulder County and Boulder County Public Health will oppose legislation to eliminate this sales tax, and continue to support legislative and other efforts to reduce the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages.

six

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

To protect and enhance the health of the public and ensure that Coloradans have access to high-quality, comprehensive, and affordable public health services.

SUPPORT EFFORTS TO INCREASE ACCESS TO CARE AND LOW-COST PREVENTIVE HEALTH SERVICES FOR CURRENT AND NEWLY-ELIGIBLE MEDICAID CLIENTS

Boulder County Medicaid enrollment has increased 162% since 2008, up from 16,000 to 58,000 individuals in 2015. With Medicaid eligibility now set at 130% of the federal poverty level, the primary expansion population is adult individuals. Connecting these clients to preventive health services is critical to saving money within both the Medicaid system and the health care system as a whole. While Colorado has an outreach and administrative case management program for children enrolled in CHP+ and Medicaid, called Healthy Communities, it does not have a companion program for adults. The Healthy Communities program focuses on the "life cycle of a client," and coordinates all of the activities necessary for families to obtain coverage and access to prevention and wellness-focused health care services. However, Healthy Communities has been historically underfunded, leaving many clients without the coordination services necessary to reduce costs and improve health outcomes. In addition, Colorado administers the Accountable Care Collaborative, which works to improve the health of Medicaid clients by assisting them in securing the necessary services to stay healthy. Boulder County supports the expansion of Healthy Communities, the Accountable Care Collaborative, and other programs aimed at strengthening access to preventive health services for Medicaid clients.

SUPPORT THE GROWTH OF THE PROVIDER COMMUNITY TO INCREASE ACCESS TO CARE FOR MEDICAID CLIENTS

In mid-2014 the number of Coloradans enrolled in Medicaid passed one million, with one-quarter of those enrollees joining after January 2014. Although Colorado has seen growth in the number of health care providers that accept Medicaid clients, many parts of urban and rural Colorado remain underserved and unable to meet the medical, dental, and behavioral health needs of their residents on Medicaid. Boulder County supports efforts to expand the Medicaid provider base through strategies such as increased provider rates and incentives for medical, dental, and behavioral health career paths like loan forgiveness in order to increase access for all patients receiving Medicaid benefits and improve the overall health of Colorado.

SUPPORT INTEGRATED PUBLIC HEALTH AND HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE CARE ACT FUNDING IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

The success of the health care system at reducing costs and improving health outcomes is dependent upon the strength of the community safety net which provides food, housing, employment, and family services supports to those Coloradans in greatest need. Current funding structures for the Affordable Care Act support direct health care services, administrative services, and navigation services that link people to insurance, Medicaid, and health care. These funding structures do not reflect the critical role

that the human services safety net or public health prevention programs play in supporting the health of individuals within our communities. These foundational programs help Coloradans in need meet their basic needs, and reduce costly behaviors like smoking, unhealthy eating, and substance abuse that require expensive health care interventions. Boulder County supports increased funding for programs that support the social determinants of health.

INCREASE RESOURCES FOR FEDERALLY-QUALIFIED HEALTH CARE CENTERS TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY-BASED, PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Although the expansion of Medicaid has resulted in an infusion of federal funds into the medical system, the provider community has not kept pace with demand for services. Private providers are not expanding their practice to include newly eligible Medicaid clients at the rate expected, and so community clinics and Federally Qualified Health Care Centers (FQHCs) are seeing increased demand for their services. FQHCs are also essential partners in local community safety nets, having developed strong prevention service programs and a whole-client health approach that supports the medical, dental, and behavioral health needs of patients. While many FQHC clients are covered through Medicaid, these clinics also remain the only option for care for those who remain uncovered in our communities, so additional sources of funding are necessary to sustain these essential community health clinics.

SUPPORT FUNDING FOR AND ACCESS TO FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES AND EVIDENCE-BASED SEXUAL HEALTH INFORMATION TO PROMOTE FAMILY STABILITY

**BUDGET
PRIORITY**

Family planning is an integral component of health. Unplanned, mistimed, or unwanted pregnancy can result in poor health outcomes for both the parents and children. Boulder County supports legislation that maintains or increases access to affordable, medically-accurate family planning services and birth control methods, including long-acting reversible contraception (LARC). While the Affordable Care Act mandates contraception coverage with no cost sharing to the consumer, there are loopholes that create gaps in coverage for some women. Reimbursement rates for LARC generally do not cover costs, meaning that providers serving low income or uninsured women cannot afford to offer all contraception options. Confidentiality is another critical concern in reproductive health. Teens and women in abusive relationships have the right, under Colorado law, to access confidential family planning services. However, current Explanation of Benefits (EOBs) procedures do not safeguard privacy. Legislation that supports adequate reimbursement for all contraceptive options, confidential health services, and comprehensive, science-based sex education will improve the ability of Boulder County adults and adolescents to avoid an unwanted pregnancy.

SUPPORT EFFORTS TO INCREASE ACCESS TO AND SERVICES FOR MENTAL HEALTH SCREENING, PREVENTION, AND TREATMENT

The Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment's (CDPHE) 2012 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System reports that 36% of adults in Boulder County suffered from poor mental health days in the month previous to being surveyed. For Boulder County adults earning less than \$25,000 per year, that number jumps to 49%. In respect to treatment, fewer than half of adults and just one-third of children with a diagnosable mental disorder get help. And even when persons with mental health issues seek help, assistance often is not available because of a lack of awareness and resources. Anxiety, mood, and impulse control disorders are associated with a higher probability of risk behaviors, including tobacco, alcohol and drug use; risky sexual behavior; intimate partner and family violence; and chronic and acute conditions such as obesity and cardiovascular disease. Boulder County supports increased funding for mental health screening, diagnosis, and treatment programming to better ensure that Coloradans suffering from a mental health disorder get the treatment they need.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION, FUNDING, AND OTHER EFFORTS TO EXPAND SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION, REDUCTION, AND TREATMENT PROGRAMMING

In developing Boulder County's Public Health Improvement Plan, community stakeholders identified substance abuse – specifically the abuse of alcohol, marijuana, heroin and prescription drugs – as a concern with serious health and social impacts. The 2010-2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health shows that Colorado rates of alcohol use are among the top five nationally among youth, young adults, and adults ages 26 and older. The impacts of marijuana use are in the spotlight with the implementation of the retail sale of marijuana in a number of Boulder County communities. Of particular concern is the largely irreversible impact of alcohol, marijuana and prescription drug use on adolescent brain development. Preventing alcohol and drug abuse improves quality of life, mental health, academic performance and workplace productivity; reduces crime and criminal justice costs; reduces motor vehicle crashes and fatalities; and lowers health care costs for acute and chronic conditions. Boulder County supports expanded efforts to address substance abuse through such strategies as prevention programming that promotes constructive lifestyles and norms; early intervention for at-risk youth; addiction treatment involving multiple interventions and regular monitoring; and meaningful regulation with strong enforcement.

SUPPORT FUNDING FOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION TO REDUCE HEALTH DISPARITIES

Boulder County supports the development, expansion, and monitoring of programs to reduce disparities in health. Persistent health inequities and disparities mean that millions of Americans suffer from a disproportionately high burden of disease, disability, and premature death. These disparities also impose an unacceptable fiscal cost. Efforts must support funding for effective strategies that work to reduce health disparities and research to better understand the underlying causes of health disparities.

SUSTAIN ADEQUATE FUNDING TO PUBLIC HEALTH PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

Boulder County strongly supports the Amendment 35 funding stream, which provides much-needed programming to support prevention, early detection, and treatment of cancer, cardiovascular and pulmonary diseases; tobacco prevention and cessation; and creates health disparities grants to prevent, screen, and treat diseases that disproportionately affect minority populations. In addition, Boulder County supports prevention and early intervention policies and programs to strengthen early childhood development and support family stability, including family-friendly workplace policies, funding for early care and education programs, and home visitation programs.

SUPPORT EFFORTS TO PREVENT AND REDUCE TOBACCO USE AND EXPOSURE TO SECONDHAND SMOKE

Boulder County supports proven interventions that reduce tobacco-related disparities, reduce youth access to and use of tobacco, encourage tobacco use cessation, and/or protect individuals from the health hazards of secondhand tobacco smoke. Priority interventions include: state tobacco retailer licensing with enforcement provisions for violations or removal of the existing tax loophole that penalizes local jurisdictions that choose to license tobacco retailers; increasing the excise tax on tobacco products; restricting the sales and/or marketing of products (including new and novel products) that are flavored and/or broadly appeal to youth; expanding smoke-free and vapor-free areas; and raising the age of purchase to 21. Boulder County supports legislation that enhances local authority to regulate tobacco products sales, advertising, and use as appropriate, and opposes legislation that would restrict or preempt local jurisdictions from passing ordinances or regulations addressing tobacco use. Addressing minors in possession of tobacco products without meaningful retailer licensing is not

supported by evidence, nor is a state registry of tobacco retailers (vs. licensing with enforcement provisions).

SUPPORT FUNDING AND PROGRAMMING FOR RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA EDUCATION, TREATMENT, AND YOUTH USE PREVENTION

Marijuana legalization, approved in 2012 through Amendment 64, has the potential to negatively impact certain residents in our communities, particularly youth, children, and those vulnerable to substance abuse and mental health disorders. Consequences of marijuana use and production can include increased risk for mental health issues, risk behaviors, school failure, addiction, accidental poisoning, foodborne illness, and unintended injuries. The commercialization of marijuana facilitates easy access to the drug and a decrease in perceptions of harm related to its use. Boulder County continues to support the sharing of state marijuana sales tax revenues with those communities that allow the commercial sales of marijuana within their jurisdictions, both to support their regulatory and enforcement infrastructure and to promote a multi-faceted approach to prevention, early intervention, and treatment of marijuana use in order to reduce negative health and safety impacts.

SUPPORT EFFORTS TO REGULATE THE POTENCY AND MARKETING OF EDIBLE MARIJUANA PRODUCTS

The public health implications that come with Colorado’s legalization of marijuana use are just beginning to surface. Research already shows the potential short- and long-term effects of marijuana use on public health, with young adults a high-risk group. The risk to the health of children is also of particular concern, especially with edible marijuana products: Between 2005 and 2011, states that decriminalized marijuana saw a 30% increase per year in calls to poison control centers for children ages 9 and younger who consumed marijuana products, according to a 2014 study published in the *Annals of Emergency Medicine*. Boulder County supports a public health approach to regulating marijuana products, including legislation and other policy approaches that address the potency and identification of edible marijuana products and how these products are marketed to the public, especially youth and children.

SUPPORT RESTRICTIONS ON THE PUBLIC USE OF MARIJUANA

For the past ten years, the Colorado Clean Indoor Air Act (CCIAA) has provided protection from the harmful effects of secondhand tobacco smoke in public places. Recent discussion of creating public venues for marijuana use raises new concerns of exposure to secondhand marijuana smoke in indoor and outdoor spaces, including for employees. Legal sanctioning of so-called marijuana ‘clubs’ also reinforces the message that marijuana is an acceptable and even necessary part of socializing, which has important implications for youth marijuana use and reduced perception of harm. If Colorado moves toward allowing public marijuana use, Boulder County supports maintaining protections of the CCIAA, eliminating the opportunity for sharing marijuana with underage persons by enforcing age restrictions (21+) in all venues, allowing local ordinances to be more restrictive than state law, and creating clear and consistent enforcement mechanisms.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO INCREASE THE LICENSE FEES FOR RETAIL FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS

Food safety programs are significantly under-resourced in Colorado. Restaurant licensing fees, which reside in state statute and were last increased in 2009, are nominal – averaging less \$300 per year per restaurant – and only support approximately 40% of current food safety program costs. Increasing restaurant licensing fees will better balance the public and private investment in food safety programming, allow Colorado’s public health agencies and its restaurant industry to move closer to national best practices for food safety programs, and better protect the public from food-borne illnesses.

**HIGH
PRIORITY**

SUPPORT EFFORTS THAT EXPAND MANDATORY VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS AND LIMIT EXEMPTIONS

Population-based programs and services focus on delivering resources that are proven to achieve a more positive health impact than individual interventions alone. The use of vaccinations to control against the spread of communicable disease is a prime example of this strategy. Colorado’s vaccination rate routinely ranks amongst the lowest in the nation, and Boulder County’s amongst the lowest in the state. Mandatory vaccinations have been recommended by multiple national organizations as a best practice to increase herd immunity and therefore improve protection of our population against communicable disease. While HB 14-1288 was a modest step in the right direction, Boulder County supports expanded mandatory vaccination requirements and reasonable limitation of personal exemptions.

SUPPORT FUNDING AND OTHER APPROACHES TO EXPAND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COLORADO IMMUNIZATION INFORMATION SYSTEM

The Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS) is a confidential, population-based, computerized system that collects and disseminates consolidated immunization information for Coloradans of all ages. Operated by the Colorado Immunization Program at CDPHE, CIIS works to increase and sustain high immunization rates by consolidating immunization records from multiple providers, allowing providers to generate notices for individuals who are not up-to-date, minimizing over-immunization, and identifying missed opportunities for immunization. First implemented in 2011, CIIS has struggled with technical and other issues that have limited its acceptance and use by health care providers, an outcome which ultimately compromises its effectiveness. Broad, statewide implementation of CIIS will meet multiple public health priorities, especially for children. Boulder County supports increased state funding and other efforts to achieve this goal.

SUPPORT THE BIRTH CERTIFICATE MODERNIZATION ACT

Transgender people, especially transgender young people, need and deserve birth certificates with their proper names and correct gender to avoid harassment and discrimination when applying for school, jobs, and identity documents. Colorado law requiring verification of gender reassignment surgery to change gender on a birth certificate does not reflect current understanding in transgender health care, which recognizes that gender transition is an individualized process that is not the same for all transgender people. The current statutory requirement of a court order also creates a barrier for those transgender people who can’t afford to hire a lawyer and who don’t have enough knowledge to navigate the legal system on their own. Boulder County supports modernizing the statute to prevent discrimination and harassment and support dignity and individual rights. An updated law would require only a letter from a physician to change a person’s gender marker on their birth certificate. Many other states and federal agencies have already changed their laws and policies to expedite gender marker changes on birth certificates and other records.

SUPPORT POLICIES THAT PROMOTE END-OF-LIFE DECISION-MAKING TOOLS AND SUPPORT THE ABILITY TO DIE WITH DIGNITY

End-of-life decision making, and communicating those decisions to families, physicians, and others, is becoming an increasingly important issue for Colorado’s seniors. Living wills, advanced directives, do not resuscitate orders, medical orders for scope of treatment, and other tools guided by medical standards provide aging adults with some ability to influence health care decisions at the end of their lives. These tools can provide comfort and dignity while assisting family members and physicians in understanding the desires of patients. Boulder County supports efforts to expand the use and availability of end-of-life decision-making tools as well as other approaches to support dying with dignity.

SUPPORT REQUIREMENT OF MANDATORY LABELING OF USE OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS IN FOOD PRODUCTS

Since the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) first approved the use of genetically altered material in food in 1992, the growing of genetically-modified (GMO) crops – primarily soybean, corn and cotton – has increased significantly. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 94% of 2012’s U.S. soybean crop and 88% of 2012’s U.S. corn crop was genetically modified; 60 – 70% of all conventionally processed food in the United States contains GMO ingredients, reports the Center for Food Safety. Despite widespread agriculture and food industry acceptance of GMOs, significant public concern exists in respect to the human health and environmental risks associated with the genetic engineering of crops. Consumers have the right to know what is in their food in order to make informed choices about whether or not to purchase good with GMO ingredients. However, FDA’s voluntary GMO food labeling program has proven inadequate in this regard, with minimal industry participation. In response, bills requiring the mandatory labeling of GMO foods have been introduced in the U.S. Congress and 16 states, including Colorado as recently as 2014. Boulder County supports state and/or federal legislation to require the mandatory labeling of food and food products derived from or containing genetically modified organisms prior to sale to consumers.

SUPPORT EFFORTS TO ENSURE THAT COLORADO PEACE OFFICERS RECEIVE BEST PRACTICE TRAINING AND TREATMENT FOR POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

Boulder County strongly supports the efforts of Colorado’s sheriffs, police chiefs, and public safety managers to bring best practice treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), both pre- and post-event, to Colorado’s peace officers. The Boulder County Sheriff’s Office is seen as a leader in implementation of PTSD treatment best practice, and works directly with other public safety agencies to expand these practices statewide. Boulder County will support legislative, funding, operational, and administrative efforts to ensure that all Colorado peace officers have access to best practice PTSD training and treatment, and urges policy makers to look to the 2014 interim study completed by the Peace Officer PTSD Task Force for guidance. Boulder County believes that successful implementation of this goal will be achieved through funding and programmatic decisions, and that no changes are needed to current workers’ compensation statute or rule.

seven

HOUSING

To secure and maintain safe and affordable housing, and to protect homeowners and residents in Boulder County.

EXTEND THE LOW INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDIT BEYOND 2016

HB 14-1017 authorized the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA) to competitively award \$5 million in state Low Income Housing Tax Credits in both 2015 and 2016. The bill also created the opportunity for CHFA to allocate tax credits above the \$5 million annual cap to support affordable housing developments in counties impacted by natural disasters. In its first year of existence, the state LIHTC program has supported the development of nearly 2,000 affordable housing units, directed nearly \$170 million in new private sector investment towards meeting Colorado's affordable housing shortfall, and generated nearly \$600 million in economic impact across the state. Boulder County strongly supports extension of this tax credit beyond 2016.

**HIGH
PRIORITY**

INCREASE FUNDING TO THE COLORADO HOUSING TRUST FUND TO PROVIDE AN ON-GOING, SUSTAINABLE SOURCE OF STATE FUNDING FOR PERMANENTLY AFFORDABLE HOUSING

According to Housing Colorado, the supply gap for housing for low income households with less than \$20,000 in annual income exceeds 110,000 homes. At current rates of affordable rental housing construction of 823 homes per year in Colorado, it will take well over 100 years to eliminate this gap. In 2014 the General Assembly passed legislation which, among other things, repurposed the Colorado Home Investment Fund to create the state's first housing trust fund. The new Housing Trust Fund expanded the number of sources that can be used to support affordable housing production, including federal grants, and made housing production funds available to any qualified applicant, including for-profit developers, all in an effort to increase private investments and equity. However, the investment in the Housing Trust Fund is limited. Additional funds are necessary to increase the pace and scale of affordable housing development and address the affordable housing crisis facing Colorado.

INCREASE STATE SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A DIVERSE STOCK OF PERMANENTLY AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND SUPPORT POLICIES THAT INCREASE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Boulder County supports state and local policy efforts that increase the development of and access to a diverse range of affordable, market-rate or below market-rate rental housing, including apartments, mobile homes, single-resident occupancy units, family homes, and more. Approaches include housing voucher programs, incentives such as property tax breaks for landlords that provide reduced rents to low-income renters, and incentives for the development of homeless transitional housing. Boulder County supports policies that increase the development of affordable and market-rate housing and the repurposing of buildings to accommodate affordable and market-rate housing.

CREATE AND FUND A PILOT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE INDIVIDUALS IN THE CRIMINAL AND JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEMS WITH HOUSING AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES

According to the Justice Department, about 1.2 million people in state, local, and federal custody reported some kind of mental health problem. National reports indicate mental health problems among 64% of inmates in local jails, 56% of state prison inmates, and 45% in the federal prison system. The Colorado Legislative Committee on Mental Illness in the Criminal Justice System has explored options for addressing this issue. Boulder County has proposed the establishment of integrated local collaboratives to develop an evidence-based, tenant-based supportive housing and comprehensive case management program to reduce recidivism of individuals with mental illness in the criminal and juvenile justice systems. Similar to other successful cross-jurisdictional collaborative programs such as the 1451 Collaborative Management Program, a program such as this would create a comprehensive approach to stabilizing individuals as they are released from incarceration.

SUPPORT STATE EFFORTS TO END CHRONIC, YOUTH, FAMILY, AND VETERANS HOMELESSNESS THROUGH COMMUNITY-BASED, COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMS

The 2015 Metro Denver Homeless Initiative point in time survey identified more than 6, 130 homeless individuals in the metro Denver area, with 650 in Boulder County. While this survey captures a snapshot of those living on the streets at one point, it does not capture homeless individuals who may be sleeping in their car, staying with friends or family, or “doubling up” with other families. While homeless services have been provided at the local level, including Boulder County, for the past several decades, planning, coordinating, and leveraging resources must be supported and advanced at the state level as well. Boulder County supports state-level efforts to address homelessness that are supportive of and provide funding for locally-implemented, community-based programs and services. State policies and funding should advance a comprehensive approach to services, care and data coordination that address the complex issues associated with homelessness, including behavioral health and mental health care, basic needs services, and supportive services.

eight

HUMAN SERVICES GOVERNANCE, SYSTEM EFFICIENCY, AND INTEGRATION

To support legislative, administrative, and funding decisions that increase efficiencies, decrease costs, and promote innovation in the delivery of human services programming.

SUPPORT ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR COUNTY ADMINISTRATION OF HUMAN SERVICES

The County Administration appropriation has historically been severely underfunded. The state workload study conducted in 2007 concluded that County Administration was underfunded 33% at that time, and remarkably, the total dollars in the appropriations for state fiscal year 2015-16 remained short of the necessary amount identified back in 2007 – prior to significant stressors on the benefits system. Since the study was conducted, programs such as SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and Medicaid have seen dramatic increases in caseload due to the economic downturn, the Medicaid expansion has increased eligibility, the ACA has mandated health coverage, and several technical system changes have been implemented. Since this is the first contact that clients typically have with human services agencies, and County Administration provide the first touchpoint to identify the best, most efficient and effective services to meet a client’s needs, it is critical that adequate, ongoing funding be provided to counties for this program.

SUPPORT AN UPDATE TO THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION WORKLOAD STUDY

The last County Administration workload study was completed in 2007 – before the worldwide economic downturn which resulted in historic increases in individuals and families needing public benefits, the implementation of the Colorado Benefits Management System, and the Affordable Care Act Medicaid expansion. In addition, counties are now accountable to performance benchmarks, including timeliness of processing for public benefits applications. The combination of these major system changes and influences has resulted in a lack of accurate data to reflect the actual cost of administering public benefits in Colorado. Understanding the costs of administering public benefits within the context of current policies and systems, including the cost drivers across the state, will help identify opportunities for system improvement and provide a better understanding of how County Administration can be sustainably funded in future years. Boulder County requests an updated workload study for the County Administration program.

**BUDGET
PRIORITY**

SUPPORT EFFORTS TO INTEGRATE DATA ACROSS DELIVERY SYSTEMS TO IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The state, counties, and their partners utilize multiple data systems to track clients receiving various services and benefits. In most cases, these systems are not integrated and cannot “talk” to one another; in others, confidentiality requirements restrict the sharing of data, even amongst practitioners. The ability to share data, while maintaining confidentiality, across such systems such as public health, human services, mental health, school districts, workforce, criminal justice, aging and others will greatly

improve these agencies' ability to integrate services and provide the most impactful interventions to clients. Furthermore, the ability to share data promotes the "any door is the right door" approach to service delivery, easing the client experience and maximizing program efficiency.

SUPPORT TECHNICAL SYSTEMS THAT FULLY INTEGRATE SCREENING, ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION, AND ENROLLMENT FOR ALL HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICE BENEFITS

At present, food assistance and health benefits are administered separately in Colorado: The Department of Human Services administers food assistance while the Department of Health Care Policy and Finance administers medical benefits. Clients are best served when the entirety of their needs can be met in one place, and yet currently there are many systems and portals through which clients access benefits. Boulder County supports efforts to integrate health and human services program outreach, enrollment, and management while supporting an "any door is the right door" approach. For example, Colorado PEAK (Program Eligibility and Application Kit) is an online, single entry point system which screens and enrolls families and individuals for health, nutrition, and financial self-sufficiency benefits. Furthermore, Boulder County opposes efforts that bifurcate benefits access systems, as multiple systems are administratively duplicative and ultimately make it more difficult for clients to access the benefits they need.

SUPPORT LOCAL ADMINISTRATION AND DELIVERY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICE PROGRAMS, INCLUDING ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION AND ENROLLMENT

Health and human services programs are best delivered through locally relevant approaches and programs that leverage partnerships to meet the needs of individuals within the community. The human services networks at the county level are comprised of public/private partnerships that include non-profit agencies, schools, human services agencies, housing agencies, law enforcement, and more. Boulder County opposes efforts to shift to a state-administered system for delivering health and human service programming or a system which diverts clients seeking benefits to a private vendor that has little or no familiarity with local services. Data shows that counties perform better in terms of timely enrollment and are better equipped to answer clients' questions about services available in their community. Experience shows that community based safety-net strategies are the best approach to addressing human services needs.

ENSURE THE STATEWIDE STRATEGIC ACTION GROUP ON AGING INTEGRATES THE PLANNING AND WORK OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AGING PARTNERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STATEWIDE PLAN ON AGING

In 2015, Colorado became the first state to approve the development of a comprehensive, long-term strategy on aging. To accomplish the task, a planning group was established to explore the aging issues Colorado faces and create a plan to help the state navigate these challenges. The planning group will examine the impact of the aging demographic shift on the economy, workforce, businesses, and market-based products and services; state and local revenues, budgets, and fiscal policies; Medicaid and other safety-net programs and the collateral impact on other non-related state programs; family caregiving and public and private options for long-term care, services, and support; federal entitlement reforms; and transportation services and infrastructure. In order for this cross-systems approach to be successful, the effort must leverage existing local and regional planning to address the aging population.

nine

EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RECOVERY

To ensure the safety of our community during emergencies, prepare for and mitigate prior to disasters, and facilitate timely and full recovery following disasters.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT ASSISTS COUNTIES IN REDUCING WILDFIRE RISK AND THE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION EFFORTS

**BUDGET
PRIORITY**

In addition to land use and land management tools available to counties for reducing wildfire risk on public and private lands, counties work closely with the community on wildfire prevention, mitigation, and suppression. One such example is Boulder County's highly recognized Wildfire Partners program, which provides wildfire mitigation assessments, technical assistance, and financial incentives to private homeowners interested in reducing their wildfire risk. Through the Department of Natural Resources Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant program, Boulder County has assisted nearly 750 homeowners in reducing their wildfire risk. Other examples include private resident prescribed burn permit programs and law enforcement programs that assist with the coordination of wildfire suppression, including multi-jurisdictional cost-sharing agreements. Boulder County supports legislation providing counties and law enforcement partners with the tools necessary to reduce wildfire risk in the wildland urban interface, ensure public safety, and improve collaboration during wildfire disasters.

SUPPORT LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE EFFORTS TO CREATE A SHORT-TERM HOUSING ASSISTANCE FUND FOR VICTIMS OF A DISASTER

Coloradans impacted by natural and other disasters often need emergency, short-term housing. Hundreds of Boulder County residents faced this situation in the aftermath of both the 2010 Fourmile Canyon Fire and the 2013 Front Range Flood. Boulder County supports the creation of a state-administered emergency housing assistance fund to support Coloradans who find themselves displaced as a result of a disaster. Such a fund would provide additional financial resources to help victims who do not qualify for federal assistance or need additional assistance to cover their specific need, should the disaster be declared a federal emergency as was the case with the Front Range Flood, or be a primary source of support for state declared disasters, such as the Fourmile Canyon Fire. Critical to the success of such a fund is flexible access, achieved through a streamlined application and reporting process that is not burdensome to residents or those state and local agencies working to serve them.

SUPPORT STATE FUNDING MECHANISMS THAT ENABLE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO COMPLETE RECOVERY PROJECTS IN A TIMELY MANNER AND THAT PROTECT LOCAL GOVERNMENT SOLVENCY

Two years into 2013 flood recovery, much has been achieved. With strong and responsive support from the state, local governments have made progress on addressing the wide and varying needs of their communities, many of which dealt with basic necessities such as transportation, housing, and public health and safety. However, much work remains, as does the uncertainty of how local governments will

continue to deal with flood recovery cash flow and funding issues. Boulder County asks for continued examination of funding needs and consideration of additional funding and funding mechanisms as needed in order to allow communities to fully recover while also ensuring that local governments remain financially solvent.

ten

ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

To advance climate action, reduce the use of fossil fuels, promote clean energy, and reduce waste.

Energy and Climate Change

SUPPORT LEGISLATION, REGULATORY EFFORTS, AND OTHER POLICY APPROACHES TO ADVANCE AN AGGRESSIVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY AGENDA FOR COLORADO

**HIGH
PRIORITY**

Colorado has made significant progress over the past decade in building a policy and administrative framework to support energy efficiency and renewable energy. In 2004, Colorado voters became the first in the nation to pass a renewable portfolio standard at the ballot box; the Renewable Energy Standard (RES) has since been increased by the General Assembly in 2007 and 2010, and most recently, in 2013 through SB 252, which established strong renewable energy goals for all of Colorado's utilities. Governor Bill Ritter, elected in 2006, made the New Energy Economy the centerpiece of his administration's efforts to capitalize on the economic and environmental benefits of energy efficiency and renewable energy, championing legislative and administrative efforts that focused on renewable sources such as wind and solar and efficiency efforts such as weatherization. Supporting the efficiency push, the General Assembly adopted HB 1037 in 2007, which established electricity and natural gas savings goals for the state's investor-owned utilities. Governor John Hickenlooper, elected in 2010 and re-elected in 2014, has expanded incentives and other strategies for supporting high-efficiency vehicles while also increasing RES requirements for rural electric cooperatives and municipal utilities. During this time, Boulder County adopted its own Sustainable Energy Plan, which identifies a host of energy-specific strategies to reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions while supporting the local economy; created programming to reduce energy consumption and increase energy efficiency throughout the county's commercial and residential sectors; invested in renewable energy and energy efficiency upgrades throughout the county's facilities; and adopted an Environmental Sustainability Plan, which outlines a number of energy and climate strategies for implementation by the county and its key stakeholders. Boulder County supports continued pursuit of an aggressive energy efficiency and renewable energy agenda for Colorado, which could include such strategies as expanding economic incentives for renewable energy and solar thermal energy; providing authority for Colorado local governments to implement community choice aggregation; supporting further construction of alternative-fuel vehicle fueling infrastructure; increasing state support of and engagement with weatherization efforts; and developing an energy efficiency performance standard for all utilities, amongst others.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION, REGULATORY EFFORTS, AND OTHER POLICY APPROACHES TO MITIGATE CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is leaving an indelible mark on Colorado and dramatically impacting many of the services that local governments provide to Colorado residents. Recognizing that local governments have a critical role to play in mitigating the impacts of climate change, Boulder County initiated, in conjunction with its cities and towns, the development of the Boulder County Sustainable Energy Plan (SEP), which outlines a series of strategies that the county's local governments will take to address climate change. The SEP also calls out broader policy approaches, such as Colorado's participation in a multi-state cap-and-trade program as an important strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and encouraging federal action to address climate change. Regional or even state-level cap-and-trade programs can provide a framework and model for developing a national program. In addition, the SEP calls for the employment of carbon offsets as a tool to create a revenue stream for investments in energy efficiency. Colorado should play a leadership role in advancing these and other strategies to address state-level action in support of its own Climate Action Plan and to contribute to development of a national solution, while also supporting the activities and contributions of its local governments.

OPPOSE STATE LEGISLATION AND OTHER EFFORTS TO UNDERMINE COLORADO'S IMPLEMENTATION OF THE U.S. EPA CLEAN POWER PLAN

Under authority of the Clean Air Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan (CPP) is designed to reduce the emissions of existing U.S. coal-fired power plants, our nation's largest single source of carbon dioxide emissions contributing to global climate change. The CPP establishes unique carbon dioxide emissions reduction goals for each state to reach an overall national reduction goal of 32% below 2005 levels by 2030. The CPP gives states broad flexibility to engage with public utility commissions, industry, the general public, and other stakeholders to design their own cost-effective and customized plans, based on local needs and opportunities, to meet the requirement. Colorado's CPP reduction requirement is 28%, slightly below the national average. Clean energy advocacy groups estimate that Colorado is on track to meet three-fourths of the CPP goal through efforts the state has already taken, including legislative vehicles such as HB 10-1365, the Clean Air-Clean Jobs Act, and SB 13-252, which further expanded the state's renewable energy standard.

Boulder County has actively supported these and numerous other efforts to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and mitigate climate change. Boulder County will also engage with and support efforts to ensure that Colorado meets its CPP requirements. Approaches that would enable emissions trading across the state and region and those that value energy efficiency as the lowest-cost emissions reduction strategy should be seriously considered. To that end, Boulder County will oppose any attempts to delay implementation of the CPP in Colorado, either by the General Assembly, as it proposed to do in SB 15-258, which was approved by the State Senate but defeated in the House of Representatives, or others, including the various lawsuits against the CPP that have been joined by the Colorado Attorney General.

SUPPORT CLIMATE CHANGE PREPAREDNESS AND RESILIENCY EFFORTS

The anticipated impacts of climate change will affect Colorado through increased heat, more extreme weather events and, likely, reduced winter snowpack and other changes to precipitation patterns. Boulder County supports the development and implementation of plans that can help the state and its communities prepare for and become more resilient to the impacts of climate change, and the development of improved strategies through ongoing planning efforts. The county will look to the Colorado Climate Network's Local Resilience Project report and preparedness planning efforts to be conducted by the state and others for legislative and other policy guidance in support of this goal.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE COLORADO COUNTIES WITH PERMISSIVE AUTHORITY TO IMPLEMENT A CARBON TAX

Carbon dioxide is the primary greenhouse gas that is contributing to climate change. Human activities, including the burning of fossil fuels, release large amounts of carbon to the atmosphere, increasing carbon dioxide concentrations and exacerbating the greenhouse effect. A carbon tax is a fee assessed on the carbon content of a fossil fuel. Because the current pricing structures of gasoline, electricity, and fuels in general include none of the long-term costs associated with climate change, or even the well-quantified near-term health costs of burning fossil fuels, there is little incentive to develop and implement measures to reduce carbon emissions. A properly designed carbon tax will incentivize decision-makers at all levels to reduce carbon emissions through conservation, substitution, and innovation strategies, for example through energy efficiency, renewable energy, and conservation-based behavioral change. In Colorado, home rule cities have authority to present a carbon tax to their citizens, which the city of Boulder did with success in 2006. Boulder County supports state legislation to provide the same permissive authority to Colorado’s statutory cities, towns, and counties.

SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF A STATEWIDE GREEN BUILDING CODE AND RELATED POLICIES AND INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE THE ENERGY PERFORMANCE OF NEW AND EXISTING BUILDINGS IN COLORADO

Residential and commercial buildings account for more than 42% of the electricity and natural gas consumed in Colorado. Research suggests that, through the use of such tools as green building codes, energy consumption disclosure requirements, and demand-side management programming, energy use in Colorado’s buildings could be effectively reduced by more than 30%. Within this context, Boulder County supports efforts that will lead to improvements in the energy performance of Colorado’s building stock. Such efforts could include a statewide “green building” code, to require new and existing commercial and residential buildings to improve their energy performance over time and ultimately meet green building standards such as the U.S. Department of Energy’s Zero Energy Ready Home Program standard or the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) commercial building standards; building energy use disclosure requirements for raising awareness in building owners, managers, and tenants about the impacts and costs of a building’s energy consumption; and the provision of demand-side incentives for all building owners, including those in jurisdictions with green building codes or other energy performance requirements.

SUPPORT ONGOING AND SUSTAINABLE FUNDING FOR THE WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Low-income and vulnerable households spend a disproportionately large percentage of their income on energy utility bills. The federal Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), created nearly forty years ago, is designed to address this problem, by improving the energy efficiency of homes to reduce home energy consumption and lower energy utility bills, helping to offset the high cost of housing. Colorado’s weatherization assistance programs serve about 3,000 homes statewide each year, with annual energy bill savings of \$200 – 500 per home. Closer to home, Longs Peak Energy Conservation, Boulder County’s weatherization program that serves the residents of Boulder, Larimer, Broomfield, and Gilpin counties, weatherizes about 300 homes per year, with average annual energy bill savings of \$238. Because of the significant infrastructure associated with weatherization programs, including equipment and trained, experienced work crews, swings in WAP funding can dramatically affect the ability of programs to remain viable, as programs must stop and start based on allocations. With Colorado’s WAP programs funded through federal allocations and state severance tax dollars, both of which can be volatile sources of revenue, stability in annual WAP appropriations can be difficult to achieve. Boulder County supports long-term sustainable funding for Colorado’s state weatherization program.

SUPPORT ENABLING LEGISLATION TO ALLOW COUNTIES AND STATUTORY CITIES AND TOWNS TO ENACT RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL ENERGY CONSERVATION REGULATIONS

Both the Boulder County Sustainable Energy Plan and the Boulder County Environmental Sustainability Plan identify Residential Energy Conservation Ordinances (RECOs) and Commercial Energy Conservation Ordinances (CECOs) as effective policy tools for improving the energy efficiency and performance of the existing residential and commercial building stock. These tools can be designed a number of ways, but in general they require existing buildings to implement specific energy efficiency and performance measures if the property fails to meet a minimum energy performance standard. Currently, only Colorado home rule cities have statutory authorization to enact RECOs and CECOs. Boulder County supports enabling legislation to provide Colorado counties and statutory cities and towns this same ability.

OPPOSE STATE LEGISLATIVE, REGULATORY, OR ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION TO WEAKEN COLORADO'S NET METERING POLICIES

Colorado's net metering policies ensure that electricity customers who own renewable energy facilities, primarily rooftop solar systems, receive a fair credit on their utility bills for the clean power that they contribute to the electric grid. In place in 43 states, net metering is a critical state-level policy for supporting renewable energy at the consumer, versus utility, level. Colorado's multi-pronged policy and programmatic approach in support of renewable energy, including solar, has seen the state rise to ninth in the nation in installed solar capacity, enough to power over 50,000 homes. In addition to supporting the widespread use of distributed generation – small generation units typically located at customers' homes and businesses – net metering helps foster the voluntary reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, contributes to the reliability of the electricity supply and distribution systems, supports the residential and small-commercial renewable energy industry, and helps to more quickly replace coal-fired power plants with cleaner sources of energy. For these reasons and in alignment with the adopted goals of its Sustainable Energy Plan and Environmental Sustainability Plan, Boulder County will oppose any legislative, regulatory, or administrative action to weaken Colorado's net metering policies, and encourages the application of these policies to all Colorado utilities.

Recycling and Waste Management

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO INCREASE THE LEVEL OF RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING IN COLORADO AND PROVIDE COLORADO'S RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES WITH INCREASED ACCESS TO WASTE REDUCTION SERVICES

Boulder County has long been a leader in implementing progressive policies and programs to increase recycling, composting, and other waste reduction services for county residents and businesses. In 2010, the county adopted a Zero Waste Action Plan, identifying steps county residents, businesses, and governments can take to reach an ultimate goal of zero waste by 2025. It is estimated that Boulder County's existing diversion rate is just under 40% through reuse, recycling, and composting programs (based on 2013 data). Boulder County supports the expansion of existing state funding and programmatic efforts to provide Colorado's residents and businesses with increased access to waste reduction services, as these programs complement and support Boulder County's zero waste goals.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION AND OTHER MEANS FOR PROMOTING AND ADVANCING PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP

Product stewardship involves taking responsibility for the lifecycle of a product, engaging manufacturers, retailers, and consumers in strategies that maximize economic benefits, reduce environmental impacts, and take the end-of-life product disposal management burden out of the hands of local government. Boulder County supports legislation, regulation, or other means for accomplishing these goals. Product stewardship can achieve corporate and consumer responsibility through regulation at the manufacturing level and attribution of consumer responsibility, for example disposal fees and advance disposal fees, national bottle law and bottle deposits, computer take-back, recycling leftover paint, and control of toxics, particularly in electronics.

SUPPORT RESOURCE CONSERVATION AS PROVIDING GREATER ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS THAN WASTE-TO-ENERGY

As communities seek alternatives to fossil fuels, technologies are emerging that produce energy from discarded materials. Boulder County recognizes that, with adequate air-quality and other controls, such waste-to-energy (WTE) technologies can be useful when no cost-competitive markets are available for discarded materials such as waste plastic, tires, and carpet. However, the county discourages incentives for WTE projects that incorporate paper or compostable materials (excepting anaerobically digested biosolids) into an energy-producing system when options exist for these materials to be composted or recycled.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE STATUTORY COUNTIES, CITIES, AND TOWNS WITH AUTHORITY TO IMPLEMENT PAY-AS-YOU-THROW PRICING STRUCTURES

Research has demonstrated that rate incentives in solid waste have strong and measurable effects on waste disposal behavior. Studies show that adoption of market-based pricing strategies similar to those used in the energy and water sectors, amongst others, will result in increases in recycling and composting rates and reductions in the overall amount of materials sent to landfill. “Pay-as-you-throw” (PAYT) pricing, as it is often described, accomplishes this by charging the consumers the same amount for every unit of trash that they dispose of – in other words, volume discounts are prohibited. With aggressive recycling and zero waste goals, Boulder County would like statutory authority commensurate with Colorado’s home rule cities to require local waste haulers to utilize PAYT pricing structures to incentivize recycling and composting.

eleven

LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION

To improve upon the built environment and quality of life for Coloradans by promoting well-planned communities.

Land Use

SUPPORT CHANGES TO STATE STATUTE GOVERNING THE USE OF TAX-INCREMENT FINANCING TO ENSURE FAITHFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF HB 15-1348, THE URBAN REDEVELOPMENT FAIRNESS ACT

**HIGH
PRIORITY**

Tax-increment financing (TIF) is a powerful tool created by state statute and used by Colorado municipalities to revitalize blighted urban lands. In order to facilitate these redevelopment projects, municipalities, through urban renewal authorities (URAs), use property tax revenues diverted from the counties, schools, junior colleges, and special districts that provide services to the project to repay the municipal bonds needed to finance the redevelopment. The use of TIF has exploded in recent years, resulting in an ever-increasing revenue diversion from property tax entities directly to URAs. In the 2014 and 2015 legislative sessions, Boulder County and numerous other partners invested significant time and effort in passing legislation that creates incentives for URAs to address the revenue losses experienced by the taxing entities impacted by the use of TIF. While the 2014 effort was lost when Governor Hickenlooper vetoed HB 14-1375, the 2015 effort was successful, and HB 15-1348, the Urban Redevelopment Fairness Act, will become law on January 1, 2016. When he signed HB 1348 into law, Governor Hickenlooper created a working group to address some technical concerns that various stakeholders had with the bill. Over the interim, Boulder County, Colorado Counties, Inc., and others have participated in processes to craft solutions to the concerns identified by the governor. Boulder County will support these changes only if they result in the faithful implementation of HB 15-1348.

SUPPORT LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS TO PROMOTE WILDFIRE MITIGATION IN THE WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE

Recent wildfires in Boulder County and across the state have reinforced the need for collaborative landowner participation in the planning and implementation of mitigation efforts in the wildland urban interface. In particular, Boulder County supports legislative efforts that promote forest health and restoration projects that improve overall forest conditions; forestry projects that reduce fuels for fire and create fuel breaks and safe escape routes; increased private homeowner awareness and participation in the creation and maintenance of defensible space and a safe home ignition zone; and increased use of ignition-resistant building materials in residential construction, renovations, decks, and additions in the wildland urban interface. One such example is Boulder County's highly recognized Wildfire Partners program, which provides wildfire mitigation assessments, technical assistance, and financial incentives to private homeowners interested in reducing their wildfire risk. Through the Department of Natural Resources Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant program, Boulder County has assisted nearly 750 homeowners in reducing their wildfire risk.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO AFFIRM THE AUTHORITY OF COLORADO COUNTIES TO DIRECTLY REGULATE PERSONAL AND CAREGIVER MARIJUANA GROW FACILITIES THAT DO NOT REQUIRE A STATE OR LOCAL LICENSE

Under current state law, Coloradans can cultivate up to six marijuana plants for personal consumption at their place of residence, while caregivers, those who grow plants on behalf of medical patients, can cultivate up to 99 plants. This allowance has resulted in a number of larger personal and caregiver grow operations being established in residential neighborhoods in unincorporated Boulder County. Like home rule municipalities, Colorado’s counties use local zoning and land use regulations to regulate allowed uses in residential areas to address health and safety issues. Large personal and caregiver grows, however, bring significant and serious health and safety impacts to residential neighborhoods, especially any that may be located in forested areas prone to wildfire. State statutes are vague as to whether the authority that home rule cities like Denver have used to limit the number of plants that can be grown in a residential home (12 total per unit, regardless of the number of people living in the unit) can also be used by counties. Boulder County supports legislation to clarify that Colorado’s counties have authority to directly regulate personal and caregiver marijuana grow facilities, including limiting plant counts, for health and safety reasons.

OPPOSE LEGISLATION TO EXPAND THE USE OF EMINENT DOMAIN BY PRIVATE PIPELINE COMPANIES

In both 2013 and 2014 Boulder County opposed failed legislation proposed to “correct” a 2012 Colorado Supreme Court decision that rescinded eminent domain authority that private pipeline companies had been utilizing for decades. In short, the court ruled that this authority was being exercised through a misinterpretation of state statute. Boulder County will continue to oppose legislative efforts to overturn the Supreme Court decision, as the county believes that negotiation between the private pipeline companies and private property owners and public entities will guarantee the best results to balance pipeline siting needs with private and public interests.

Transportation

SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE, MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS AND ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

Boulder County supports transportation planning and funding with a strong multi-modal focus and investment in a regional transportation system that reduces reliance on fossil fuels. Examples include timely completion of a transit system that connects the entire Denver metropolitan region (such as FasTracks, approved by voters in 2004), development of multi-modal infrastructure through safe bikeways and walkways, managed HOV/transit lanes, transportation demand management, and other transit services and alternative modes programs that provide people with modal choice.

SUPPORT INCREASED FUNDING FOR TRANSPORTATION, INCLUDING FUNDING FOR TRANSIT

Boulder County supports legislative approaches, such as converting the state’s Hospital Provider Fee into an enterprise fund, and other strategies to generate revenue for funding of transportation improvements in Colorado, as long as equitable and sufficient funds are committed to multi-modal and alternative modes of transportation, and the funding generated does not supplant current CDOT funding. Priorities for new funding should include completion of the U.S. 36 bus rapid transit project, completion of FasTracks and build-out of transit improvements in the Northwest Corridor, and local and regional multi-modal and alternative modes infrastructure, including final mile connections. Boulder County believes that any new road capacity funding should be invested in managed lanes that place prioritization on maximizing the travel of people (not just vehicles), and that managed lane projects

must provide equitable travel choices in order to ensure that lower-income residents benefit from the public investment in a toll road (low-income residents are more likely to use public transit and carpools, and much less likely to be regular users of toll roads). Boulder County continues to support the SB 09-108 FASTER funding mechanism, as well as funding sources that are tied to transportation use, including vehicle miles traveled-based approaches. Lastly, Colorado's federal and state transportation funds are distributed through a Metropolitan Planning Organization prioritization process administered by the Denver Regional Council of Governments; Boulder County strongly supports preservation of this process.

SUPPORT STATE FUNDING FOR THE SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

**BUDGET
PRIORITY**

The federal government-initiated Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program was a successful and popular program in Colorado. With typical annual allocations of approximately \$2.5 million, the Colorado Department of Transportation worked with over 500 schools to make capital and programmatic improvements to improve safe access to schools, ranging from small towns like Ridgeway and Brush, to the largest cities like Denver and Colorado Springs. As a result, the number of children walking and biking to school has increased by as much as 31%. SRTS helps keep kids safe, improves congestion near schools, and gives students opportunities to become more comfortable with a variety of travel options at an early age. Nonetheless, with the 2012 federal transportation bill, MAP-21, federal funding for SRTS was phased out. With HB 14-1301, the General Assembly took the first step to preserving SRTS in Colorado, and the charge has been taken up by the state's Transportation Commission, which has agreed to fund CDOT's SRTS program at \$2.5 million per year for the next four years. Boulder County supports this effort, which will help ensure safe transportation for our most vulnerable population, children.

SUPPORT LEGISLATIVE AND OTHER EFFORTS TO LINK LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND INVESTMENT

Consistency and coordination between land use planning and transportation investment will result in decreases in greenhouse gas emissions, fossil fuel consumption, and transportation infrastructure costs while optimizing the use of existing infrastructure and amenities that require land use planning and transportation investment. Several states, including Tennessee, Pennsylvania, and Washington, have recently formed agencies to support such coordination. For example, the Tennessee Department of Transportation's Office of Community Transportation, formed administratively in May 2013, already is demonstrating positive outcomes in maximization of funding, addition of bike lanes and similar infrastructure to projects where they might have been overlooked, and supporting state-local collaboration.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION AND OTHER TOOLS TO INCREASE ELECTRIC AND FUEL-EFFICIENT VEHICLE USAGE, INCLUDING INVESTMENT IN RELATED TECHNOLOGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Expanding the use of electric and fuel-efficient vehicles and the necessary infrastructure to support them will play an important role in achieving greenhouse gas emissions reductions from the transportation sector, advancing Colorado's statewide carbon reduction goals and reducing dependence on foreign oil. Policy approaches that support the use of electric and fuel-efficient vehicles include: Investment in electric and plug-in hybrid electric vehicle charging infrastructure; fee-bate and other incentives for the purchase of electric and highly fuel-efficient vehicles; and vehicle-to-grid technology, which enables electric and hybrid-electric vehicles to "plug" into the electric grid and provide power during the many hours that those vehicles sit idle.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO AFFIRM COUNTY AUTHORITY TO IMPOSE A TRANSPORTATION MAINTENANCE FEE

Colorado home rule cities currently have the authority to impose a Transportation Maintenance Fee to fund the ongoing maintenance of local roads. Counties, however, do not possess the authority to impose such a fee. Boulder County supports legislation that would enable county governments to collect a Transportation Maintenance Fee to provide revenue for the maintenance of county roads. This is especially necessary in instances where specific users cause increased deterioration of county roads, for example through the use of local roads for the movement of heavy drilling equipment or the hauling of water to drilling sites.

twelve

OIL AND GAS

To support expanded ability for Colorado local governments to regulate the oil and gas industry in concert with community needs and desires.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION AND OTHER POLICY APPROACHES TO ADDRESS THE AIR AND WATER QUALITY IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH OIL AND GAS OPERATIONS

While much attention is being paid to the increasing number of concerns raised in respect to hydraulic fracturing, “fracking” is just one contributor to impacts that oil and gas industry activity has on air and water quality. Impacts from fracking and other operations include air toxin and volatile organic compound emissions close to population centers; dust resulting from the use of silicates; and surface water and shallow groundwater contamination from abandoned or improperly lined ponds that hold brine and fracking water. Boulder County supports legislative and other efforts to address these and other impacts using an approach that appropriately balances public health and regulation.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO AFFIRM AND EXPAND THE AUTHORITY OF COLORADO COUNTIES AND MUNICIPALITIES TO REGULATE LAND USE ACTIVITIES OF THE OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY, AND WHICH CLARIFIES ANY STATE REGULATION IN THIS ARENA AS MINIMUM STANDARDS THAT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS CAN STRENGTHEN AS NECESSARY TO ADDRESS LOCAL CONCERNS AND CONDITIONS

**HIGH
PRIORITY**

State statutes and case law have established that local governments in Colorado have express authority and jurisdiction to regulate land uses, including the land use aspects of oil and gas operations. Statutes such as the county zoning enabling statutes from 1939 and the Local Government Land Use Control Enabling Act of 1974 provide local governments with broad authority to regulate and plan for the use of land, and authorize Colorado counties to provide for the physical development of the unincorporated territories of the state. Similarly, case law such as *Board of County Commissioners, La Plata County, Colorado v. Bowen/Edwards Associates, Inc., (1992)* has established that this authority is a legally protected interest that may not be infringed upon by any other governmental entity absent an express preemption right that is granted by the General Assembly. Equally as important, the Oil and Gas Conservation Act (OGCA), from which arises the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission’s (COGCC) authority, does not expressly preempt county land use regulatory authority. Subsequent General Assembly-adopted amendments to the OGCA have been clear to state that the legislature had no intention to expressly or implicitly preempt county land use regulatory authority. Boulder County supports this well-established regime, which clearly affirms that the COGCC has not been delegated land use regulatory authority over oil and gas operations. Rather, through the OGCA, COGCC authority is directed to: Regulate the technical aspects of oil and gas to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the general public; protect the health, safety, and welfare of any person at an oil or gas well; and prevent and mitigate adverse environmental impacts on air, water, soil, and other biological resources, including the environment and wildlife.

Boulder County has been closely following the work of the Governor’s Task Force on State and Local Regulation of Oil and Gas Operations, created in September 2014 by Executive Order B-2014-005. Boulder County urges the Task Force to forward state legislation that achieves the following:

- Clarifies that Colorado counties and municipalities have express authority to regulate the land use activities of the oil and gas industry, including authority to impose setbacks greater than those required by the COGCC, and other measures such as noise or visual impact requirements designed to mitigate land use or surface impacts of oil and gas development;
- Permits Colorado counties and municipalities to require oil and gas operators to first attempt to resolve any operational conflict claims at the local jurisdictional level before appealing to district court, and requires operators to demonstrate burden of proof that no possible construction of the local regulations may be harmonized with the state regulatory scheme;
- Permits Colorado counties and municipalities to take such actions as limiting oil and gas operations to certain zoning districts or prohibiting certain oil and gas activities from within their jurisdictional boundaries on health and safety grounds or standard land use criteria such as unreasonable impacts to nearby uses or other resources on the surface; and
- Makes clear that any COGCC regulation in the area of land use are minimum standards above which local governments can modify or strengthen as necessary to address local concerns and conditions.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO AMEND THE OIL AND GAS CONSERVATION ACT TO REFORM VARIOUS OPERATING PRACTICES OF THE COLORADO OIL AND GAS CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The OGCA mandates the COGCC, when regulating the oil and gas industry, to “Foster the responsible, balanced development, production, and utilization of the natural resources of oil and gas in the state of Colorado in a manner consistent with protection of public health, safety, and welfare, including protection of the environment and wildlife resources;” and “Protect the public and private interests against waste in the production and utilization of oil and gas.” (C.R.S 34-60-102) Changing the COGCC mandate as spelled out in the OGCA and reforming various practices of the COGCC to increase both collaboration with Colorado’s local governments and accountability to the people of Colorado will help ensure that goals of the oil and gas industry are appropriately balanced with the values of Coloradans. In pursuit of COGCC reform, Boulder County will support legislation that achieves the following:

- Amends C.R.S 34-60-102 to ensure that surface impacts are adequately protected even if this means oil and gas operators cannot recover 100 percent of the resource or if 100 percent recovery must be phased in order to minimize surface impacts;
- Amends C.R.S. 34-60-103 to include compliance with government regulation as an exception from the definition of waste, as proposed in House Bill 13-1269;
- Amends C.R.S. 34-60-106 to better balance the “cost effectiveness and technical feasibility” test in respect to the other goals of the OGCA;
- Changes the definition of “operational conflict” as interpreted by the courts so that operational conflict arises only when application of local or state regulations causes a permanent reduction in the quantity of all oil and gas ultimately recoverable from a pool under proper and prudent operation;
- Increases the people of Colorado’s trust in the work of the COGCC by reducing conflicts of interest for COGCC members, as proposed in House Bill 13-1269; and
- Increases COGCC oversight over the fracking process.

SUPPORT INCREASING COLORADO’S SEVERANCE TAXES AND PURSUING OTHER APPROACHES TO INCREASE STATE REVENUES RECEIVED FROM THE OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Severance taxes are taxes that states levy on minerals “severed,” or removed, from the ground. Every major energy-producing state, including Colorado, levies severance taxes to make up for the permanent loss of nonrenewable natural resources and to mitigate the impacts of energy and mineral development on local communities. By almost every measure – annual collections, annual collections as a percentage of total state tax collections, actual tax rates – Colorado’s severance tax regime lags those of other energy-producing states. In combination, Colorado’s low severance tax rate, stripper well exemption, and severance tax credit of 87.5% of ad valorem taxes both reduces the revenues available to the state and its local governments to address the impacts of oil and gas development and provides no opportunity to leverage this burgeoning – and ultimately finite – industry for the benefit of Colorado’s people and environment. Boulder County supports increasing Colorado’s severance tax rates and pursuing other policy approaches – for example, eliminating industry tax credits – to increase state tax revenues collected from oil and gas development, end taxpayer subsidization of oil and gas producers, ensure better mitigation of the industry’s near-and long-term impacts, and provide broader benefit to Colorado for the extraction of nonrenewable energy resources.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO AFFIRM AND EXPAND THE AUTHORITY OF COLORADO COUNTIES AND MUNICIPALITIES TO IMPOSE IMPACT AND OTHER FEES ON OIL AND GAS ACTIVITIES

Local governments face numerous challenges in regulating the oil and gas industry in concert with the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission. Recent lawsuits against a number of Colorado local governments – including Boulder County communities Lafayette and Longmont – from both industry and the state of Colorado itself are prime examples of the need for General Assembly affirmation and expansion of county and municipal authority to regulate oil and gas activities, as necessary, to address local concerns and conditions. Local ability to impose an impact fee to address transportation infrastructure needs and impacts or a well inspection fee to ensure compliance with local regulations are but two examples where Colorado local governments need General Assembly assistance. Boulder County supports General Assembly action to both affirm and expand the authority of Colorado counties and municipalities to impose impact and other fees on oil and gas activities as part of their local regulatory efforts to ensure that oil and gas development within their jurisdictions is compatible with the needs and desires of their communities

thirteen

PUBLIC LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES

To promote land conservation and preservation and outdoor opportunities for Coloradans.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION AND FUNDING THAT PROMOTES FOREST RESTORATION AND WILDFIRE MITIGATION, INCLUDING THE USE OF PRESCRIBED FIRE, IN THE WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE

Wildfire mitigation measures modify the forest environment surrounding a structure that is at risk from destruction by a wildfire, while forest health efforts improve the conditions of Colorado's forests to restore ecosystems to a healthier state. Together, these efforts have the benefit of minimizing the destructive effects of wildfire on Colorado's communities, land, and environment. Activities such as developing and maintaining defensible space and a safe home ignition zone around homes, forest thinning, and prescribed fire are common and proven tools for reducing wildfire risk. Local governments have access to an array of tools to reduce the risk of wildfire by considering the amount and type of development that occurs in areas at risk for wildfire and establishing requirements for wildfire mitigation measures for any development within these areas. Boulder County supports the expansion of wildfire mitigation and forest restoration efforts across Colorado's forests.

OPPOSE LEGISLATION AND OTHER EFFORTS TO TRANSFER COLORADO'S FEDERAL PUBLIC LANDS TO STATE OWNERSHIP

Boulder County supports the protection of Colorado's federal public lands including national parks, wildlife refuges, forests, historic sites and wilderness areas, and will oppose legislation that attempts to authorize state control of these lands. Public lands provide economic, environmental, ecological, recreational, and health benefits to the state and local communities. Numerous polls have consistently shown that Coloradans appreciate and support the opportunities these benefits provide, and that a large majority of Coloradans believe that federal public lands should continue to be owned and managed by the federal government. Research consistently shows that public lands serve as economic drivers for local communities by increasing tourism, income and employment opportunities, and land and home values. Colorado's outdoor recreation economy alone contributes more than \$10 billion annually to the state's economy, supports over 100,000 jobs across Colorado, and generates nearly \$500 million in annual state tax revenue. Additionally, western states, including Colorado, woefully lack the resources to manage the millions of acres of federal public lands located within their borders. The transfer of these lands to state control raises legitimate concerns that the land will be sold to private interests or the natural resources exploited to pay for firefighting and other management costs. Finally, existing case law and constitutional interpretation strongly suggest that states have no constitutional authority to force federal land transfers. Theories based on state enabling acts do not circumvent the fact that the U.S. Constitution's Property Clause and Supremacy Clause make state legislation intending to force federal land transfers unconstitutional. For all these reasons, Boulder County will strongly oppose state legislation or other efforts to transfer Colorado's federal public lands to state ownership.

INCREASE STATE CAPACITY AND RESOURCES TO RESPOND TO THE EMERALD ASH BORER INFESTATION

In September 2013 the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) was discovered within the city of Boulder. The presence marked the western-most infestation of the federally-quarantined EAB, and the first in Colorado. Since that time, Boulder County has been working with a coalition of local, state, and federal agencies to respond to the EAB. Colorado is the 22nd state to identify and confirm an EAB infestation. But Colorado is an island when it comes to information and support: There are no infested nearby states with which to collaborate, and county residents have little awareness of the threat from EAB. In Colorado, impacts of this pest will be felt across all ages and socioeconomic demographics, and management of the pest will require significant financial resources from institutions and individuals trying to save trees or remove and replace them. For example, Boulder County has detected nearly 1,000 ash trees on county-owned property, and an inventory of the 1,200 miles of county rights-of-way within the habitat range for ash remains to be completed. Within the City of Boulder alone there are approximately 98,000 ash trees, and an estimated 1.45 million ash trees within the Denver metro area. Consequently, local governments, the State Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Agriculture will be required to work collaboratively to address the impacts and slow the spread of this pest. For example, in November 2013 Boulder County worked closely with state and federal agencies in establishing the existing EAB quarantine area. However, the state has limited resources to assist local governments in managing the infestation.

PROMOTE BROAD ACCESS TO PUBLIC LANDS TO DEVELOP A STRONG STEWARDSHIP AND CONSERVATION ETHIC AMONG A DIVERSE POPULATION OF COLORADANS

Colorado's natural environment depends upon the next generation of residents and visitors to sustain and promote the health of local, state, and federal public lands. Boulder County supports programs and efforts that foster stewardship and long-term support for our public lands, such as youth corps programs, programs to get children outdoors, and efforts to link urban areas to parks and open spaces. Boulder County supports initiatives aimed at establishing an appreciation for our public lands among all of the diverse populations of Coloradans.

SUPPORT EXPANDED LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY AUTHORITY FOR COLORADO AND ITS LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO MANAGE PESTICIDES TO MEET PUBLIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH GOALS

The Colorado Department of Agriculture is granted authority to regulate the dissemination and use of pesticides in Colorado through both the Pesticide Act (CPA) and the Pesticide Applicators' Act (CPAA). These acts consider the regulation of pesticides a matter of statewide concern, and while the 2015 sunset review and re-adoption of the CPAA made significant improvements to the Act, both it and the CPA provide little authority to local governments to regulate pesticide use to address community concerns. Boulder County has adopted a number of policies to guide the use of pesticides on county open space and other properties and to move toward a strategic and integrated pest management practice to protect the environment, neighbors, and users of those lands. These policies speak to the important role that integrated pest management can play in support of sustainable agricultural practices and protecting pollinator health. Boulder County supports legislative and regulatory changes to allow Colorado's local governments to better collaborate with the state and federal governments in managing pesticides to meet local public and environmental health goals.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT PROMOTES THE EFFICIENT UTILIZATION AND CONSERVATION OF WATER

Colorado's lakes, rivers and streams, and water delivery systems provide clean drinking water for our cities and towns and are critical to supporting the state economy, fish and wildlife populations, and our way of life. Within this context, state and local government water policy must result in water supply and management decisions that are environmentally and economically sustainable in order to conserve,

protect, and restore Colorado's rivers. Boulder County staff participated directly in the two-year long effort to draft Colorado's Water Plan, the state's first comprehensive water plan. The inclusion of conservation, land use, and watershed health metrics in the plan will move the state toward sustainable water resource management practices and create public policy incentives to achieve greater conservation and more efficient use of Colorado's water supply. State legislation and other policy approaches will be important tools in this effort.

SUPPORT THE PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF TOOLS THAT THE STATE, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND OTHERS MAY USE TO CONSERVE AND PROTECT COLORADO'S LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Colorado's environment defines its quality of life and economy. Recognizing this, the state and its local government partners have developed an array of public policy and programmatic initiatives designed to preserve and protect Colorado's land and natural resources; examples include the Conservation Easement Tax Credit and Great Outdoors Colorado. Boulder County will continue to utilize these tools to protect our local environment and will advocate for their continuation and expansion to ensure the preservation of the environment and quality of life that Coloradans have grown to expect.

SUPPORT RESOLUTION TO CONFLICTS BETWEEN THE FEDERAL ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT AND STATE WATER LAW

Currently, the federal Endangered Species Act prohibits certain modifications to endangered species habitat. Designed to protect and enhance the quality of habitat for federally-listed species, these restrictions describe the specific kinds of activities allowable within habitat areas. Meanwhile, state water law establishes maintenance standards for ditches and stream corridors, including the removal of vegetation for enabling stream flows. At times, these state maintenance standards come into conflict with the federal ESA restrictions. Boulder County supports bringing resolution to these conflicting requirements.

SUPPORT THE USE OF DRONES FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLIC SAFETY NEEDS AND FOR THE PURPOSES OF MANAGING PUBLIC LANDS

Boulder County supports the ability to expand the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV or drones) specifically for immediate public safety and natural resource management purposes. The Boulder County Sheriff's Office has initiated a pilot program to utilize a UAV to assist with immediate public safety needs such as search and rescue calls, wildfires, and mapping and photographing crime scenes. UAVs are also now commonly used by federal and state land managers to assess the health and conditions of land and wildlife, providing landscape-scale information not previously available. UAV research can lead to higher quality data and lower costs, and drones can capture data in even the most challenging terrain with minimal intrusion to an ecosystem. And farmers and agricultural land managers are utilizing UAVs to strategically manage for weeds and to monitor the water and nutritional needs of crops. Acknowledging the important and primary regulatory role that the federal government plays in respect to UAVs, Boulder County supports their use in narrow circumstances.

SUPPORT STATE EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH AND COMPLETE REGIONAL TRAIL SYSTEMS THAT LINK COMMUNITIES AND CONNECT VISITORS TO IMPORTANT LANDMARKS AND AMENITIES

In 2015 the Colorado Governor's Office initiated an effort through the Department of Natural Resources to work in conjunction with Great Outdoors Colorado, the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, the Colorado Department of Transportation, local governments, non-profits, and foundations to identify funding, ownership, access, and other obstacles to the completion of regional trails throughout Colorado. In Boulder County, regional trails link communities and local and federal public lands to provide transportation and access to outdoor amenities and active outdoor recreation. In many areas

gaps exist in regional trails due to funding constraints, varying land ownership, access issues, and other obstacles. Examples include the St. Vrain Trail which would connect Lyons and Longmont, and trail connections from Boulder to Lyons; both trail corridors include incomplete segments requiring additional funding, land and easement acquisition, and other resources for completion. Boulder County supports statewide efforts to assist with the completion of regional trail systems that have been identified and supported by communities through local planning processes.

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STATE FISCAL AND GOVERNANCE

To improve the fiscal position of the state to sustain services to Coloradans today and into the future.

SUPPORT CONVERSION OF THE HOSPITAL PROVIDER FEE TO AN ENTERPRISE FUND

Colorado is one of 38 states that utilize some form of a Hospital Provider Fee (HPF) as a revenue source to both increase access to health care for their most vulnerable residents and reduce the financial burden that hospitals face when providing uncompensated care.

Paid by Colorado's hospitals, the HPF generates over \$600 million in fee revenue every year, revenue that is matched 1:1 by the federal government. This revenue is used to support health care coverage for 382,000 Coloradans, primarily through Medicaid and the Child Health Plan Plus program, and improve the fiscal sustainability of Colorado hospitals through reimbursements for uncompensated care. With the HPF, these goals are achieved without impact to the state General Fund.

**HIGH
PRIORITY**

**BUDGET
PRIORITY**

The fundamental policy goal of converting the HPF into an enterprise fund is removal of the fee from the state's Taxpayer Bill of Rights revenue cap. The TABOR revenue cap limits the growth of state government tax revenue to a formula that takes into account population growth and inflation; tax revenue collected above the cap must be returned to taxpayers through refunds.

Paid entirely by Colorado's hospitals, the hospital provider fee is not taxpayer revenue. Despite this fact, it counts against the TABOR revenue cap. According to the Governor's Office of State Planning and Budget, it is only because of the HPF that the state will exceed the TABOR revenue cap in the 2015-2016 state fiscal year. In other words, state revenue growth is not exceeding the population growth and inflation formula enshrined in TABOR. But TABOR taxpayer refunds will begin in 2016, and are projected to grow to \$6 billion by 2024.

Conversion of the HPF to enterprise fund status is allowed by TABOR, and more consistent with the purpose of TABOR: to protect state taxpayer revenues from state government excess. In fact, the HPF could have been made an enterprise in 2009 when it was created, but the state legislature failed to do so. The time has come to correct that mistake.

Boulder County strongly supports the conversion of the Hospital Provider Fee to an enterprise fund, to remove the HPF from the state TABOR cap, as a strategy for bringing additional revenue to state government and increasing the ability of the governor and General Assembly to budget for the many pressing needs facing Colorado.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO PLACE THE SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL FACILITIES DISTRICT TAX REAUTHORIZATION PROPOSAL AS ADOPTED BY THE SCFD BOARD OF DIRECTORS BEFORE DISTRICT VOTERS IN 2016

**HIGH
PRIORITY**

The Science and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD) is a nationally-acclaimed model for funding scientific and cultural organizations in the seven-county Denver metro region. The one-tenth of one cent sales tax that funds the SCFD, initially approved by region voters in 1988 and subsequently reauthorized in 1994 and 2004, is set to expire in 2016. This sales tax provides vital funding to nearly 300 scientific and cultural organizations throughout the Denver metro area, which collectively welcome nearly 15 million visitors annually, generate more than \$1.85 billion a year in economic activity, and support more than 10,000 jobs. In 2015, \$1.85 million in SCFD funding will flow to the more than 80 Tier II and Tier III organizations that provide cultural programs within Boulder County, all of which contribute to the unique cultural richness of our community. These organizations served 726,375 Boulder County residents in 2014, and provided free programming and cultural experiences to over 100 Boulder County schools. Beginning in 2013, the SCFD board of directors conducted a robust public engagement process, during which it adopted significant funding and programming enhancements to improve the effectiveness of the SCFD tax and fairly balance the needs of all Tier I, II, and III organizations. In addition, with direct stakeholder assistance, the board developed and then adopted a tax reauthorization proposal. Boulder County strongly supports this proposal, and urges the Colorado General Assembly to place it before metro region voters in 2016.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE THE LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF THE COLORADO PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION THAT DOES NOT PLACE COSTLY BURDENS ON EMPLOYER MEMBERS OR UNDULY COMPROMISE THE BENEFITS OF EMPLOYEE MEMBERS

With the 2012 sale of Memorial Health System by the City of Colorado Springs to the University of Colorado, Boulder County became the largest member of the Public Employees' Retirement Association (PERA) Local Government Division. The PERA benefits package is an important contributor to Boulder County's ability to compete in the marketplace for high-quality employees. Recognizing the need to ensure the long-term sustainability of PERA, the county has supported legislative efforts to reduce the Association's accrued liability and move it closer to full funding, including such bills as SB 06-235 and SB 10-001. More recently, the county has supported legislation that requires study of PERA's benefit offerings and other aspects of the PERA system, to inform the five-year solvency study required by SB 001 that will be completed in 2016. If further legislative reforms are necessary to stabilize PERA's funds for the long-term, Boulder County will support such reforms only if they do not place costly burdens on local government employer members or unduly compromise the benefits received by local government employees.

SUPPORT EFFORTS TO BRING LONG-TERM FISCAL STABILITY TO THE STATE OF COLORADO

The state and its counties are intertwined in many different, significant ways when it comes to the delivery of services to Colorado residents. As a result, Boulder County will continue to engage with any substantive effort to evaluate and address the ongoing structural and budgetary challenges that negatively impact the fiscal stability and sustainability of the State of Colorado, and by extension, its local government partners. Such an effort should: Examine the "Gordian Knot" created by the conflicting priorities of the Gallagher Amendment, Amendment 23, and the Taxpayer Bill of Rights; protect existing sources of revenue such as the Business Personal Property Tax unless replaced with a commensurate revenue source; collaborate with Congress to solve the problem of collecting taxes on internet retail sales; and explore creative solutions such as local government revenue sharing, service taxes, and repeal or modification of the three-percent TABOR reserve requirement.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO RE-ESTABLISH THE RIGHTS OF COLORADO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO PROVIDE BROADBAND TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES

Boulder County stands behind the principle of local control and the ability of local government to determine the services and amenities it will provide to its residents, without state intervention. This includes the provision of low-cost, high-speed broadband telecommunications services. However, state law is a barrier in pursuit of this goal. Signed into law in 2005, SB 152 preempts local governments from providing telecommunication services, without a vote of the people. In the case of Longmont, the city completed a 17-mile fiber network shortly after SB 05-152 became law. As a result of the bill, the city was forced to keep the network “dark” until a November 2011 vote allowed the city to move forward with its plans. And more and more communities are taking the Longmont route: In 2015 alone, 43 Colorado counties, cities, and towns asked voters for authority to invest or partner in broadband infrastructure, and the voters said yes on every occasion. Boulder County believes that SB 152 is an unnecessary and misguided barrier, and will support legislative efforts to re-establish the right of local governments to provide broadband telecommunication services, from small and simple free Wi-Fi hotspots in public buildings to large and complex city-wide fiber networks.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REQUIRE THE PERIODIC ASSESSMENT OF STATE TAX BENEFITS

State tax benefits, in the form of credits and exemptions, are a tool widely used by state governments to promote economic development, transform markets, reduce poverty, and accomplish other public goals. The State of Colorado offers a variety of tax credits and exemptions, from the Enterprise Zone Program to promote business development in economically distressed areas to tax credits that incentivize job growth in such industries as aerospace and biotechnology. With the use of public tax dollars comes the responsibility of the state and its elected and appointed representatives to fully understand the economic benefit related to a tax credit or exemption and whether a tax benefit is accomplishing the purpose for which it was created. Periodic review and assessment of Colorado’s tax benefits will ensure that these benefits are creating public value and allow for the most effective and strategic use of this tool.

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