



Legislative Policy Statement

2024



EAGLE COUNTY



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OVERVIEW

Eagle County's Legislative Policy Statement identifies the county's key policy principles on legislative issues. The county utilizes the Legislative Policy Statement as a guiding document when reviewing and analyzing specific bills that impact Eagle County interests. The Legislative Policy Statement is necessarily broad and by no means all-inclusive, and should be used as a reference when considering legislation that may impact Eagle County.

Additionally, as a member of the legislative advocacy groups Counties & Commissioners Acting Together (CCAT), Colorado Counties Inc. (CCI), and Colorado Communities for Climate Action (CC4CA), the BoCC helped to formulate the 2024 policy agendas of these three organizations (attached as Exhibits 1, 2, and 3). Eagle County is generally aligned with these agendas, and these positions are reflected in this document.

Eagle County may take official county positions on a limited number of significant bills. The BoCC, other elected officials, and county staff will coordinate a review of legislation through the County Manager's Office. With the County Attorney's Office, the County Manager's Office will provide the BoCC with a brief summary of the substance of the legislation and, if warranted, a proposed official county position that is consistent with the principles of the Legislative Policy Statement. The BoCC will consider the official county position, and, if adopted, the county will communicate the position to legislators, and the public. Official county positions are not automatically assumed on bills simply because they are congruent with the policy statements contained in this document. Eagle County welcomes the opportunity to discuss the county's legislative priorities and positions.



EAGLE COUNTY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES - 2024 to 2025

With a mission of “Creating a better Eagle County for all,” the Eagle County’s Strategic Priorities for 2024 to 2025 provides a roadmap for the BoCC, County Manager’s Office, and county departments as the county allocates resources, gauges progress, and ensures the delivery of quality services to constituents.

The strategic plan identifies underlying principles on which decisions are based and includes goals and objectives to be achieved through a variety of efforts. Beyond excellence in service delivery, the BoCC understands opportunities for residents to achieve their fullest potential are not always fairly accessible to all (e.g. housing, child care, health care, and transportation). While many of these needs are called out below, the BoCC will lend support to actions that will further fulfill our mission beyond the priorities highlighted below.

Eagle County’s decisions on legislation will either:

- **Support proposals that are consistent with and work toward the achievement of the County’s mission and strategic priorities; or**
- **Oppose legislation that runs counter to or prevents the achievement of the County’s mission and strategic priorities.**

The Strategic Priorities for 2024 to 2025 is split into three areas of focus with goals that specifically address actions that need to be taken to help implement the county’s mission statement. Those strategic priority areas include:

Support Our Workforce

- Implement innovative solutions to encourage affordable housing
- Support accessible, quality early childhood care and education programming
- Support mental health and access to affordable health care

Create a Resilient Economy

- Promote sustainable economic growth that benefits all residents
- Increase transportation options by supporting ECO transition and more county airport flights serving locals
- Update plans and resource development options for Gypsum I-70 Interchange

Protect Our Mountain Ecosystem

- Safeguard our natural resources, wildlife habitat, and water resources
- Assure innovative sustainability practices at the county’s landfill
- Update the county’s building code to reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions
- Reduce impacts of wildfires and drought

The 2024 Legislative Policy Statement has been aligned with these three priorities and then includes additional areas of concern and focus for the county.

EAGLE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2024-2025



SUPPORT OUR WORKFORCE

HOUSING

Local resident housing — to include workforce, aging, and disadvantaged members of the Eagle County community — has risen as a top priority for much of our community. Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, Eagle County has seen a net neutral migration of residents moving out of the county and location-neutral employees moving into second homes, who will now make Eagle County their primary residence. This shift is having a severe impact on the housing supply for local residents, where jobs are remaining unfilled much longer than a healthy economy may sustain and vacancy rates of suitable housing are at unhealthy lows.

The housing inventory in Eagle County has seen new units coming to market over the last few years, which is better than previous decades' inventory increases. However, the short term rental market has pulled many more units out of the year-round rental pool. Units formerly occupied by a local resident are now vacant except for a few weeks per year for short-term rental or occupied by a location-neutral employee. The loss of these units in the year-round rental pool is putting extreme pressure on alternative housing solutions to include overcrowding, longer in-commuting, substandard housing, long rental wait lists, rising rental rates, and more.

Eagle County's real estate market has seen a sharp increase in housing prices, which increases the affordable housing gap in which homebuyers struggle. Another concerning trend is the number of cash buyers coming into the market with offers above list price and a quick close, beating out local buyers handicapped by a loan process. Finally, the biggest impact to local buyers is the increase of lending institution's interest rates, making local purchases more out of reach.

The spectrum of housing needs has never been greater in Eagle County. From homeless stability, rental unit choice, for-sale inventory, and aging population housing needs, Eagle County is facing severe housing shortages that are impacting the nature of our community and infrastructure. These needs and shortages are the primary cited cause of mental health and stress by residents.

Eagle County:

Supports legislation that creates more opportunities for attainable and affordable housing, defined at the community level as a Rural Resort market, including securing state funding for new development.

Supports legislative efforts that provide additional protections, funding to purchase, and needed technical assistance for residents to preserve its own existing manufactured and mobile home park housing.

Supports legislation that will increase the supply of affordable housing in multifamily buildings by limiting construction defect litigation.

Supports legislation that continues the Private Activity Bond program which can be used to issue revenue bonds for the purpose of financing qualified residential rental projects or single-family mortgage loans to low- and moderate-income persons and families.

Supports legislation that provides mechanisms for regulation, taxation, and restriction of the short-term rental market.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

The first five years are crucial to a child's lifelong success. Eagle County recognizes that early childhood education builds the foundation for a healthy and productive future – not just for children, but for parents, families and local businesses too. The Eagle County early childhood care and education system is experiencing high levels of turnover resulting in a shortage of early childhood professionals, including teachers, assistant teachers, and teacher aides. This creates an environment in which it is challenging to meet the growing need for care for young children in Eagle County.

Early childhood education is an investment that offers short- and long-term benefits for our kids, families, local businesses, and community. Supporting early childhood care and education options can help our local businesses attract and retain a workforce that is present, prepared, and productive. Finally, programs in our communities will help hard-working Eagle County families stay in Eagle County, rather than moving to seek more options elsewhere.

Approximately 3,600 children ages five and younger call Eagle County home. They and their families are served by 46 licensed child care centers and 347 early childhood educators. There are only 41 licensed child care options in Eagle County to serve the estimated 3,605 children from birth thru age five living in our communities. Capacity for infant care is even more scarce than the limited options for 3 to 5 year-olds.

Eagle County:

Supports legislation that promotes access to affordable, quality early childhood education opportunities.

Supports legislation that expands the early childhood professional workforce, including scholarship programs, concurrent enrollment, apprenticeships, and streamlining and improving the credentialing system/process.

Supports increased state funding for the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) and increases to income eligibility to be able to serve more working families.

Supports county-level management of CCCAP to meet the needs of families and childcare providers, including fully reimbursing providers at their private rates and streamlining administrative processes for providers, families, and county staff.

Supports quality initiatives for family, friends, and neighbor care.

Supports additional investments in early childhood mental health and development through expansion of home visitation program funding and mental health screenings and consultations (for families and child care providers).

Supports closing the gap between the desired capacity (number of children a program may wish to serve) and the staffed capacity (number of children the provider is staffed to serve). Currently, the gap between these capacities is just under 500.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Behavioral health continues to be a leading community health priority in Eagle County as identified by the recent community health assessment and Public Health Improvement Plan (2024-2028). Improved social connectedness and access to mental health services, including preventative and intervention services. These reports also highlight significant concerns about inequities of mental wellbeing among the general population compared to community groups that are often marginalized (e.g. Latinx, LGBTQ+, Older Adults, Youth & People Living with Disabilities). Specific data points concerning the loneliness reported by our Latinx (40.3%) and LGBTQ+ (49.4%) residents compared to all Eagle County residents (32.4%) highlight some of these inequities. Additionally, the US Surgeon General's 2023 Advisory: Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community highlights decades of research demonstrating that social connection, and its adverse social isolation, are significant predictors of lifespan and quality of health.

While much has been done to increase access to therapeutic services in Eagle County, further efforts are needed to improve access to preventative services that are culturally responsive and reflective of our community's diverse set of identities (e.g. home visitation and school-based prevention programs). Living in a rural community impacts the accessibility, affordability, and appropriateness of care for our community members. Ensuring equitable access to crisis services and treatment will remain critically important in 2024 while future years should see an intentional shift further upstream toward early intervention and prevention efforts to achieve prolonged social and emotional wellness.

Eagle County:

Supports legislation and policies that increase capacity and infrastructure in the behavioral health system to raise awareness about mental illness and suicide prevention.

Support funding for evidence-based programs that promoted maternal and family mental wellbeing (e.g. Universal Home Visitation programs such as Family Connects).

Supports funding for more mental health services, especially for more crisis beds, across the state.

Supports expanding the use of Medicaid and other federal dollars so communities can hire behavioral health professionals and provide behavioral health services.

Supports legislation to strengthen laws requiring insurance companies to provide care and coverage for mental health and substance use disorders.

Support mental health parity in insurance payments.

Supports funding for more mental health bed space at the state mental health facility in Pueblo and an increase in the number of mental health beds on the western slope.

Supports legislation and funding to address the service gaps for children, adults, and pregnant people needing behavioral health assessments, evaluations, and culturally competent treatment.

Supports funding of and public/private insurance payment toward a full continuum of behavioral health services, including prevention, screening, case management, transportation, tele-health, and crisis intervention.

Supports alignment and coordination between state agencies to simplify, streamline, and align mental health funding to reduce duplication and fragmentation and enhance ease of access.

Support funding and system enhancements that build and implement stronger prevention and early intervention access to support emotional wellness and resilience.

Supports policies and legislation that encourage integrated care models.

HEALTH CARE ACCESS AND COST

Eagle County promotes the availability of and access to quality, culturally appropriate, gender-affirming, and affordable health care, including preventative care. Access to care includes being able to gain entrance to and navigate the healthcare system. There are many barriers to accessing care in Eagle County including the lack of affordable, adequate health insurance plans, a lack of providers who accept public insurance such as Medicaid, and a growing rate of uninsured residents, which is reducing the capacity of the safety net systems. This is a growing concern as identified in the Public Health Improvement Plan. As a region, uninsured rates among Eagle County residents is approximately 16%. However, this is likely under-representing the true need. For example, among families in 2023 that accessed Family Connects services that are universally available to all families with a newborn, 27% of new mother's reported not having health insurance.

Eagle County:

Supports legislation that promotes quality equitable health care access and improves the affordability of care for all populations, particularly in rural and frontier communities.

Supports adequate funding of federally qualified health centers.

Supports a public option buy-in program that targets or results in reduction of cost and increase in efficiencies.

Supports reinsurance programs that provide a stop loss against large claims, and help to stabilize the market.

Supports insurance policies and co-ops that cover pre-existing conditions.

Supports transparency that enables health systems to be studied, costs to be analyzed and published, costs to be reduced, and efficiencies found.

Supports policy, system, and workforce enhancements that ensure care delivery interactions are socially and culturally appropriate so that all may feel dignified when seeking care.

Opposes legislation that may create barriers and fears in immigrant communities, which leads to potential decreases in accessing necessary services and resources.

CREATE A RESILIENT ECONOMY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND DIVERSIFICATION

A resort economy faces threats of fluctuation in reaction to the greater U.S. and worldwide economy as well as environmental and weather-related threats. About 60 percent of Eagle County's workforce is employed in the hospitality/tourism industry. Hospitality positions are classified in one of the lowest wage and benefit brackets by comparison to other industries. The county promotes a strong economic foundation and works with regional and state partners on economic strategies. Eagle County hosts the Northwest Colorado Small Business Development Center and supports the economic development efforts of the Vail Valley Partnership and Basalt Chamber of Commerce. Strategies that the county supports include workforce training, retraining and development, healthcare, tax policy, and expanding access to capital.

Eagle County:

Supports the development of a statewide economic development strategy that addresses issues of business climate and economic direction at the state level, but seeks local input and respects local control of economic development.

Supports appropriate state tax policies and incentive programs that include Eagle County or expand the definition of a rural economy, including enterprise zones, business incentive agreements, or other legislative initiatives that encourage business expansion, retention, and attraction through primary job creation, investment in capital equipment, and employer facility development.

Supports giving county commissioners authority to approve the use and amount of the county's portion of revenues designated in a proposed urban renewal plan for tax increment financing.

Supports workforce development and funding for higher education, relevant pre- and post-secondary vocational training, workforce retraining and STEM curriculum for K-12.

Supports efforts to reduce the high costs of healthcare and health insurance premiums that have a significant impact on the workforce and employers.

Supports economic development and resiliency programs that can lead to primary job growth and economic diversification.

Supports programs to grow small-scale business to broaden the economic base in resort tourist communities.

Supports efforts that respect county authority in fostering community sustainable beautification and enhancement.

Supports programs that further sustainable recreation while protecting the environment on which the economy depends.

Supports programs that help businesses and workers recover from the economic impacts of emergencies and disasters.

TRANSPORTATION

Eagle County believes that the safe, efficient, and environmentally sensitive movement of people and goods is vital to the continued economic success of the State of Colorado and to the maintenance of the high quality of life that Coloradans enjoy. In order to ensure these conditions, Colorado voters, the Colorado Legislature, the State of Colorado, and federal government must be willing to make significant investments to maintain and improve the state's transportation system, including roads, bridges, and multimodal systems. Recent state and federal support has provided for significant investment, easing some of the burden on municipal and county governments.

During the 2022 General Election, residents in seven of eight Eagle County communities supported the formation of the Eagle Valley Transportation Authority (EVTA). EVTA will allow regional collaboration and cost sharing, improve the transportation and transit systems in our county, and help address the needs of our workforce, employers, residents, and visitors. This authority is partly necessary due to insufficient funding and support from the state for rural public transit. The county will still work toward proper funding at the state level but will also work to ensure that state policy continues to support regional transportation authorities and regional cooperation.

Eagle County:

Supports long-term transportation funding at the state and federal levels in the form of new revenue streams to meet Colorado's growing transportation and transit needs.

Supports innovative transportation funding mechanisms such as a vehicle mMiles traveled (VMT) tax.

Supports financing tools, including, but not limited to, bonding, public-private partnerships, and the issuing of state tax credits as options for expediting transportation projects, when offset by new revenue streams or other rational funding mechanisms.

Supports extending transfers from the state general fund to transportation, and supports expanding the uses of these funds for maintenance, provided new funding for transportation construction projects is in place.

Supports initiatives and programs that provide multi-modal funding opportunities, including infrastructure for trails, transit, and passenger rail and additional operating support for public transit.

Supports legislation and programs that enable affordable, safe, and efficient public transportation in resort-based communities, including efforts to better integrate transportation and land use policies and encourage transit-oriented development.

Supports initiatives and programs that facilitate the implementation and integration of new transportation and transit delivery technologies to improve safety and increase mobility.

Support funding, programs, policies, and technical assistance for projects that restore habitat connectivity and safe passageways in areas impacted by transportation projects.

Supports equity in transportation and seeks fairness in mobility and accessibility to meet the needs of all community members. Supports equitable access opportunities and connection to travel routes.

Supports policies that promote alternative modes of transportation and alternative fuels to achieve a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Supports efforts to improve safety and reduce closures on I-70 during the winter months.

Supports new infrastructure, road improvement projects, and travel demand management programs as contemplated in the I-70 Mountain Corridor Record of Decision.

Supports the availability of federal Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) dollars for road and bridge needs.

Supports an equitable Highway Users Transportation Fund (HUTF) allocation formula and restrictions on the use of “off the top” diversions.

Supports legislation that ensures local shareback is provided for transportation projects from all transportation revenue sources.

Supports state funding for the Safe Routes to School program.

Supports the availability of higher quality and real time crash data on local and state roads to improve motor vehicle safety and reduce serious injuries and deaths from motor vehicle crashes.

Opposes financing mechanisms that are not offset through new revenue streams or other rational funding mechanisms.

Opposes efforts to pass along additional state roadway construction or maintenance responsibilities to local governments, without increased and adequate funds to meet these additional responsibilities.

Opposes funding mechanisms which eliminate or reduce local shareback for transportation projects.

BROADBAND

Access to broadband can provide remote workforce employment opportunities, help local businesses access markets well beyond our borders, enable residents access to quality and location-neutral health care services, and expand educational opportunities for students that will enrich the communities in which they live. All county residents should have access to the information and services that only broadband networks can provide. To both ensure that our local economy remains competitive and that none of our communities are left behind, we need to ensure Eagle County residents have equitable access to affordable, fast, and reliable broadband service.

Eagle County:

Supports policies that encourage equitable access to broadband services in both unserved and underserved areas.

Supports initiatives to improve the quality of publicly accessible and geographically specific broadband service availability information.

Supports the development of additional state and federal resources and other mechanisms to assist in expanding broadband services.

Supports the promotion of policies and programs to encourage owners of fiber infrastructure, both public and private, to make fiber transport assets accessible and affordable and incentivize open access and public-private partnerships for future infrastructure investments.

Supports the designation of broadband as a utility within the state and managed as a regulated service.

PROTECT OUR MOUNTAIN ECOSYSTEM

GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION AND CLIMATE PROTECTION

Eagle County is committed to climate protection and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions within county operations, in the community, and in the state. In 2016 Eagle County adopted the Eagle County Climate Action Plan, which identified strategies in the building, transportation, power supply, waste diversion, and education sectors to achieve a 25% GHG reduction by 2025 and 80% GHG reduction by 2050. In 2020 the Climate Action Plan was updated and included the goal to reduce 50% of GHG emissions by 2030. Eagle County also sets internal emissions targets beyond the Climate Action Plan; in 2020 Eagle County achieved its goal of a 50% GHG reduction by 2030, ten years ahead of schedule.

Eagle County:

Supports collaboration between state and federal government agencies and Colorado's local governments to advance local climate action.

Supports state and federal programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including adequate and ongoing funding of those programs.

Supports analyses, financial incentives, and enabling policies for the development and deployment of clean energy technologies including programs that support, develop, and train the workforce that will implement these technologies.

Supports locally and regionally driven and designed programs to support communities impacted by the clean energy transformation.

Supports prioritizing policies that put people at the center of decision-making, do not exacerbate or create disparities in growing the green economy, and enhance equitable outcomes for all.

Supports programs that help communities adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Supports public land management decisions and strategies that avoid, minimize, or mitigate the release of GHGs and sequester carbon.

WILDFIRE MITIGATION AND FOREST HEALTH

Four out of the five of Colorado's largest wildfires have occurred since 2018, and the damages from the Front Range's 2021 Marshall Fire are the costliest in state history at over \$2 billion. Wildfire mitigation and forest health efforts have the benefit of minimizing the devastating effects of wildfire in Colorado, a problem that is only growing larger due to the impacts of climate change. Wildfire mitigation measures modify the forest environment surrounding a structure that is at risk from destruction by a wildfire, and forest health efforts improve the conditions of Colorado's forests to restore ecosystems to a healthier state. Activities such as developing and maintaining defensible space and a safe home ignition zone around homes, "hardening" structures, 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.

Eagle County:

Supports funding for wildfire mitigation efforts through the reauthorization of the Department of Natural Resources' Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant Program.

Supports emphasizing and prioritizing wildfire risk education, risk reduction, mitigation, and preparedness activities and programs that support community fire adaptation.

Supports legislative efforts that promote forest health and restoration projects that improve overall forest conditions.

Supports forestry projects that reduce fuels for fire and create fuel breaks and safe access points to our communities.

Supports increased private homeowner awareness and action 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, roofs, and additions in the wildland urban interface.

Supports efforts to further develop partnerships with private entities, like insurance providers, realtors, and other stakeholder-based groups to create innovative approaches to motivate property owners to complete wildfire mitigation actions.

Supports efforts to seek alternative federal funding options for the United States Forest Service (USFS) for wildfire response and recovery. This would result in additional resources for much-underfunded forest management activities.

Supports the implementation of appropriate, scalable building codes and regulations at a local level designed to reduce wildfire risk to property and infrastructure.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND MOUNTAIN ECOSYSTEMS

Colorado's natural environment—including its forests, sagebrush ecosystem, wildlife, rivers, lakes, agricultural resources, and mountains—contributes to its high quality of life and robust economy. Recognizing this, the federal government, the state, and local government partners have developed an array of public policy and programmatic initiatives designed to preserve and protect Colorado's land, water, and natural resources. Examples include the Conservation Easement Tax Credit and Great Outdoors Colorado conservation and recreation initiatives, water quality and quantity protections, wildlife species and habitat protections and projects, conservation and management of public lands for environmental and recreational purposes, and more. Eagle County will continue to utilize these tools and explore innovative new approaches to protect our local environment and will advocate for their continuation and expansion to ensure the conservation of the environment, our recreation and tourism-based economy, and quality of life that our citizens and visitors have grown to expect.

Eagle County:

Supports introducing legislation in 2024 that will create a wetlands law specific to Colorado that will offer broad, lasting protections for waters no longer protected under the Waters of the United States.

Supports the development of tools the state and local governments may use to conserve and protect natural resources.

Supports efforts to protect floodplains and riparian areas from encroachment.

Supports efforts to provide equitable access to recreational opportunities, which helps drive the economy and public appreciation of natural resources, in a manner which does not degrade or adversely impact such resources.

Supports active management and/or restriction of recreational opportunities in sensitive environmental areas including important wildlife habitat and key portions of local watersheds.

Supports restoring local control to allow local governments to adopt any ordinance, rule, resolution, charter provision, or statute restricting the use and application of pesticides within the jurisdictional boundaries of such local government in exercising its local police powers to protect public health, safety, and the environment.

Supports resources for and coordination with local conservation districts and mechanisms to support the preservation of agricultural lands.

Supports legislative changes to remove barriers to restoring the Environmental Health of Natural Stream systems and wetlands (riparian habitat restoration and the original goals of SB270).

Opposes any state or federal legislation that would usurp local decision making related to development, and would preclude local government's ability to assess environmental impacts, mitigation, and capacity to support such development (water rights) (SB-213).

WILDLIFE

Wildlife are critical to Eagle County's local recreation economy as well as being important to our quality of life and an important issue to our community members. Eagle County continues to see declines in many local wildlife populations, a trend which has continued over the past several decades. Significant contributors include development of important habitat (especially winter range), habitat fragmentation (including due to transportation projects such as the I-70 corridor), and increasing disturbances from recreation on public lands. The county continues to work collaboratively with our local, state, and federal partners to find opportunities to stabilize and restore our native wildlife populations. Eagle County will advocate for legislation, regulations, and other policy approaches that support our wildlife goals while respecting local land use authority and private lands.

Eagle County:

Supports legislation intended for the recovery and preservation of threatened and endangered species, considering all potential impacts and subject to local government involvement and approval.

Supports efforts to improve hunting and fishing within the county, consistent with local authority, while minimizing and mitigating impacts from hunting and fishing on other affected areas and private property.

Supports efforts to protect aquatic and terrestrial wildlife populations from threats such as impacts to sensitive environments, wildlife habitat, and connectivity.

Supports forest health and wildfire mitigation efforts that most closely mimic natural ecological cycles and that accommodate important wildlife breeding, rearing, etc. timeframes.

Supports policies and management actions to stabilize local wildlife populations including big game, sage grouse, and other species that have been in decline over the past several decades within the county, as well as actions to increase habitat quality and connectivity, decrease recreational and other impacts, to create conditions for at least the partial recovery of these wildlife species.

WATER RESOURCES AND DROUGHT PREVENTION

Protecting the quality and quantity of Colorado's water is vital to its environment, economy, and the public's health. Eagle County will advocate for legislation, regulations, and other policy approaches that focus on the critical goals of protecting water quality and quantity and conserving water resources.

Eagle County:

Supports Colorado's doctrine of prior appropriation.

Supports water conservation and reuse efforts.

Supports the application of county powers related to water resources, including 1041 powers, to address local impacts on and protection of Colorado's water resources. 1041 powers must be broadly and liberally construed to ensure maximum flexibility and authority for counties.

Supports cooperative statewide water planning efforts that do not negatively impact the basin of origin communities and are supported by such communities.

Supports using the most current climate science and modeling available to produce water supply projections and plans.

Support wetlands protections and the development of mechanisms to allow mitigation to occur within the same watershed in instances where impacts to wetlands are unavoidable.

Supports usage of the Colorado River to be based on actual hydrology.

Supports state and regional drought planning and preparedness, with appropriate local engagement and decision-making.

Supports efforts to maintain and seek state primacy of federal water quality programs that adequately fund counties to ensure compliance with the Clean Water Act.

Supports legislation that promotes efficient water use and water conservation.

Supports sustainable water resource management practices, including linking land and water planning, public policy incentives and regulations to achieve greater conservation and more efficient use of Colorado's water supply.

Opposes any attempt to limit application of local 1041 powers.

Opposes attempts by the federal government to usurp the prior appropriation system when issuing federal permits.

ADDITIONAL POLICY PRINCIPLES

ENVIRONMENTAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH

FOOD SAFETY

Eagle County Public Health & Environment provides support and conducts inspections at our retail food establishments to ensure safe food for our residents and guests. One of the most significant factors affecting Eagle County's retail food community in 2024 is the worker shortage and the inability to retain trained staff in an unstable job environment with high housing costs. Staffing shortages in restaurants contributes to decreased attention to proper food safety practices. Administratively, license fees, which are set by the state legislature, have not been reviewed in more than five years. As the costs associated with providing inspections have gone up, these fees have not matched that increase, meaning Eagle County subsidizes the costs of inspection personnel.

Eagle County:

Encourages policies and funding structures that provide workforce support and allow restaurants to provide better benefits and wages while remaining financially viable.

Support increases to restaurant license fees and/or support the fee setting process being removed from the legislature and moved to the responsibility of the state Board of Health.

Opposes any state or federal action that would limit or remove local implementation of contracted consumer protection programs, such as retail food.

AIR QUALITY

Mountain and rural communities like Eagle County have historically enjoyed cleaner air than urban areas. Worsening wildfire seasons have caused widespread air pollution around the nation, contributing to elevated levels of particulate matter and ozone, both of which are hazardous to human health and the environment. Eagle County has experienced an increasing number of days with unhealthy air quality due to both localized and interstate wildfire smoke.

Radon gas, an indoor air pollutant that causes lung cancer, is present in elevated levels in over 40% of homes in Eagle County. Testing homes and businesses for radon is the first critical step in identifying if a problem exists, followed by mitigation if the building has high levels of radon.

Eagle County:

Supports state and federal legislative, regulatory, and other efforts to protect public and environmental health by reducing the emissions of harmful pollutants.

Supports funding for air monitoring resources and local program support at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, especially as it relates to wildfire smoke response.

Supports state and federal grants for radon testing, mitigation, and education.

WASTE DIVERSION AND RECYCLING

Eagle County set an objective through the Climate Action Plan to achieve a waste diversion goal of 30% by 2030. According to the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment, Colorado recycles only 16% of its waste, which is well below the national average of 32.1% calculated by the EPA. Residential curbside recycling is available in less than half of counties statewide and more than 65% of Coloradans never recycle or recycle only sporadically.

There are many innovative strategies which could help change behavior of residents in Eagle County and increase the diversion rate. Options include increased access to disposal options like national bottle law and bottle deposits, computer take-back, and recycling leftover paint, in addition to control of toxics found in electronics. The development of local end-markets for recycled materials would decrease transport costs of materials and GHG emissions.

Studies also show that adoption of market-based pricing strategies similar to those used in the energy and water sectors, 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. Finally, continued inquiry and investment in new technologies like waste-to-energy and brownfield redevelopment can further increase waste diversion.

Eagle County:

Supports 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.

Supports setting statewide recycling goals with interim targets, ensuring that all Coloradans have access to recycling services.

Supports legislation and other means for promoting and advancing product stewardship, producer responsibility, and local markets for recyclable materials.

Supports legislation to provide statutory counties with authority to implement pay-as-you-throw pricing structures.

Supports waste-to-energy and brownfield redevelopment incentives.

Supports legislation and innovative solutions to develop local sites for septage, grease, and other liquid waste disposal/treatment options.

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL EQUITY

Health and environmental equity encompasses the right to a safe, healthy, productive, sustainable, and resilient environment where people live, work, and play. Health and environmental equity addresses disproportionate risks often experienced by populations who experience disadvantages due to systemic inequities in policies, practices, and social norms and the inequitable distribution of resources that result in health disparities. According to the Centers for Disease Control, health disparities exist in Eagle County and are preventable differences in the impact of disease, injury, violence, or opportunities among populations. These disparities in Eagle County occur by populations of race, ethnicity, gender identity, education, income, disability, age, geographic location, and sexual orientation.

Eagle County:

Supports policies and legislation that are foundational to a healthy community, including health determinants such as affordable housing, a living wage, a healthy built environment, transit oriented development, affordable health care, and access to goods and services.

Supports policies and practices that are culturally relevant, inclusive, and promote equity among all Eagle County residents.

Supports funding for effective strategies that work to reduce physical, mental, and social health disparities and better understand the underlying causes of these disparities.

Supports initiatives and efforts to better define and support environmental justice efforts to promote health equity.

Supports legislative policies for allocation of the Clean Water State Revolving Funds to a grant and loans program for the repair and replacement of failing decentralized infrastructure for low to moderate income residents and underserved communities.

PUBLIC HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Colorado's local public health agencies and the state develop public health improvement plans as required by the Public Health Act of 2008 (SB 08-194) every five years. Eagle County Public Health & Environment engages with community residents to assess and set priorities for the public health system and guide us in addressing core public health services and functions to improve policy, system, and environmental conditions intended to mitigate health disparities.

Eagle County:

Supports funding of local public health systems and workforce. Adequate funding will provide accountability in the systems and assure positive public health outcomes through program development, implementation, and evaluation.

HEALTHY FAMILIES AND EARLY CHILDHOOD

Home Visitation

Eagle County Public Health & Environment provides evidence-based nurse home visitation across the perinatal spectrum as it is a proven method to provide needed medical expertise, health promotion for both parents and baby, and protection against adverse childhood experiences. We believe that providing holistic care for the family support system impacts the long term health outcomes of our communities. We also recognize that the impacts of social, economic, and environmental inequities have more control over long-term health outcomes of Colorado and Eagle County families than any individual health behaviors or access to health care. In response to this, we aim to make sure our services include family voice and are culturally responsive and representative of our community.

Eagle County:

Supports policies and legislation that creates long-term funding sources for services and programs along the perinatal care continuum.

Supports policies and legislation that recognize and try to counteract the impacts of social determinants of health, intergenerational trauma, and systemic inequities, particularly for pregnant people and youth.

Supports policies and legislation that centers the voice of individuals with lived experience.

Food Justice

Access to food is a human right. We provide services to fight against food insecurity and hunger while building and supporting local pipelines that get fresh, healthy foods in the hands of Eagle County residents. Each county resident receiving federal help in accessing food brings in money to support our local economy and local jobs along with improving health outcomes in children such as school performance as well as social and mental health outcomes. Additionally, we recognize the importance and benefits of breastfeeding and provide breastfeeding support through certified, compassionate, and culturally responsive staff.

Eagle County:

Supports legislation and policy that makes access to healthy, nutritious food more accessible, including free lunch programs, economic support, and equitable access to food.

Supports legislation and policy that supports the rights of breastfeeding people, expansion of breastfeeding support, and increased access to breastfeeding education for both providers and community members.

Sexual Health Justice

The availability of family planning services and long-term contraceptives contributes to a decrease in teen births, abortions, and public assistance costs. Additionally, these services empower individuals to make their own choices on when or whether to start a family.

Eagle County:

Supports legislation that protects and increases contraceptive availability, access for Long Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARC) for family planning purposes.

Supports legislation that protects and advocates for reproductive justice and gender affirming care.

Supports legislation that validates and protects the sexual health rights of LGBTQ+ individuals.

Supports policies that dedicate funding and resources to Title X Family Planning Clinics and other reproductive health care organizations in Colorado.

Supports legislation for comprehensive sexual health education that is age-appropriate and inclusive.

HEALTHY AGING

Eagle County Public Health & Environment is committed to ensuring active and healthy aging, economic and social vitality, and a thriving, age-friendly community for people of all ages as they continue to live, work, and play in Eagle County. In 2017, Eagle County was designated as an Age Friendly Community through the AARP/World Health Organization program, and in 2021 the Aging Well Plan was updated to focus on the following age-friendly priorities: physical environment, social isolation and inclusion, and healthcare.

Eagle County:

Supports policies and funding efforts that improve the whole wellbeing of older adults. This can include access to safe, reliable transportation, building capacity for in-home caregiving needs, falls prevention, and social connectedness to reduce loneliness.

DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Effective public health infectious disease prevention and control requires community-centered and science-based policies, programs, and infrastructure to quickly identify and control outbreaks, prevent disease transmission, and respond to emerging infectious diseases. A changing climate and increased global mobility reinforce the need to strengthen public health infectious disease programs. This includes improved information sharing at a global, national, state, and local level as well as enhanced traditional and non-traditional surveillance systems to monitor and quickly identify disease concerns in our community. Immunization is one of the most cost-effective disease prevention strategies, preventing disease, disability, and death in children and adults. Increasing and maintaining high vaccine coverage levels in children and adolescents, effectively communicating the availability, safety, and value of vaccines, and incorporating new vaccines into the routinely recommended immunization schedule requires supportive policies and adequate funding to develop effective immunization programs at a state and local level.

Eagle County:

Supports funding and policies that improve federal, state, and local disease surveillance, investigation, and prevention and response strategies to monitor and reduce the incidence and transmission of communicable diseases.

Supports funding and policies to improve outreach, access, and affordability of vaccinations for all persons to reduce the incidence of vaccine-preventable diseases.

Supports funding and other approaches to expand implementation of the Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS).

SUBSTANCE USE

Eagle County has a substance use/misuse problem. Our County sees higher use rates among youth and adult populations when compared to the rest of the state and nation, regardless of substance. That said, alcohol consumption is our chief concern given the significant societal impacts in addition to the individual health impacts, but other substances are worthy of a more comprehensive approach to substance misuse prevention. Additionally, local Healthy Kids Colorado Survey data from 2021 highlights stark disparities across substance use for LGBTQ+ identifying youth; indicates substances are being used as a coping mechanism for behavioral health issues; and reveals ease of access for youth to obtain any substances remains high.

Drug overdose deaths have increased in Colorado, but the issue was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Colorado experienced a 38% increase in deaths due to drug overdoses from 2019 to 2020. The number of deaths due to opioids, including heroin, opioid based prescription medication, and fentanyl increased by 54%. In 2020, overdoses involving fentanyl made up 68% of all opioid-related deaths. In Eagle County, we average 4 overdose deaths each year that typically involve opioids in combination with other substances (e.g. alcohol). The impact of opioid use disorders and overdoses disproportionately impact some populations based on their race, ethnicity, socioeconomic factors, and sexual orientation and gender identity.

Eagle County:

Supports legislative efforts to clarify county authority to implement product and point of sale restrictions for tobacco and other substances and to take additional measures to curb youth initiation and use of all substances.

Supports the coordination of local efforts in our communities to adopt substance use prevention measures.

Supports any efforts of the state to make substance use (particularly alcohol, nicotine, and marijuana) less appealing and more difficult to obtain for youth.

Opposes further cuts to the State Tobacco Education and Prevention Program funding stream for local public health grantees.

Supports legislative and funding efforts to support harm reduction services and strategies to reduce potential harms of substance use.

HUMAN SERVICES

Human Services provides an array of essential services which support building wellbeing for community members across the age range.

ABUSE PREVENTION, EDUCATION, AND INTERVENTION

Eagle County prioritizes the health, safety, and welfare of children, families, and adults in the community. All children and teens should grow up in a safe, stable, and secure family that supports their long-term wellbeing. At-risk adults should be able to live lives free of mistreatment and neglect.

Eagle County:

Supports funding to address increases in Adult Protective Services caseloads resulting from the implementation of mandatory reporting for elder abuse.

Supports the five 2023 Child Welfare Interim Committee bills which will make significant improvements in the Child Welfare and Behavioral Health systems, allowing youth and families to access the necessary services they need for youth to remain at home or with kin or to reunify when it is safe for them to do so. Of top importance: Children's behavioral health statewide system of care bill, High-acuity Crisis for Children and Youth bill, and Kinship Foster Care Homes bill.

Supports expansion of early intervention services to prevent child and adult abuse and neglect.

Opposes changes to the 80/20 split for out-of-home placements which would increase the county level share of these expenses.

FAMILY-CENTERED ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORTS

Eagle County supports a two-generation approach, which serves children and their caregivers together to harness the family's full potential and to put the entire family on a path to permanent economic security. Policies should support aligning funding streams, programs, and resources to build a whole family's assets jointly and avoid further systemic fragmentation of services.

Eagle County:

Supports policies that reduce the "cliff effect" for people moving off public benefits toward self-sufficiency.

Supports investments in non-custodial parent work support programs through Child Support Services.

Supports state-level efforts to provide paid sick leave to all workers. Women and minorities have disproportionately lower access to paid sick leave, and thus more negative economic and health impacts when sick.

Opposes policies which, directly or indirectly, disproportionately and negatively impact immigrant populations' access to food, medical care, and other critical human services.

PROGRAM FUNDING AND ADMINISTRATION

Programming required by state and federal legislation should be adequately funded by those entities to ensure successful, high-quality implementation and administration. The County Administration Allocation is intended to fund direct, common supportive staff and all operating expenditures for the two largest Human Services programs: Food Assistance and Medicaid. Currently statewide, this funding is expected to overspend by nearly 20 million dollars, potentially increasing the county share beyond the expected twenty percent. Additionally, Human Services departments are required to fill Emergency Support Function 6 roles in the case of emergency when the Emergency Operations Center is activated, and there is no corresponding funding stream for the training, planning, and other preparation required to staff this role in case of emergency.

Eagle County:

Supports efforts under SB 190 to close the funding gap between state allocations and the costs of administering human services programs.

Supports the federal-state-local structure for financing and delivering Medicaid services.

Supports local-level funding for ESF-6 work similar to the funding mechanisms which support ESF-8 preparation and response.

Opposes legislation that would further shift federal and state Medicaid costs to counties.

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Eagle County seeks to create communities with a sense of place. Land use authority is critical to shaping safe, well-planned developments, while supporting economically and naturally sound environments to live. Eagle County accomplishes this through its Comprehensive Plan, various area community plans, and land use regulations.

Eagle County:

Supports legislation which would maintain or increase county construction review and oversight authority, including timely adjudication and appropriate penalties for building code violations.

Supports efforts to work with state departments and other regulatory agencies in order to allow counties more control over the fee structure regarding electrical permits.

Supports establishing mechanisms ensuring proposed urban renewal projects meet the current statutory requirement of ameliorating blight or slum conditions.

Supports right-to-farm ordinances and acquisition of conservation easements and conservation leases to maintain agricultural uses.

Supports legislation regarding water quality and water preservation in land use decisions.

Supports legislation that allows for more streamlined public noticing and electronic noticing options.

Supports opportunities and policy to fully stop syndicated conservation in Colorado and across the country.

Supports policies, programs, and technical and financial assistance to define, locate, and resource traditionally underserved communities.

Opposes legislation that would supersede, override, or preempt local land use authority from both regulatory and comprehensive planning perspectives.

Opposes any state or federal effort to preempt or further limit local government regulatory authority over any extractive industry.

PUBLIC LANDS

Approximately 85% of the land area in Eagle County comprises public lands. This greatly elevates the importance of federal and state policies related to public lands. Federal programs like Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) help offset losses in property taxes due to non-taxable federal lands within county boundaries. Secure Rural Schools (SRS) federal payments provide numerous critical services including infrastructure, conservation projects, search and rescue missions, and fire prevention programs. SRS was extended until 2023 as a part of the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) provides offset funding from oil and gas development to purchase and develop wildland and wetland areas. With the signing of the Great American Outdoors Act into law in 2020, the LWCF is now permanently and fully funded at \$900 million a year. Eagle County appropriately benefits from these programs and supports permanent allocation of funding for PILT, SRS, and LWCF.

Eagle County recognizes that protection of these lands is critical. Our community relies on these lands for clean drinking water and our economic well being, and they are used by residents and visitors alike. Additionally, public lands support a diverse array of species that rely on this critical natural habitat.

Eagle County:

Supports new legislation to be enacted that provides forest revenue sharing payments to counties and promotes

active natural resource management for the stability and wellbeing of forest counties and communities.

Supports full Congressional appropriation of Payments In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and Secure Rural Schools (SRS) to compensate counties for the costs associated with the presence of federal tax-exempt lands.

Supports all efforts to compensate counties for lost property tax revenue from tax-exempt lands.

Supports legislation that encourages the state and federal governments to provide sufficient funding to local governments to alleviate the burden from the negative impacts attributable to wildfire, fuel loads, road and trail maintenance, search and rescue efforts, law enforcement, wildlife, predators, pests, noxious weeds, and undesirable plants originating on state and federal lands.

Supports control of the allocation of USFS PILT remaining solely with the boards of county commissioners.

Supports the timely and judicious allocation of Land and Water Conservation funds to federal, state, and local governments under the Great American Outdoors Act.

Supports legislation that would allow the State Land Board to sell land directly to local governments.

Supports legislation that encourages public land managers to develop and implement vegetation management programs that create and maintain healthy, diverse wildland communities and that are consistent with county policies.

Supports legislation that would create special land designations that are consistent with land use policies within the county of designation. All proposed wilderness legislation should include county input.

Supports adequate opportunity for public input on state and federal land use changes.

Supports the use of existing available tools (e.g. National Monument designation, Wilderness Study Areas, Colorado Roadless Areas, etc.) to conserve wilderness-quality habitat in areas where doing so coincides with local land use objectives.

Opposes mandatory linkages among federal payment programs that reduce county receipts.

Opposes legislation that would designate wild and scenic rivers or any other designation where Eagle County has not participated in the designation, or if such designation would conflict with local land use policies.

Opposes reducing wilderness areas or redrawing wilderness boundaries to accommodate development.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Eagle County continually strives to provide a safe and secure environment for its residents and visitors alike, whether it be on the road, in the community, or out on public lands. Public safety agencies like the Eagle County Sheriff's Office, Eagle County Emergency Management, local police agencies, fire departments, and paramedic services coordinate to provide services to address a continuum of needs throughout Eagle County, including emergency management and mitigation, law enforcement, community outreach, education, and crime prevention.

Eagle County:

Supports counties' emergency management roles while maintaining the effectiveness of our all-hazards public safety preparedness programs and emergency responses to natural and manmade disasters.

Supports additional state and federal resources to enhance and expand community resiliency planning and mitigation for emergency disasters like wildfire, flood, and drought.

Supports regional, state, and federal efforts to improve mutual aid and resource mobilization systems to support large-scale and expanding incidents.

Supports state and federal efforts to improve disaster recovery systems and funding streams that support the recovery of individuals, public safety agencies, critical infrastructure, and resilient landscapes following a disaster.

Supports a continuum of evidence-based approaches to build individual and family resiliency, reduce crime, and prevent violence, including designing effective evidence-based prevention and early intervention programs for youth and families at risk.

Supports the responsible expenditure of taxpayer funds in association with the safe and effective operations of Colorado's courts and public safety systems.

GOVERNANCE AND FISCAL ISSUES

UNFUNDED MANDATES

In order to effectively serve the needs of their communities, county officials must have the financial resources and authority commensurate with the responsibilities placed on them by state and federal laws, regulations, and court decisions. In all decision making, state and federal governments should refrain from solving budget shortfalls with county government resources. State and federal governments should base decisions about laws and regulations affecting county governments on comprehensive data and measurable outcomes. Relying on these two standards to scrutinize existing and proposed laws and regulations will help reduce unnecessary, unfunded or underfunded mandates, streamline government, and utilize limited resources more efficiently.

Eagle County:

Supports the provision of adequate funding for any future state- or federally-imposed mandates upon local government, including the need for technology improvements necessary to fulfill these mandates.

Opposes cost shifting from state and federal government to local governments.

LOCAL CONTROL AND FLEXIBILITY

Eagle 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 in regards to the services it provides and the land use decisions that it makes. Local authority also includes the flexibility to determine use of funding for specific initiatives. The most effective governance results from local, state, and federal officials working in true partnership toward the development and implementation of programs and services.

Eagle County:

Supports legislative efforts that strengthen and preserve local control and authority of county governments, allowing for the consideration of matters of statewide concern.

Opposes legislation that reduces local control or weakens administrative flexibility of county governments, allowing for the consideration of matters of statewide concern.

RULE-MAKING

Eagle County believes county commissioners are important and necessary stakeholders in any rule-making process.

Eagle County:

Supports county participation in legislative and regulatory efforts that impact counties.

Opposes the exclusion of counties from participating in legislative and regulatory efforts to promulgate rules and regulations that affect counties.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PARTNERSHIPS

Eagle County recognizes the important role all levels of government play. Eagle County respects the unique and important roles of federal, state, and local governments and believes counties are more than an administrative arm of state government. Commissioners represent the interests of their constituents, and counties must be viewed as partners, not as a “special” interest.

Eagle County:

Supports involvement of counties in executive department restructuring that directly affects operations and programs administered by county government.

Supports commissioner representation on state boards, commissions, and working groups appointed by members of the executive, legislative, or judicial branch whose decisions affect county government.

Supports allowing Colorado Parks and Wildlife managers authority to enforce hunting rules and regulations throughout county-owned public properties.

LONG-TERM FISCAL STABILITY OF THE STATE OF COLORADO

Eagle County recognizes the importance of a state government that operates in a fiscally responsible way and advances the economic vitality and wellbeing of all Coloradans. Eagle County appreciates the transparency in the state budgeting process and the opportunity to provide input, and it seeks collaboration with the state, especially with regard to decisions and processes that affect our organization or our constituents. The state and its counties are intertwined in many different, significant ways when it comes to the delivery of services to Colorado residents. Rising costs of doing business, including the costs of healthcare and health insurance premiums, present a significant challenge for the state and its counties.

Eagle County:

Supports and 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.

GOVERNMENTAL IMMUNITY

Eagle County recognizes that the complexity and diversity of its operations and services required to meet the needs of the community may expose the county, its officers, and employees to liability for damage and injury. The county strongly believes that public officers and employees need to be assured that this liability will not impair the lawful and proper provision of necessary services to the public.

Eagle County:

Supports legislation that protects the interests of counties, their officers, and their employees in the lawful and proper performance of their duties and responsibilities.

Supports legislation that discourages baseless and frivolous claims and demands made against counties, their officers, and their employees.

Supports the availability of public liability insurance at reasonable costs and the ability of counties to reduce these costs through self-insurance.

Opposes legislation that expands or increases county liability or, conversely, further limits county immunity.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Eagle County recognizes that the Colorado Workers' Compensation Act was developed as a no-fault system established "to assure the quick and efficient delivery of disability and medical benefits to injured workers at a reasonable cost to employers, without the necessity of any litigation, recognizing that the workers' compensation system in Colorado is based on a mutual renunciation of common law rights and defenses by employers and employees alike." The county is concerned about any legislation that will erode the ability of an employer to control their claim costs and inhibit an employer's ability to get competitive quotes from the market for quality insurance coverage.

Eagle County:

Supports legislation that maintains the spirit of the Colorado Workers' Compensation Act, for the protection of both Colorado employers and employees.

Opposes legislation that creates presumptive eligibility coverage within the law, promotes litigation, or adds significant insurance premium costs or administrative burdens to employers.

ELECTIONS

The State of Colorado and its counties are regarded as a national model for election security and high voter turnout. The Eagle County Clerk and Recorder's Office is responsible for administering elections with integrity and accuracy, reflecting the will of all eligible Colorado voters. Colorado votes by mail, and mail ballots are the most secure way to conduct an election. Mail ballots cannot be hacked, are completely auditable, are processed every step of the way by election judges representing different political affiliations, and are stored in secure facilities with locks and cameras. As with other counties across the state, most of the responsibility for administering state and local elections falls on Eagle County. State reimbursement for election administration, including regular election staffing, has not increased in recent years, while the complexity of conducting elections safely, securely, and according to law has increased dramatically.

Eagle County:

Supports the conduct of accessible elections for all, including the Vote by Mail format, 24-hour drop boxes, and early voting access.

Supports increasing federal funding for elections

Supports the equitable sharing of the costs of elections by all governmental entities with a stake in elections.

MOTOR VEHICLE FEE RESTRUCTURING & ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES

The motor vehicle responsibilities in county offices, directed by the Colorado Department of Revenue, are customer service-centric, complicated, and demanding. Despite the fact that sales of new and used cars and corresponding registration fee revenues have increased in recent years, county revenues to administer these services have remained flat.

Additionally, vehicle owners increasingly ask for electronic communication to timely remind of vehicle renewal due dates, but counties are unable to facilitate this request due to current laws. Instead, counties spend county dollars to send out renewal postcards to each vehicle owner. In 2023, Eagle County spent over \$25,000 to send out these reminder cards. Having the ability for customers to opt in for email reminders rather than mailed postcards would save the county money as well as provide the kind of electronic communication customers are requesting.

Eagle County:

Supports increasing the Clerk Hire Fee and the county share of late fees to enable counties to keep pace with the necessary costs of providing this service at a level that meets customers' needs and expectations.

Supports the Department of Revenue creating a process for vehicle owners to request to receive from the Department electronic communications and notifications for vehicle registration renewals and issuance of license plates.

E-RECORDING SURCHARGE FEE EXTENSION AND ELECTRONIC RECORDING TECHNOLOGY BOARD GRANT SURCHARGE EXTENSION

In 2004 the state instituted a \$1.00 surcharge on all recorded documents and in 2017 also instituted an additional \$2.00 Electronic Recording Technology Board surcharge. The funds retained from these surcharges are intended to help counties pay for projects that establish, maintain, improve, or replace the electronic document management system that enables the County Clerk and Recorder to accept electronically recorded land records and to provide online access to recorded documents. Other projects may include digitization and indexing of documents received for recording at the office of the County Clerk and/or the security of the document management system. Eagle County began collecting these funds several years ago, but there are ongoing costs to maintain and upgrade the system every year. As the custodian of public land records, marriage certificates, loans, covenants, plats, and maps, it is imperative that Eagle County preserve these documents in a manner that is compatible with modern technology.

Electronic Recording Technology Board (ERTB) grants are also available to assist counties with maintaining and upgrading their recording software through the collection of the \$2.00 ERTB surcharge. Eagle County has applied, and can continue to apply, for ERTB grants that help maintain electronic filing systems. This surcharge will sunset on April 30, 2026 if not extended. Colorado's recording fees are among the lowest in the nation.

Eagle County:

Supports legislation to extend the e-recording surcharge fee permanently, as well as an increase to the amount retained by the county.

Supports legislation to continue charging the Electronic Recording Technology Board (ERTB) electronic filing surcharge of \$2.00 that is uniformly collected on all documents.

Contact the Eagle County Commissioners



From left:
Commissioner Jeanne McQueeney
Commissioner Matt Scherr
Commissioner Kathy Chandler-Henry



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