

## House Local Government Committee

### Overview

The House Local Government Committee generally considers matters concerning local governments, special districts, housing, and land use planning. In addition, the committee has legislative oversight responsibility for the Department of Local Affairs.

### Legislative Staff

The following legislative staff are assigned to research issues and draft bills that may appear before the House and Senate Local Government Committees.

#### *Legislative Council Staff*

- Juliann Jenson, House Local Government Committee, [juliann.jenson@state.co.us](mailto:juliann.jenson@state.co.us)
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- David Beaujon, Senate Local Government Committee, [david.beaujon@state.co.us](mailto:david.beaujon@state.co.us)
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- Josh Abram, Fiscal Analyst, [josh.abram@state.co.us](mailto:josh.abram@state.co.us)
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#### *Legislative Legal Services*

- Gregg Fraser, Senior Attorney, [gregg.fraser@state.co.us](mailto:gregg.fraser@state.co.us)
  - Phone: 303-866-4325
- Bob Lackner, Senior Attorney, [bob.lackner@state.co.us](mailto:bob.lackner@state.co.us)
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#### *Joint Budget Committee*

- Amanda Bickel, Chief Legislative Analyst, [amanda.bickel@state.co.us](mailto:amanda.bickel@state.co.us)
  - Phone: 303-866-4960

### Meeting Times and Locations

The House Local Government Committee meets on Wednesday afternoons beginning at 1:30 p.m. and Thursday mornings upon adjournment. The committee's designated meeting room is House Committee Room 0107. Occasionally, the committee meets in a different room to accommodate larger crowds or the needs of other committees. Changes to the committee's regular schedule are announced on the House floor prior to adjournment. Scheduled changes will also be posted on Twitter by the committee staff. If you wish to receive Twitter updates, go to <http://twitter.com/colocalgovcomm> to follow the committee.

### Joint Meetings with the Senate Local Government Committee

The SMART Government Act requires the House and Senate Local Government committees to hold annual hearings with the Department of Local Affairs. At the hearings, the departments must present their annual performance plan, regulatory agenda, and requested

budget. The hearings must be held between November 1, 2016 and January 11, 2017. The House Local Government Committee will meet jointly with the Senate Local Government Committee to conduct these hearings. During the legislative session, joint meetings of the House and Senate Local Government committees will be held on Thursdays, upon adjournment of both chambers in HCR 0107, in the basement of the State Capitol Building.

## Stakeholders

The following entities are stakeholders that regularly appear before the General Assembly regarding local government issues:

- *Department of Local Affairs.* The Department of Local Affairs includes the Division of Local Government, the Division of Property Taxation, Division of Housing, and the Board of Assessment Appeals.
- *Division of Fire Prevention and Control.* The Division of Fire Prevention and Control in the Department of Public Safety provides support to Colorado communities for the prevention, management, and protection against wildfires.
- *Fire and Police Pension Association.* The Fire and Police Pension Association is charged with overseeing the benefits for Colorado firefighters and police officers.
- *Housing organizations and providers.* Many organizations provide assistance to property owners. In addition, several services are provided to aid homeless citizens, including the Fort Lyon Rehabilitation Center.
- *County commissioners.* A board of county commissions is the policy-making body of a county and is responsible for administrative and budgetary oversight. Commissioners are elected in each county by the local voters. Colorado Counties, Inc., is a non-profit membership organization that offers assistance to county commissioners and local governments.
- *County clerk and recorder.* The county clerk and recorder is the primary administrative officer of the county and is responsible for the legal distribution and recording of all records, including:
  - vehicle registration and titles;
  - all primary, special elections, and general elections;
  - marriage licenses; and
  - the books of the board of commissioners.

The Colorado County Clerks Association provides educational support and advocacy services for county clerks.

- *County sheriffs.* The county sheriffs and their departments are in charge of enforcing the state criminal laws in unincorporated county areas. The sheriff is also the fire warden for prairie and forest fires within the county's boundaries. The County Sheriffs of Colorado is an association that provides education, professional, and advocacy resources for County Sheriffs.
- *County treasurer.* The county treasurer is responsible for the receipt, custody, and disbursement of county funds. The Colorado County Treasurers' Association and the

Public Trustee Association of Colorado provide education and information assistance to public professionals regarding county funds.

- *County assessor.* The county assessor is responsible for discovering, listing, classifying, and valuing all property in the county in accordance with state laws. The Colorado Assessor's Association provides standards and assistance for the equalization of property valuation in Colorado.
- *County coroner.* The county coroner is responsible for investigating the cause and manner of deaths, issuing death certificates, and requesting autopsies. The Colorado Coroners Association is an association that provides education and training opportunities for county coroners.
- *County surveyor.* The county surveyor is responsible for any surveying duties pertaining to the county and for settling boundary disputes.
- *Mayor.* The mayor presides over the board of trustees or city council as a voting member and policy-supervisor.
- *City Council/Board of Trustees.* The members of a city council or board of trustees are elected to serve as a policy-making and administrative body for the municipality.
- *City manager.* In larger cities, a city manager can be used to manage the administrative duties of a city's operation. The Colorado Municipal League is an association that provides professional services and resources for municipal officials.
- *School boards.* School boards are local government entities charged with overseeing the educational operations of children in kindergarten through twelfth grade of a designated school district. The members of a school board are elected by the community. The Colorado Association of School Boards represents and advocates the interests of school boards and their members.
- *Special districts.* Special districts provide services and infrastructure to support and promote the needs of a specific area. A special district and its official business are overseen by a locally elected board of directors. The Special District Association of Colorado is an association that provides services and support for special districts and its directors.

## **Glossary of Frequently Used Terms**

**Annexation:** Annexation is the process of incorporating adjacent land into the boundaries of a municipality.

**County categorization:** Colorado counties are assigned into six categories by the General Assembly for the purposes of setting salaries for county officials.

**County classification for fees:** Colorado counties are assigned to six classifications by the General Assembly for the fixing of fees collected by the county and its officers.

**Municipal Home rule:** The Colorado Constitution allows municipalities to adopt home rule charters to provide greater authority and regulation of local matters. A home rule city's ordinance generally supercedes conflicting state laws regarding local matters, such as zoning procedures. Home rule charters have been adopted by 96 municipalities in Colorado.

**County Home Rule:** The Colorado Constitution allows for counties to adopt a home rule charter to establish the organization and structure of county government based on local needs. Home rule counties are still required to provide the programs and services determined by state law. There are currently two home rule counties, Pitkin and Weld. In addition, Denver and Broomfield are each classified as a home rule municipality and county.

**Lease-purchasing:** Lease purchasing can be used by a county as an alternative to debt financing to build major facilities beyond a county's short-term financial resources.

**Mill Levy:** A mill levy is a tax rate, calculated at \$1 per \$1,000, that is applied to the assessed value of a property by a local governing body.

**Property tax:** Counties and municipalities can assess a property tax based on a property's value multiplied by a mill levy.

**Sale Taxes:** A sales tax is collected on the sale of certain goods and services. Sales taxes can be collected by both counties and municipalities on the sale of items within the jurisdiction.

**Special Districts:** Special districts are local governments created by the voters that provide infrastructure for the health, safety, or economic development of a district. Colorado statute provides specific guidelines for the creation, type, and action permitted of a special district.

**Statutory towns and cities:** State law provides guidelines and restrictions for the governing powers of a statutory town or city. Ordinances adopted by a local government that conflict with state laws are invalid.

**Use taxes:** A use tax is levied on the retail price of certain tangible personal property purchased outside a tax district jurisdiction, but stored, used, or consumed within that jurisdiction.

**Wildland-Urban Interface:** The wildland-urban interface is the area where man-made structures and urban infrastructure meet the natural wildland terrain. This area has the potential of being at high risk for wildfire impact.

**Zoning:** Zoning is the determination of land use by a governing body. Guidelines for zoning and planning are determined by different governing bodies depending on jurisdiction:

- *Local Government.* A home rule municipality has the right to determine a zoning ordinance. Ordinances adopted by a home rule city regarding local matters, such as zoning, supercede state laws.
- *County.* A board of county commissioners is charged with establishing zoning ordinances for the classification of unincorporated areas of a county.
- *State.* A statutory town or city is subject to zoning and planning regulations adopted in state law.

### Sources

- *2016 Colorado Local Government Handbook*
- *Colorado Revised Statutes*