

Ken Matthews
Secretary, Chaffee County Housing Policy Advisory Committee
Vice President, Chaffee Housing Trust
5633 Pinon Ridge Trail, Salida, CO 81201

To: Senate Finance Committee
Re: Support for HB19-1245

April 25, 2019

I moved to Chaffee County from Denver in 2013. Soon after coming to Chaffee County it became clear to me the dire need for affordable housing, hence the roles I have undertaken as outlined above.

The Chaffee County Housing Policy Advisory Committee (HPAC) was formed shortly after our 2016 Housing Needs Assessment was released, with the goal to develop strategies to create affordable housing. HPAC, through its advocacy and with the support of the Chaffee County Commissioners, promoted an Inter-governmental Agreement among Chaffee County, Salida, Buena Vista, and Poncha Springs to fund the Chaffee County Office of Housing, establishing our first full-time Housing Director.

Chaffee County is beginning the process to re-write its Comprehensive Plan and then will redraft its Land Use Code to reflect the goals of this Comprehensive Plan. Salida passed an Inclusionary Housing ordinance that mandates every subdivision over 5 units must sell 12% of its units at 80% AMI or pay a fee in lieu that will go into a housing fund to develop housing at this AMI level. Poncha Springs revised its land use code which has spurred historic building of rentals, multi-family, and single ownership opportunities. Buena Vista has also revised its land use code and has a new low income tax credit funded, 48 unit affordable housing project (60% AMI and below). The Chaffee Housing Trust recently completed an 8-unit condo project for buyers at 80% AMI. Habitat for Humanity has ongoing efforts to provide homes for lower income buyers.

Despite committed efforts, we continue to lose residents who cannot afford to live in our County, which depends on an agricultural, outdoor recreation, and tourist economy. Teachers; nurses, aids, and staff at our Regional Medical Center; construction workers; service industry workers; municipal and county government employees - all are challenged or cannot find housing. These essential areas of our economy are threatened, as is the diversity of our social fabric. The State demographer estimates that the majority of jobs coming to Chaffee County in the future will be at 60% AMI or less. The housing for these jobs does not exist and cannot be addressed with solely local resources.

Rural Colorado faces daunting housing issues. These communities cannot survive, much less thrive without affordable housing. Chaffee County (approximately 19,000) does not have the population to attack affordable housing in the same manner as Denver. Chaffee County cannot "tax" their way out of this problem. We need outside funds to succeed. A dedicated funding source for affordable housing is needed. Colorado is one of only 10 states that do NOT have a dedicated funding source for affordable housing. I support HB19-1245 and urge you to pass and fund this bill. It is the right thing to do. The time to do it is NOW. Rural Colorado needs this funding and support desperately.

Sincerely,

Ken Matthews