

February 15, 2019

Representatives of the House Public Health Care & Human Services Committee:

Thank you for the work that you do and for your attention to this matter. My name is Amanda Uehlein. I am a resident of Grand County and work in the human services field/non-profit sector. I have a Master's degree in counseling/psychology and have worked in direct service in one capacity or another for many years. I support HB19-1170 because I have both witnessed and experienced the negative impacts of housing insecurity and instability.

Grand County has an unprecedentedly high rate of residents living in substandard and unsafe housing. Of the 18,000 dwellings in our county, around 5,000 are inhabited full-time. As more and more landlords in our rural, resort community are turning toward short-term vacation rentals, long-term tenants have fewer and fewer options.

Many of the residents in our community have no other choice but to stay in uninhabitable conditions. There are single moms living without working refrigerators, elders and individuals with disabilities going without heat or potable water, and families living in unsafe structures ridden with black mold, many times with more than one family in a single dwelling. In addition, the lack of safe and stable housing in our area has contributed in part to a workforce shortage, as many residents have chosen to move out of the county when faced with these options. All of these experiences have long-term implications for the physical and mental health of our neighbors.

The current laws and policies do not support the tenants in these awful conditions and, in fact, favor the landlords. HB19-1170 would level the playing field, ensuring that timely action would be required of landlords to address unsafe conditions and that these individuals and families would have a right to legal recourse if action is not taken. I can only foresee a positive impact on the overall health and wellbeing of our Grand County community if HB19-1170 were enacted. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Amanda Uehlein
PO Box 1924
Granby, CO 80446

Kate Testimony HB1170 (Warranty of Habitability) February 2019

- Good afternoon Mr. Chair and committee members. My name is Kate Johnston and I am speaking today as a private citizen in strong support of House Bill 1170.
- As a public health professional, I work to improve the health of children and families and reduce preventable illness in Colorado.
- You may have heard of the social determinants of health, which is how the places we live, work, and play affect our health. They account for a much larger proportion of health outcomes than either clinical care or our genetic make up and they can be impacted by policies like this one.
- Housing is one of the most important social determinants of health.
- A recently released study showed that children who experienced homelessness were more likely to have fair or poor health than children who did not. And children who experienced homelessness both before and after they were born were at high risk for fair or poor health, hospitalizations, and developmental delays.
- While having stable housing is protective, the quality of that housing is also critical. Exposure to mold indoors is linked to respiratory symptoms, cough, and wheeze in otherwise healthy people as well as increased asthma symptoms in people with asthma.
- Early mold exposure and exposure to damp indoor environments have been linked to development of asthma in susceptible individuals.
- One study showed that respiratory symptoms in preschoolers were most strongly associated with mold odor during the past year and water damage over a year ago, demonstrating that remediating mold while also repairing the source of the dampness are equally necessary to protecting children's health.
- These conditions can impact residents throughout their lifetimes, as uncontrolled asthma can actually change airways, turning into something called Asthma-COPD Overlap Syndrome in adulthood.
- Helping families stay in homes and ensuring that those homes are both safe and healthy is an important step to keeping Coloradans healthy.
- Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak to you about this important measure to protect all Coloradans, especially our youth. I encourage your support of this measure and am happy to answer any questions you have.