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COSTILLA COUNTY

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

"Where Colorado Began"

April 4, 2019

Re. Support of HB19-1292

Dear Representatives Singer and Galindo and Senator Ginal,

I write this letter in strong support of HB 19-1292, which authorizes funding for the Colorado Resiliency Office (CRO) within the Colorado Department of Local Affairs. As the Chief Administrative Officer of Costilla County, which was impacted by the Spring Creek Fire in 2018, I know first-hand how valuable the CRO is to Colorado communities before, during, and after major shock events like the many wildfires our state experienced last year.

Communities across Colorado are experiencing rapid growth in the wildland-urban interface, a rapidly changing climate, and changing social, and economic conditions. Wildfires are growing in frequency and intensity. More severe rain events and subsequent flooding threaten our homes, businesses, and lives.

The CRO is a critical office for helping communities address these changes that threaten local long-term resiliency by providing education, data, tools, and trainings that empower action at the local level. Building resiliency is not only needed to protect our communities in the face of a disaster, but also to enable communities to continue to thrive afterwards. Addressing resiliency before a disaster hits is not only good governance, it saves taxpayer dollars in the long run. For every \$1 spent on risk reduction today, \$6 are saved in future avoided costs.

Following the Spring Creek Fire, the CRO has played an active and supportive role in Costilla County's recovery. The CRO co-chairs the state's Long-Term Recovery Working Group, which helped dedicate resources and funding for a recovery manager for Costilla County. Funding this critical position will help our county implement our Recovery Plan. I look forward to continuing to work with the CRO to incorporate resiliency activities into our long-term recovery efforts.

I was encouraged to see the passing of HB 18-1394 last year that codified the CRO and its activities that build local resiliency. Current funding for CRO operations is set to expire June 30, 2019. It is critical that HB 19-1292 pass to not only continue to fund this office, but to demonstrate the state's long-term commitment to supporting local communities in their efforts to shape their future into a more resilient one.

Sincerely,

Ben Doon, Costilla County Chief Administrative Officer