



American Planning Association  
**Colorado Chapter**

*Making Great Communities Happen*

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April 24, 2019

Senator Joann Ginal  
Colorado Senate District 14  
200 E. Colfax Avenue, Room 346  
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Senator Ginal,

RE: House Bill 19-1292 Reauthorization Colorado Resiliency Office

The Colorado Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA) would like to offer its strong support for this legislation. The Chapter is comprised of some 1400 city planners and other professionals working throughout Colorado in the public, private and nonprofit sectors for the betterment of our communities.

The Resiliency Office provides the organizational infrastructure for two important roles. First, the office manages the State's post disaster recovery programs. Secondly, it assists our cities, towns and counties in proactive planning to identify and mitigate existing conditions that may contribute to community vulnerability from inevitable future events such as floods, fires and storms. While emergency response is the first line of defense after a disaster, the work of pre-disaster preparedness and recovery is a continuous process. For some of Colorado's smaller communities, the Resiliency Office may provide the only staff and technical support resources available to them for disaster planning and recovery efforts.

Failure to reauthorize funding for the Office puts the entire state at risk and would create a gap in planning and recovery efforts. Additionally, in order to work with the federal state resources that become available post disaster, this office's role in recovery would need to be recreated in the tense environment after a disaster.

The Resiliency Office currently operates very efficiently in terms of staffing and its overall budget. It also coordinates with numerous other Departments and Agencies to keep State efforts coordinated and available to quickly respond to disaster impacts. This level of organizational preparedness saves lives, protects community infrastructure and reduces disaster recovery costs.

In closing, we urge the Senate to provide the necessary funding to retain the Resiliency Office and the continuity of its work.

[www.apacolorado.org](http://www.apacolorado.org)

PO Box 49573 - Colorado Springs – CO - 80949



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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan A. Wood".

Susan A. Wood, AICP  
APA Colorado Legislative Committee Chair

cc: Sol Malick, APA CO Legislative Liaison  
Michelle Stephens, AICP, APA CO Chapter President  
Denise Balkas, AICP, APC CO Legislative Committee

[www.apacolorado.org](http://www.apacolorado.org)

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# COSTILLA COUNTY

## BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

*"Where Colorado Began"*

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[www.costillacounty-co.gov](http://www.costillacounty-co.gov)

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

P.O. Box 174  
111 West Moore Ave.  
(719) 742-3631  
Fax: (719) 742-5420

Huerfano County  
La Veta, Colorado  
81055



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 Mayor of La Veta, 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 a disaster like the many wildfires our state experienced last year. CRO is providing support to our community as we prepare for years of recovery and post-fire flooding and work hard to protect lives and properties.

We are not alone. Communities across Colorado are experiencing rapidly changing climate, 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 and technical assistance to 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 Huerfano County's and the Town's recovery. The CRO co-chairs the state's Long-Term Recovery Working Group, which helped dedicate recovery resources and funding, including leveraging federal funds for emergency watershed projects. We 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 state and 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,

  
Douglas R. Brooch  
Mayor, Town of La Veta

# Colorado Recovery and Resiliency Collaborative

December 10, 2018

Irv Halter, Executive Director  
Colorado Department of Local Affairs  
1313 Sherman St., #518  
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Mr. Halter:

As local governments who have been working together since 2015 as the Colorado Recovery and Resiliency Collaborative (CRRC) to identify lessons learned and recommended improvements following the catastrophic 2013 Flood, we write today in strong support of the Department of Local Affairs' funding request for three staff for the Colorado Resiliency Office, DOLA Priority R-02.

CRRC participants – Berthoud, Estes Park, Jamestown, Johnstown, Lyons, Milliken, Boulder, Colorado Springs, Evans, Fort Collins, Greeley, Longmont, Loveland, Manitou Springs, and Boulder, El Paso, Larimer and Weld counties, as well as staff from DOLA, DHSEM, and the Governor's Office – analyzed recovery processes from recent wildfires and floods and documented critical lessons to be learned, including a need to update the Colorado Disaster Emergency Act which resulted in passage of HB18-1394. A key tenet of that bill was to codify the Colorado Resiliency Office (CRO) to ensure its long-term viability and the ability of Colorado to respond to and be resilient in the face of future disasters and other shocks and stresses.

Current funding for CRO staff is set to expire on June 30, 2019, which would mean closure of the CRO. HB18-1394 states that CRO is to be funded with gifts, grants, and donations, which does not provide adequate, predictable funding for staffing the CRO. Therefore, it is critical that funds be allocated from the General Fund for these positions, per DOLA request R-02. The CRO cannot be effective unless it has ongoing staff to build expertise, relationships, and programs that will increase preparedness, decrease risk, connect critical sectors, and ultimately save valuable tax dollars, as for every \$1 spent on risk reduction, \$6 are saved.

Another key intention of HB18-1394 was to be proactive in response to changes at the federal level regarding emergency management. The federal direction places more responsibility on local and state governments for emergency management, creating incentives for local and state governments that have a proven record of mitigation and resiliency. We must be able to

demonstrate Colorado's commitment to mitigation and resiliency in order to fully benefit from federal programs in the future. By supporting the CRO, Colorado will be well-positioned when it comes to changes in funding and focus at the federal level.

The very nature of resilience is long-term thinking and cross-jurisdiction planning. There have been multiple disasters throughout the state since 2013, including wildfires, flooding, mudslides, landslides, and tornadoes. These disasters affected multiple municipalities, counties, and special districts. As we look to the future, Colorado's risk profile is changing: Wildfires are more catastrophic and frequent, rain events are more intense, and tornadoes are occurring in areas previously free from those hazards. Continued population growth will only exacerbate the risk.


Finally, as state and local staff move on to other jobs or retire, lessons learned from recent disasters may be lost; in addition, a new state administration will be coming into office. A permanently staffed CRO will provide institutional memory and support for Colorado's local governments to ensure that the next disaster-affected jurisdiction in Colorado can be more effective and resilient in their response and recovery.

Committing to the long-term sustainability of the Colorado Resiliency Office will enable the State of Colorado and its towns, cities, counties, and special districts to better respond to future disasters and attract federal dollars to reduce risk, save taxpayer dollars, and enhance local and state resilience.

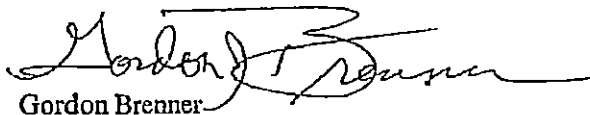
Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

On Behalf of the Colorado Recovery and Resiliency Collaborative



Deb Gardner  
Boulder County Commissioner



Gordon Brenner  
Recovery Coordinator, City of Colorado Springs



Lori Hodges  
Director, Larimer County Office of Emergency Management