



# 2025 Policy Statement

Overview

The *2025 Policy Statement* was developed with input from all nine steering committees and provides general direction to CCI, including staff, and external partners. The nine steering committees will convene regularly during the 2025 session of the General Assembly and are charged with the responsibility of advancing CCI’s position on specific legislation as it is introduced. This statement serves as a guide to those committees as they debate issues and establish a “CCI position.”

Table of Contents

Legislative Principles 3

Preamble 4

Agriculture, Wildlife and Rural Affairs 6

General Government 8

Health and Human Services 10

Justice and Public Safety 15

Land Use and Natural Resources 17

Public Lands 20

Taxation and Finance 22

Tourism, Resorts and Economic Development 24

Transportation and Telecommunications 28

## **LEGISLATIVE PRINCIPLES**

The principles outlined below result from ongoing discussions in all five CCI districts and nine Steering Committees. These principles are meant as self-enforcing principles that provide guidance to CCI members to make final determination in each instance. In accordance with the CCI Bylaws, Steering Committees are responsible for reviewing Member-adopted policy (Legislative Priorities), provide direction on legislative issues (adopt bill positions, update Policy Statement), and study and make recommendations on issues related to assigned subject areas [Article XI, Section 3, Part 3].

### **LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**

In every case, a CCI initiated bill needs sponsors, an appropriate coalition to support the measure, the support of CCI members, and consistent lobbying and vote counting to be successful. Before initiating a bill or taking a position, CCI should also carefully consider the likelihood of success of a legislative proposal. In this way, we keep the faith with legislators who support us and sponsor our bills. CCI should be conscious of fiscal realities when considering initiating or taking a position on a piece of legislation.

If we are to retain a high level of credibility CCI-initiated legislation should be realistic and closely related to the conduct of our members' responsibilities. CCI's primary focus should be on matters of importance to our members. Local elected officials groups, county and otherwise, as well as other interest groups, should be encouraged to find sponsors for and initiate their own proposals, allowing our members and CCI to take a supportive role when the bill is introduced.

### **BILL POSITIONS**

Through staff assignment of legislation, those bills which will clearly have an impact on county responsibilities and interests, will be assigned to a Steering Committee for consideration of a bill position. Bills that could influence our members' responsibilities, if modified, should be monitored by CCI staff and brought to the Steering Committee if a change in the bill warrants consideration of a position.

All issues for deliberation by a Steering Committee should be placed on the appropriate committee agenda in a timely manner in accordance with CCI's 5-day advance notice policy to allow adequate consideration. Addendums should be provided in a timely manner.

## **PREAMBLE**

County commissioners, as elected officials representing the interests of their citizens through Colorado Counties, Inc. (CCI), affirm the following principles for effective governance.

### **UNFUNDED MANDATES**

In order to effectively serve the needs of their communities, county officials must have the resources and authority commensurate with the responsibilities placed on them by state and federal laws, regulations and court decisions.

CCI strongly supports the provision of adequate funding for any future state or federally imposed mandates upon local government, including the need for technology improvements necessary to fulfill these mandates.

CCI strongly opposes cost shifting from the state and federal government to local governments. In all decision making, state government should refrain from solving state budget shortfalls with county government resources.

State and federal government should base decisions about laws and regulations affecting county governments on comprehensive data and measurable outcomes. Relying on these two standards to scrutinize existing and proposed laws and regulations will help reduce unnecessary, unfunded, or underfunded mandates, streamline government, and utilize limited resources more efficiently.

State and federal officials should consider other programmatic models that might exist and the possible limitations on local control that might result from new legislation, rules or regulations. The most effective governance results from local, state and federal officials working in true partnership toward the development and implementation of programs and services.

### **LOCAL CONTROL AND FLEXIBILITY**

County officials are the elected officials closest and most responsive to the citizens. We strongly support the concept of true home rule power and authority for counties consistent with those given to municipalities.

CCI supports regulatory and legislative efforts enabling volunteer organizations to continue providing services to their communities.

We support efforts to provide counties with the greatest autonomy and flexibility possible.

### **RULE-MAKING PROCESS**

County officials oppose any administrative effort to promulgate rules and regulations that interpret the law in a manner that negatively impacts counties. We believe county commissioners are important and necessary stakeholders in any rule-making process, as such we will continue to support our inclusion in all relevant rulemakings.

### **INTERGOVERNMENTAL PARTNERSHIPS**

Counties recognize the important role all levels of government play in our intergovernmental system. We respect the unique and important roles of the federal, state and local government, and believe counties are much more than an administrative arm of state government. Commissioners represent the

interests of their constituents, and counties must be viewed as partners, not as a “special” interest. Counties must be involved in executive department restructuring that directly affects county operations and programs administered by county government.

### **COUNTY REPRESENTATION**

CCI supports realistic and equitable recognition of the role of county government in carrying out coordinated government programs, including commissioner representation on state boards, and commissions and working groups appointed by members of the executive, legislative or judicial branch whose decisions affect county government.

Colorado counties have strong opposition to preemption, rather advocating for local control and decision-making authority to address their unique needs and challenges effectively.

## **AGRICULTURE, WILDLIFE AND RURAL AFFAIRS**

### **AGRICULTURE**

CCI recognizes agriculture is an essential economic sector and, accordingly, supports activities and measures that work to ensure the sustainability and profitability of agriculture. Such activities and measures include:

- General efforts to promote the agriculture industry in Colorado.
- Programs that encourage state-owned and -operated facilities to use Colorado agricultural products where feasible.
- Right-to-farm ordinances and the acquisition of conservation easements and conservation leases to maintain agricultural land uses.
- Efforts that manage and minimize noxious weeds, undesirable plants, rodents, insects and other negative impacts and undue burdens on agricultural interests. Accordingly, CCI endorses Colorado's strategic plan to stop the spread of noxious weeds and works with other endorsing organizations in the public and private sectors to implement this plan.
- Current Colorado open range laws and fence laws. CCI will oppose any changes that weaken those existing laws.
- Management of fuel loads and healthy forests.
- Policy that land classified as agriculture and the assessed valuation of agricultural land should be based on production capacity versus market value.

CCI recognizes the unique needs of producers and opposes actions that jeopardize the viability of the agricultural industry and fail to respect private property rights. Additionally, wetlands are critical to the viability of agriculture, wildlife habitat, and the environment. CCI believes the public-at-large, not individual property owners, must bear the burden to protect vital wetlands.

CCI urges Congress and the states to review practices, statutes, and policies in order to protect agricultural interests.

### **WATER**

CCI recognizes adequate supplies of water are critical to the agricultural industry and that water is one of Colorado's most precious natural resources. CCI supports Colorado's doctrine of prior appropriation, necessary water conservation efforts, and reuse efforts. The federal government should not usurp the system of prior appropriation in the issuance of necessary federal permits, and CCI opposes federally reserved water rights. However, cooperative statewide water planning efforts which do not negatively impact the basin of origin communities and are supported by those communities should be encouraged.

Relatedly, CCI supports efforts to seek and maintain state primacy and county control, the application of county powers (including 1041 powers) to water projects to address local impacts, and protection of Colorado's water resources. CCI supports efforts to maintain and seek state primacy of federal water quality programs and believes provision of adequate funding to counties is essential to ensure compliance with the federal Clean Water Act. 1041 powers must be broadly and liberally construed to ensure maximum flexibility and authority for counties and will oppose any attempt to limit the application of local 1041 powers.

### **WILDLIFE**

Wildlife resources provide, in addition to their inherent values, crucial economic benefits to all citizens, and CCI supports enhancement of the local government role in this arena, including through the creation of wildlife advisory committees in the management and utilization of Colorado's wildlife resources.

CCI encourages the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife to work with counties in conducting actual census counts of big game populations to calibrate existing population estimate models. CCI supports efforts of the Colorado Wildlife Commission and the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife to manage species appropriately with due consideration of cost-benefit and economic impacts. CCI also supports efforts to amend the Endangered Species Act in order to improve flexibility under the act. CCI urges consideration of sound science, cost-benefit and economic impact analyses, and recovery plans when proposing species for listing and furthermore encourages balancing the impact of the Endangered Species Act with that of other legislation. Overall, CCI supports proactive and creative efforts to restore or reintroduce endangered species considering all potential impacts and subject to local government involvement and approval. Local input and buy-in are critical and necessary for such efforts.

CCI endorses activities that improve hunting and fishing within the state that are consistent with local authority while minimizing and mitigating impacts from hunting and fishing on other affected areas and private property. Management of predatory animals is vital, and the legislature should provide funding to help offset associated costs. Moreover, it is critical that reasonable reimbursement be provided for damage to crops, depredation, and other such losses of private property caused by wildlife.

## **RURAL AFFAIRS**

The rural/urban divide presents an important challenge for rural Colorado, and CCI emphasizes the need to find opportunities to bridge this divide and facilitate mutual understanding. CCI recognizes the uniqueness and necessity of rural counties in Colorado and urges both county and state officials to take a strong leadership role in revitalizing communities in their counties. Programs that support rural development and foster sustainable rural economies are essential, and CCI advocates for their continued funding and implementation. Additionally, CCI supports full staffing and funding of all Colorado State University Cooperative Extension and Research and Experiment Station agent positions by Colorado State University and believes counties should have a voting seat on the CSU Extension Advisory Board, given their contributions to this program. While CCI recognizes and supports the opportunities arising from the growth of renewable energy, CCI opposes renewable energy mandates that result in undue fiscal hardship or operational burdens on rural agriculture users.

## **GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

### **COUNTY POWERS**

County government should have power and resources commensurate with the responsibilities placed upon it. Where a service or function is a matter of local concern, local legislative authority is both appropriate and desirable. Counties assume a municipal role for many citizens in unincorporated areas by offering law enforcement, transportation, parks and recreation, waste management, sewer, and other services. CCI supports passage of legislation enhancing these county powers, including enhancement of the functional home rule option, and encourages ongoing study to determine the need for state legislation that better provides tools and resources for counties to deliver services at the local level. CCI strongly supports prior county approval of programs that must be funded with county property taxes but are not controlled or generated at the county level.

### **STATE AGENCY ACCOUNTABILITY**

CCI believes that state agencies deriving revenue from locally assessed fines, fees, permit processes and document review must clearly justify and quantify the local benefit of the tasks funded by these revenues.

### **JUDICIAL REVIEW**

CCI supports continued access to the courts by counties to secure judicial review of governmental agency actions.

### **SPECIAL DISTRICT REVIEW**

Special districts provide a variety of services to county constituents, so strong communication is paramount. Special districts and counties should partner and collaborate to ensure effective and cost-efficient service delivery. CCI supports continuing county control over the formation, modification, and continuation of special districts.

### **EMPLOYMENT AND PERSONNEL CONTROL**

CCI supports counties' right to full indemnification from the state for liability resulting from the actions of employees in the course of state mandated duties.

County employees are oftentimes community members, who should be valued. County commissioners are best equipped to determine fair-compensation that reflects the employees value and the available funding.

CCI supports workers' compensation reforms that will assist in better risk management and health care cost containment, as well as proposals that will lower other associated costs. CCI opposes mandates that raise workers' compensation costs.

### **GOVERNMENTAL IMMUNITY**

CCI supports maintaining the protection afforded by the governmental immunity statutes.

### **PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS**

CCI recognizes the necessary balance between private property and the public interest.

CCI recognizes the necessary balance between private property and the public interest. CCI strongly supports preservation of private property rights, including water rights, and government responsibility to provide just compensation for the taking of private property as defined by the Colorado Constitution and the United States Constitution.



## **ELECTIONS**

CCI supports equitable sharing of the costs of elections by all governmental entities with a stake in elections. CCI supports giving county governing bodies the local authority and flexibility to make local decisions on the conduct of elections in consultation with county election officials. CCI supports efforts to ensure the safety of our election workers.

## **ELECTED OFFICIAL COMPENSATION**

CCI believes the compensation of all county elected officials should be changed simultaneously to avoid tension between elected officials that results from salary increases being awarded to some but not others. CCI supports maintaining the ability of county elected officials to reduce their own salary at their discretion to meet budgetary constraints.

## **SALARY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

CCI strongly supports equal treatment in the statutes regarding the responsibility of municipalities, special districts and counties and the state to report personnel salary information. CCI also supports giving counties flexibility in methods of reporting county personnel salary and financial information.

## **PRIVATIZATION**

CCI believes privatization can be an effective management tool in the delivery of goods and services from local governments to their residents. Given the unique geographic characteristics, economic needs and other special circumstances of the various areas of Colorado, CCI believes privatization determinations should be made at the local level.

## **AUTHORITY TO ISSUE BUSINESS LICENSES**

CCI supports the grant of authority to counties to issue businesses in the unincorporated area of the county, similar to that of municipal authority.

## **NATURAL MEDICINE**

Counties support the additional local authority to regulate natural medicines in the same fashion as cannabis.

## **PUBLISHING REQUIREMENT**

CCI supports giving counties the ability to publish warrants, salaries, and semi-annual financial reports on a county website as an alternative to publishing in local newspapers.

## **COUNTY GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY & ACCESSIBILITY**

CCI strongly supports transparency and accessibility in county government and the citizens ability to engage with their government and elected officials. Transparency and accessibility requirements should strive to balance a citizen's right to know with financial and resource availability of the county.

## HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Counties are the front-door for services for Coloradoans in need. Our workers help their neighbors in some of the darkest and most uncertain moments in their lives. The strength of the county and state's shared financial partnership equates to better services for those who need supports to survive.

CCI advocates for local administration of the human services and public health system in order to maximize the flexibility and responsiveness of the system to local needs, while ensuring efficient management and local control. CCI opposes any effort that centralization of these services.

CCI supports flexibility at the county level in providing programming and services to best meet local needs without shifting costs to counties and negatively impacting county government. CCI believes the state should fund mandated programs and ensure that one-time dollars (such as those available through the American Rescue Plan Act) are not used for on-going programs or costs.

CCI supports county control of personnel matters consistent with applicable federal law. CCI supports immunity for social services personnel and social services delivery agencies and state support of defense and liability.

### BEHAVIORAL HEALTH POLICY

CCI supports an enhanced state focus and adequate state and federal funds to provide locally based efficient and effective behavioral health services. CCI supports implementation of exemplary local programs through state-funded incentives. CCI supports removal of funding barriers to evidence-based practices.

CCI supports collaboration among state and county departments of human services, law enforcement, judicial, mental health centers and substance abuse providers on all behavioral health issues that are of mutual interest. CCI supports efforts to ensure collaboration across state departments to ensure effective treatment for individuals and provide for a seamless experience, across payment providers.

CCI is supportive of legislation that promotes effective and coordinated mental health and substance abuse treatment through the appropriate sharing of information.

CCI supports training of law enforcement officers to more effectively recognize and take appropriate action with offenders who have mental health and/or substance abuse disorders. Appropriate diversion for mental illness and substance abuse is extremely important. These critical services should be available before, during and after incarceration.

Especially at a time when we know Colorado's youth are facing profound crises, CCI supports the creation of a comprehensive, state-wide System of Care that serves children, youth, and young adults under the age of twenty-one with the following core elements:

- Standardized screening and assessments;
- Expanded crisis response and stabilization services;
- Tiered care coordination for moderate and intensive level of need, including high-fidelity wrap around;
- Individualized, culturally responsive, trauma-informed and evidenced based services and supports (including in-home, community based, and out-of-home placements);
- Parent and youth peer support;
- Respite care; and
- Individualized, youth-guided, family-driven care planning.

CCI supports the Memorandum of Understanding negotiated pursuant to Colorado's Opioid Settlement and the efforts of the locally-driven regional Opioid Abatement Councils.

## **CHILD WELFARE**

CCI recognizes the primary responsibility for children lies with parents. CCI believes that child welfare intervention is only appropriate, and should be reserved for, those circumstances where the physical, mental or emotional health of the child or the safety of the community is threatened. CCI supports the rights of children to reside in a safe environment and to be free from physical, mental and emotional harm, and that all actions taken be in the best interests of the child.

CCI does not support wholesale revisions to the Colorado Children's Code (Title 19). Any revisions should explicitly involve county child welfare experts.

CCI desires funding the findings of the Child Welfare Funding model (developed pursuant to SB21-277) and to address the underfunded "242 Child Welfare Staffing" line item. The child welfare allocation formula should be agile and responsive to community needs. Lastly, increased prevention funding and programming is a valuable investment to prevent unnecessary and expensive further system involvements.

Commissioners find it unacceptable that child welfare caseworkers continue to toggle between two systems (Trails Mod and Trails Legacy). CCI supports state efforts to modernize and streamline the Trails system.

Commissioners realize the value of Collaborative Management Programs (CMP); however, believe their value derives from local collaboration that identifies community need. We also know that these programs are underfunded to meet the demand on critical programs that serve multisystem-involved youth.

### *Foster Care/Out-Of-Home Placement*

The counties and other entities involved with out-of-home placements should have the option to negotiate rates and resolve differences on placement decisions at the local level.

Counties support mechanisms that will further expand the continuum of placements for children needing out of home placement, including increased state-funding/incentives to these providers.

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION**

CCI emphasizes the importance of strong early childhood development for all Colorado children to ensure they become responsible, successful members of society. This involves, and CCI supports policies that, addresses needs such as family support, proper nutrition, health, and quality early education. The organization advocates for a safe and healthy childcare environment by collaborating with local providers and health experts.

CCI recognizes the importance of early childhood care and education as a workforce issue and as an important early development tool while respecting parental choice. CCI supports locally controlled, quality, accessible and affordable childcare for all families.

CCI advocates for local control of income eligibility requirements, parental co-pays, and provider reimbursement rates.

CCI believes the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) is a valuable benefit to support low-income families access childcare. We recognize that current funding to CCAP does not meet the real need in our communities and support closing this gap. Programmatic administrative burdens should be minimized in order to maximize available funding for families.

## JUVENILE JUSTICE

CCI supports a continuum of approaches to prevent juvenile justice involvement, especially the promotion of effective prevention and early intervention programs for youth and families at risk. Where possible, programs should remain flexible to permit development of locally appropriate solutions and reflect available community resources. Whenever possible, a continuum of community-based services should be utilized to support at-risk and justice-involved children to avoid unnecessary system-involvement.

## PUBLIC & MEDICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

CCI supports county input into a state budget management process. CCI supports the continued mitigation of excessive county tax burdens including but not limited to the county tax base relief fund.

CCI advocates for 100 percent reimbursement from the state to each county to administer the food stamp, Medicaid and other adult assistance programs. Furthermore, CCI recognizes the results of the comprehensive assessment of the administration of public and medical assistance programs (pursuant to SB22-235) and urges the state to provide the recommended funding levels, to support county departments of human services.

Commissioners realize the inadequacies of the Colorado Benefits Management System (CBMS), which results in poor experiences for community members seeking benefits and burn-out of our eligibility workforce. CCI urges state investments to either stabilize and improve the agility of CBMS or create a new system. CCI also supports a framework for awareness, accountability, and transparency of the CBMS system.

CCI supports the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs and believes related Federal funding should be utilized for TANF programming, especially those that reflect community needs.

### *Medicaid Services*

CCI supports improvements to the Medicaid delivery system and supports programs, policies and laws that encourage full enrollment for Medicaid and CHP+.

CCI advocates for a local application site in each county at the option of local government.

Modifications and improvements to the Medicaid program should consider workload changes for eligibility staff and be assisted with sufficient resources for implementation (including funding and IT-investments).

CCI opposes any requirement for county financial support for Medicaid services.

## PUBLIC HEALTH

### *Mission & Functions*

The health of the public be protected and promoted to the greatest extent possible through the public health system while respecting individual rights to dignity, health information privacy, nondiscrimination, due process, and other legally protected interests.

CCI supports the mission of state and local public health agencies to provide leadership and protect and promote the public's health by:

- 1) Promoting healthy conditions;
- 2) Providing or promoting the provision of essential public health services and functions that are appropriate for the populations being served;
- 3) Encouraging collaboration among public and private sector partners in the public health system; and
- 4) Seeking adequate funding to provide essential public health services and functions or accomplish public health goals through public or private sources.

This policy statement shall not be construed to require an individual or agency within the public health system to provide specific health services or to mandate local public health agencies to implement unfunded programs. CCI supports increasing state funding for local public health. CCI advocates for a stable, long-term, state funding source. CCI supports licensing, inspection, quality improvement, and health protection functions and an equitable system allowing counties to recoup their costs.

#### *Roles and Responsibilities*

CCI recognizes the following essential public health roles:

- 1) Monitor health status to identify and solve community health problems;
- 2) Investigate and diagnose health problems and health hazards in the community;
- 3) Inform, educate, and empower individuals about health issues;
- 4) Mobilize public and private sector to identify and solve health problems;
- 5) Develop policies, plans, and programs that support individual and community health efforts;
- 6) Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety;
- 7) Link individuals to needed personal health services;
- 8) Continue to provide or work toward the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable;
- 9) Encourage a competent public health workforce;
- 10) Evaluate personal and population-based health services; and
- 11) Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.

The provision of essential public health services and functions are shared goals of the public health system to achieve the mission of public health. CCI supports state and local government's responsibility for assuring that the health system accomplishes the mission of public health as long as adequate resources are available to do so. While certain public health functions must be performed by state and local public health agencies, these agencies may also collaborate with public and private sector partners within the public health system.

#### *Public Health Powers*

CCI recognizes that local public health agencies should be authorized to provide or implement local public health services and functions consistent with the needs of each county, and must retain and expand local control by local elected leaders held accountable by local voters.

CCI supports initiatives that provide comprehensive local and state solutions; that focus on preventive, cost-effective and locally flexible approaches; and that manage, fairly distribute and leverage resources. CCI opposes the preemption or elimination of local health and environmental rules and policies. Any Medicaid managed care system should address access to quality care.

#### *Funding*

The state shall reimburse counties for all locally administered state public and environmental health programs. CCI opposes any local public and environmental health mandates without adequate funding. CCI opposes shifting responsibility and liability from the private sector or other levels of government to county government. CCI advocates for a stable, long-term state funding source for statewide poison control information services.

## **SENIOR SERVICES AND ADULT PROTECTION**

Commissioners realize the increasing aging demographic in our communities. Thus, it is imperative that the state prioritize supporting local Area Agencies on Aging (for its prevention services) and Adult Protection Services (for its protection services).

## **VETERAN SERVICES**

CCI supports sustainable funding for veteran services in Colorado.

## **JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY**

### **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

CCI supports and protects counties' emergency management roles while maintaining the effectiveness of our all-hazards public safety preparedness programs, and emergency responses to natural and manmade disasters. CCI urges additional state and federal resources be made available to enhance and expand community resiliency planning and mitigation efforts.

### **FIRE PREVENTION AND MITIGATION**

CCI supports additional funding for planning and implementation of programs designed to reduce the threat of wildfire. Due to the growing number of homes in the wild land/urban interface, CCI supports county efforts to develop comprehensive plans, building codes and community partnerships that address the threats of wildfire, especially those in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI). CCI supports the state emergency fire fund and the shared efforts to increase this fund. Additional state funding for fire prevention, mitigation and response should not come out of the energy and mineral impact assistance fund.

### **PROSECUTION & COURT FACILITIES**

CCI supports a more reasonable and equitable funding arrangement for judicial functions mandated to counties, including the district attorney's office and court-related facilities and security costs.

CCI supports the concept and use of drug courts and other specialty courts to divert mentally ill and substance using offenders away from the traditional justice system.

CCI supports adequate state funding for courthouse security that pays for the needs of individual counties.

### **COUNTY JAIL FACILITIES**

Commissioners understand the value of uniform standards across county Jails; to best realize these standards, the state should make funding available for county jail facilities to come into compliance with these standards.

CCI supports timely and adequate (commensurate with actual costs) reimbursement for housing state inmates in county facilities. CCI also supports state action to alleviate the existing backlog of state inmates in county facilities.

Commissioners support the federal repeal of the Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy (MIEP), which prohibits the utilization of Medicaid for individuals during their time in county jail. CCI supports Colorado's efforts to utilize Medicaid as individuals prepare to depart from county jail.

### **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**

CCI supports the goal that the mentally and developmentally disabled should not be incarcerated in local jails, and that programs to provide alternative institutional or community-based residential facilities and services should be developed.

CCI supports funding for services and treatment to offenders who are released from incarceration into the community.

CCI supports increased and sustainable funding to counties from the Jail Based Behavioral Health Services (JBBS) program to provide appropriate behavioral health services to inmates while supporting continuity of care within the community after release from incarceration.

## **JUDICIAL REVIEW**

CCI supports counties' ability to secure judicial review of governmental agency actions.

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT AND CRIME**

CCI supports a continuum of approaches to prevent violence, including effective diversion and deflection programs. Where possible, programs should remain flexible to permit development of locally appropriate solutions.

CCI supports strong and efficient relationships between all levels of government with respect to the criminal justice system and public safety systems. CCI supports the responsible expenditure of taxpayer funds in association with the safe and effective operations of Colorado's public safety systems.

## **IMMIGRATION**

CCI recognizes that immigration is a federal responsibility, and therefore encourages Congress to develop meaningful immigration legislation that eliminates unfunded mandates on county governments and helps counties work in partnership with federal partners to meet the needs of our communities. CCI believes that counties must have the ability to fully work with federal partners on immigration enforcement in order to protect our communities.



## **LAND USE AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

### **LAND USE**

CCI supports local control in land use decisions, recognizing that growth, development, natural resource management, and environmental concerns differ across communities. Local governments are uniquely positioned to ensure community wellbeing and public safety are at the forefront of these decisions. CCI will oppose any efforts to supersede, override, or preempt local land use authority. Additionally, land that has a reduced value by virtue of being open space or having a conservation easement should, if condemned by another entity, be valued at no less than the original value.

### **LAND USE TOOLS**

CCI supports coordinating planning activities with state, federal and other local governments. CCI also supports mechanisms that mitigate the costs of growth and redevelopment and promote smart growth strategies. Counties should have access to impact fees, real estate transfer taxes, and other growth-financing tools to manage development effectively. CCI also supports the ability of counties to engage in programs such as transferable/purchase development right programs, conservation easements or leases, and fee simple acquisitions of open space properties. Reasonable legislative action should be pursued to provide counties with tools to address the impacts from 35-acre or larger parcels of land, as these parcels are typically exempt from subdivision regulations.

CCI supports the use of data and local housing needs assessments as best practices in the development of planning documents and planning decisions. CCI also supports any effort to maintain or strengthen the statutory powers granted to counties under Article 65.1 of Title 24, Colorado Revised Statutes, referred to as “1041 powers,” which must be broadly and liberally construed to ensure maximum flexibility and authority for counties.

CCI encourages counties to participate in the creation of master plans and comprehensive plans between municipalities and counties, along with a strong emphasis on public involvement in the development of comprehensive plans and master plans. However, CCI opposes requiring the submission of a comprehensive plan or master plan to the electorate, which lacks legislative liability for enforcement, and supports the current format of comprehensive plan or master plan approval. CCI will not support the expansion of standing to allow unaffected parties to sue local governments beyond the tests established by the United States and Colorado Supreme Courts for standing.

### **PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS**

CCI strongly supports preserving private property rights and government responsibility to provide just compensation for the taking of private property as defined by the Colorado Constitution and the United States Constitution. CCI recognizes the necessary balance between private property and the public interest.

### **HOUSING**

CCI believes that affordability and attainability of housing are important local issues, acknowledging that the question of what constitutes affordable housing varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. CCI supports a broad range of affordable housing opportunities and local policies that promote such opportunities. CCI also supports giving counties authority to enter into agreements with property owners and developers for affordable housing as part of site-specific land use approvals.

CCI encourages communities to take advantage of funding opportunities such as the voter-approved Proposition 123 and supports efforts to increase the funding or incentives available to local communities for housing initiatives.

Short-term rentals (STRs) are a significant element of Colorado's housing stock, with impacts on local economies, housing availability, and revenues. CCI supports providing local governments with the necessary tools and flexibility to manage STRs in the manner that best supports their communities' needs.

## **CONSTRUCTION**

Counties have a public safety responsibility to ensure code-abiding construction. CCI recognizes the importance of preventing overly burdensome regulations but would oppose efforts to reduce county construction review and oversight authority, as these powers are essential for addressing public safety concerns. CCI supports timely adjudication and appropriate penalties for building code violations. Additionally, CCI supports efforts to enforce "green construction", recycling efforts, and wildlife and wildfire safe construction.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

CCI supports adequate local and state regulation of extractive industries. CCI opposes any state or federal efforts to preempt or limit local government regulatory authority over any extractive industry. CCI encourages coordination among industry, local governments, and state agencies regarding current and future development. CCI believes it is crucial local governments have financing necessary to address the impacts of any energy industry and ensure the community's economic viability.

## **ENERGY**

CCI recognizes the benefits of energy planning and energy conservation and supports the development and construction of cost-effective, environmentally sound projects (including water storage or hydroelectric projects) consistent with local land use policies in order to meet energy needs. Accordingly, CCI supports programs and resources to help counties deploy renewable energy resources where locally appropriate and with local support. CCI encourages counties to incorporate energy considerations in their long-term planning and supports efforts to empower counties to implement sustainable, reliable energy efficiency practices. CCI opposes state preemption of local renewable energy siting authority and associated reduction of 1041 powers.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

CCI supports appropriate efforts to preserve Colorado's natural environment while managing its resources in a responsible manner. CCI supports voluntary conservation measures that enhance or protect local community values and public goals and that are consistent with applicable laws and regulations. CCI encourages state and federal mitigation of the impacts and cost burdens imposed upon local governments when they are required to implement unfunded environmental mandates. CCI supports efforts to seek state and local primacy when appropriate.

CCI supports the establishment of appropriate health-related standards for emissions and discharges based on sound scientific data and the use of risk/cost-benefit and economic impact analyses. Regarding wetlands, CCI believes the public-at-large, not individual property owners, must bear the burden to protect vital wetlands. CCI urges Congress and the states to review practices, statutes, and policies in order to protect and preserve agricultural interests.

CCI opposes any designation of wild and scenic rivers or any designation in Colorado where the impacted counties have not participated in the designation, or where the designation would conflict with local land use policies.

CCI supports responsible county authority to mitigate and manage impacts from solid and hazardous waste facilities and will oppose efforts to preempt or limit local authority.

## **WATER**

CCI recognizes water is one of Colorado's most precious natural resources, and an adequate, dependable supply of water is crucial to all areas of the state. Therefore, increased yields and water conservation and reuse measures are paramount to insuring the future of Colorado's water supply. The enhancement or development of local water supplies in the pursuit of additional storage should consider improvements to and rehabilitation of existing structures as well as the development of new structures. Such efforts are both necessary and prudent for the protection and security of the state's water supply. These endeavors should benefit both the area of origin and the area of use.

CCI supports Colorado's doctrine of prior appropriation and opposes both attempts by the federal government to usurp the system of prior appropriation in the issuance of necessary federal permits as well as federally reserved water rights. Pursuant to the Colorado Constitution and state statutes, CCI recognizes water rights are private property rights to be used for decreed beneficial purposes. Any future water supply solutions and water conservation and reuse measures should respect and not injure existing water rights and should seek to increase Colorado's ability to capture and put to beneficial use that water to which the state is entitled under existing and any water compacts.

CCI also supports state primacy, county control, the application of 1041 powers to water projects to address local impacts, and protection of Colorado's water supply. In addition, such measures and solutions should seek to increase Colorado's ability to capture and put to beneficial use that water to which the state is entitled under existing and future water compacts. CCI supports developing and constructing cost-effective, environmentally sound water storage or hydroelectric projects consistent with local land use policies in order to utilize Colorado's full river system entitlement and meet state and national energy and growth needs.

The State of Colorado should provide incentive-based solutions and, when possible, funding mechanisms to assist local governments in achieving these goals. As all Coloradoans have a vested interest in solving Colorado's water resource/supply problems, there must be a concerted effort to educate all Coloradoans on the importance of water and the need to conserve and manage this vital yet limited resource in order to provide for the needs of the future generations of Coloradoans.

## **PUBLIC LANDS**

Federal and state public lands have tremendous impacts on county government, both positively and negatively. CCI supports a strong working relationship among state, federal, and local governments to coordinate planning functions and implement various policies that minimize burdens on local governments and individual private property rights. CCI supports experimentation initiatives (e.g., adaptive grazing management and wildfire risk reduction projects) in federal land management that are supported by the affected local governments.

### **LAND MANAGEMENT**

State and federal land management must minimize the negative impacts from wildfire, fuel loads, road maintenance, search and rescue efforts, law enforcement, wildlife, predators, pests, noxious weeds, and undesirable plants. CCI recognizes that wildfires and forest insect infestations may be indications of forest and range health problems. CCI encourages the state and federal governments to provide sufficient funding to alleviate the burden from those negative impacts on local governments. CCI encourages public land managers to develop and implement vegetation management programs that create and maintain healthy, diverse wildland communities attractive for recreation use and scenic quality; provide habitat for a wide variety of wildlife species; reduce fuel loads; and assure a steady supply of water, forage and wood products for the use and benefit of society. All policies and plans for public lands must be consistent with affected counties' policies.

### **ENDANGERED SPECIES**

CCI supports the recovery and preservation of endangered species and supports efforts to amend the Endangered Species Act in order to improve flexibility under the act. CCI urges consideration of sound science, cost-benefit and economic impact analyses, and recovery plans when proposing species for listing and furthermore encourages balancing the impact of the Endangered Species Act with that of other legislation. Overall, CCI supports proactive and creative efforts to restore or reintroduce endangered species considering all potential impacts and subject to local government involvement and approval. Local input and buy-in are critical and necessary for such efforts.

### **SPECIAL LAND DESIGNATIONS**

CCI supports multiple uses on all federal and state public lands. The efficient administration, conservation and development of Colorado's natural resources must be balanced with protection of the environment and consideration of local needs. CCI supports special land designations (including Wilderness) that are consistent with land use policies within the counties and are supported by the county within which the designation is proposed. CCI strongly encourages the Colorado congressional delegation to base future wilderness legislation with county input. CCI supports strong local involvement and representation on the Multiple Resource Advisory Councils and CCI will act upon any public land reforms.

### **STATE LAND BOARD**

The implementation of the changes to Article IX, Sections 3, 9 and 10 of the state constitution (1996's Amendment 16) must be equitable to counties, and CCI will ensure the Stewardship Trust process considers local government concerns regarding nominated lands. CCI urges the State Land Board to adopt criteria to ensure consistent treatment of nominated lands. CCI believes the State Land Board should consider county and community input as to the long-term and short-term uses of their lands, especially in areas with historical agricultural use.

### **GREAT OUTDOORS COLORADO**

CCI supports the objectives of Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) and county involvement in guiding GOCO towards wise investments in Colorado that fulfill the public's trust. GOCO should provide

technical assistance to counties for development of projects eligible for GOCO funds, such as parks and related outdoor facilities, including environmental education facilities and county fairgrounds. CCI also supports Section 10 of the GOCO amendment requiring PILT payments to counties, encourages distribution of lottery proceeds to counties consistent with article XXVII of the Colorado Constitution, and opposes diversions of lottery funds to other state programs.

## **RIGHTS-OF-WAY CLAIMS (RS 2477)**

CCI urges the Department of Interior agencies to expediently implement secretarial direction on processing Revised Statute 2477 claims and further urges USDA agencies to adopt a similar policy. CCI also supports congressional legislation and/or Administration adoption of a new policy regarding RS2477 rights of way that is uniform for all and allows federal land managing agencies the ability to recognize these rights-of-way. CCI also urges Congress and the Administration to consult with local officials in the development of a new policy and/or legislation.

## **WATER**

Water is one of Colorado's most precious natural resources, and an adequate, dependable supply of water is crucial to all areas of the state. With respect to public lands, CCI supports balancing traditional consumptive needs and non-consumptive beneficial uses for environmental needs and recreational economics. CCI supports Colorado's doctrine of prior appropriation and opposes federally reserved water rights and attempts by the federal government to usurp the system of prior appropriation.

CCI supports necessary water conservation and reuse efforts, efforts to seek and maintain state primacy and county control, the application of 1041 powers to water projects to address local impacts, and protection of Colorado's water resources, while avoiding additional future out-of-state compact calls.

CCI opposes any designation of Wild and Scenic Rivers or any designation in Colorado where the impacted counties have not participated in the designation or where the designation would conflict with local land use policies or hinder full utilization of the river system.

## **CCI PUBLIC LANDS FUND**

CCI encourages Colorado's public lands counties to continue supporting CCI's Public Lands Steering Committee in order to ensure adequate representation on federal and state public land legislation or regulatory efforts.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMPENSATION**

CCI supports full congressional appropriation of Payment-In-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILT) to compensate counties for the costs associated with the presence of federal tax-exempt lands. CCI supports all efforts to compensate counties for lost property tax revenue from tax-exempt lands. Consistent with C.R.S 30-25-301 et seq, compensation must equal the estimated assessment of ad valorem taxes on land withdrawn from county tax rolls for the purposes of wildlife conservation and public recreation. CCI maintains that control of the allocation of U.S. Forest Service moneys pursuant to C.R.S. 30-29-101(3) must remain solely with the boards of county commissioners. CCI supports maximizing and fully appropriating federal payments and taxes due to Colorado counties related to the presence of federal property, including but not limited to federal mineral lease, secure rural schools, and forest service payments. CCI opposes mandatory linkages among federal payment programs that reduce county receipts.

## **TAXATION AND FINANCE**

### **TAX POLICY**

CCI supports a comprehensive review and restructure of policies on collecting and distributing tax revenues, as well as tax surpluses. We support intergovernmental cooperation and will work to implement such collaboration.

CCI believes tax policy reform should ensure the powers granted to counties and the funding mechanisms available are sufficient to address county responsibilities. Tax policy reform should create a fair and equitable distribution of the property tax burden among all property. County resources should be broadened and diversified to eliminate regressivity and lessen the reliance on property taxation. CCI supports examination of all legislative alternatives to ensure local government has adequate authority to meet its statutory responsibilities and the expectations of residents. CCI supports allowing counties flexibility in the use and deposit of county revenues. CCI believes counties should be involved in reviewing any proposal concerning the use of surplus tax revenues to ensure that the needs in various areas of the state are considered.

CCI supports the ability for counties to seek local voter approval to diversify county revenue. This would allow local governments to respond more effectively to the specific needs of their communities as well as address changing community factors which have made it even more essential for local governments to have the tools necessary to address these shifts. This approach strengthens the connection between residents and their local government, giving communities a greater say in shaping their future and ensuring that initiatives are brought directly to local electors when needed.

### **PROPERTY TAX-FUNDED PROGRAMS**

In order to preserve counties' ability to fulfill their statutory duties, CCI supports requiring the state to reimburse local governments and districts for any loss in property tax revenues caused by constitutional or statutory changes. CCI supports allowing counties to reduce funding for or eliminate programs neither controlled nor generated at the county level and funded by county tax revenues.

Suggested change -- In order to preserve counties' ability to fulfill their statutory duties, CCI supports allowing counties to reduce funding for or eliminate programs neither controlled nor generated at the county level and funded by county tax revenues. CCI also encourages the legislature to refrain from making any additional changes to the property tax system to allow for great budget certainty and allow time for the changes of 2022, 2023 and 2024 to be implemented

### **ASSESSMENT ISSUES**

CCI supports clear and consistent standards for assessors to follow in classification and valuation of property. CCI also supports changes in the classification of agricultural real property for property tax purposes that will prevent abuses of the classification and permit agricultural classification for only bonafide agricultural operations. CCI supports fair and equitable assessment of state valued properties.

As a general matter, CCI supports requiring petitioners/taxpayers to exhaust their local remedies before they appeal a decision to the Board of Assessment Appeals (BAA), requiring the evidence considered at a BAA hearing be the same as that presented at the local hearing, and that evidence based on mass appraisal valuation practices be sufficient and acceptable regarding valuation of residential properties. CCI further supports amendments to the existing BAA appeals process requiring appropriate fees and disclosures.

### **STATE FUNDS/TABOR**

CCI supports allowing counties to treat all funds transferred from another governmental entity, as “pass through” funds, not subject to the revenue and spending limits established under Article X, Section 20 of the Colorado Constitution. CCI supports a constitutional amendment enabling a county to institute a real estate transfer tax upon an affirmative vote of local residents.

## **LIMITED GAMING**

CCI supports Colorado's constitutional provisions on limited gaming. Decisions by the Limited Gaming Control Commission should continue to provide appropriate and adequate support for limited gaming communities and contiguous communities to mitigate the direct impacts on those communities created by the growth and development of the gaming industry.

CCI is strongly opposed to diversion of local gaming revenue by the Governor or General Assembly

## **TOURISM, RESORTS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **TOURISM & RECREATION**

Tourism plays an important role in the economies of counties around the state, and county officials are sensitive to the fact that Colorado's tourism industry takes many forms. These forms include but are not limited to the following:

- Winter recreation in the mountain resort communities,
- Year-round recreation in the state's parks, waters, and historic and natural areas;
- Conference and convention business;
- Attendance at fairs and trade shows;
- Visual and performing arts activities;
- Tourism in gaming towns; and
- Attendance at the wide variety of athletic and sporting events that take place throughout Colorado.

CCI believes these diverse recreation and tourism opportunities set Colorado apart from other states and emphasizes that the issues and needs associated with each kind of tourism encompass numerous topics, including tax policy, land use, immigration, affordable housing, and transportation. Ultimately, the issues of one type of tourism are not always common to all others.

CCI endorses recreational uses consistent with community goals and recognizes the important role county government has in promoting and supporting recreational activities within their communities. Recreational activities and their supportive services should receive adequate public funding, and CCI encourages state support of such activities.

Encouraging a balanced approach, CCI particularly supports sustainable recreational opportunities that consider a community's economy and environment. Resources should be sufficient to support recreational activities while maintaining the integrity of natural processes. CCI supports projects and programs that further sustainable recreation while protecting the environment.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

In addition to its role as a primary economic driver, commissioners recognize tourism and recreational opportunities contribute to business relocation decisions and other economic development opportunities and are supportive of programs and opportunities equipping counties to further economic development tourism and sustainable economies recreational opportunities in their communities. Examples include enterprise zones, business incentives and credits, development grants and programs, appropriately trained employees, economic development councils, and educational opportunities.

Sound approaches to tourism can lead to job growth, increased revenues and economic diversification, and CCI supports opportunities to further these approaches. Small scale (cottage) industries offer an economic base to small resort/tourist communities. Impacts from tourist-related development must be addressed at the time of development to prevent unforeseen and unacceptable costs to the local taxpayers.



Tourism flourishes in attractive communities. CCI supports efforts that respect county authority while fostering community beautification and enhancement. Protection of the natural, scenic, cultural, educational, and historical environments is key to the success of a tourist/resort community.

CCI urges and supports a strong partnership among counties, the state, municipalities and industry in the design and implementation of economic development incentives and programs.

## **TOURISM, HOUSING, AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Tourism and resort-oriented counties often offer low-paying jobs and a high cost of living. A stable and sustainable community depends on housing opportunities in the county for those who support, volunteer, study, recreate, or work in the community. CCI supports community-backed affordable/attainable housing efforts. CCI supports efforts to attain stable local, state, and federal funding and endorses private sector involvement, wherever possible, in cooperation with federal, state, and local agencies.

The impacts on a resort community from tourism on housing, transportation, road maintenance, public health human services, education, and emergency services (police, sheriff, ambulance, fire, hospital emergency, etc.) are often shared by communities and jurisdictions outside the resort community itself. Therefore, CCI supports attempts to develop revenue sharing programs that help to mitigate the impacts of resort/tourism activities, as well as general mechanisms to support or mitigate such impacts.

CCI also supports the appointment of county commissioners to housing-related boards in Colorado, including the Colorado Housing Board, the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority Board, and the Private Activity Bond Allocation Committee.

## **TRANSIT**

Public transportation for visitors and guests in a tourist/resort community provides an essential service to those guests while protecting the qualities of life those visitors are seeking clean air, quiet, traffic free environment, pedestrian friendly atmosphere, and accessibility. In these communities, trails are recreational needs as well as commuter routes and a component of community transit needs.

Public transit is essential for those communities that depend on a transient or non-local work force. CCI supports legislation and programs that address and financially support efforts to provide affordable, safe and efficient public transportation in tourist/resort communities. CCI also supports development of a highspeed rail network within Colorado and designation of a rocky mountain high speed rail corridor.

## **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

CCI recognizes the challenge counties face regarding their commitment to a stable, successful, yet often temporary workforce. CCI supports programs to develop the local workforce and to promote stability within the workforce.

CCI supports state and federal initiatives that clarify immigration issues and provide solutions to today's immigration challenges. Counties impacted by the enforcement of federal and state immigration laws need federal and state support and should be reimbursed for their local law enforcement expenditures.

#### *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Implementation*

The federal “Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014” (WIOA) requires increased local input in developing the state plan for workforce development centers and allows increased local control over the implementation of such plan. The purposes of WIOA are to establish a central, coordinated delivery of services at the local or regional level providing job training, adult education and literacy programs and services through a more streamlined and flexible workforce development system. WIOA provides local governments with increased responsibility for the administration of the workforce program.

CCI recognizes and fully supports the major purpose and goal of WIOA, which is to facilitate and promote partnerships with the private sector and employers who play a primary role in the successful implementation of WIOA. In order to achieve successful implementation of WIOA in Colorado, CCI supports the following:

- The local elected official (LEO) shall maintain a strong role in all phases and levels of WIOA implementation;
- The elimination of the current fragmentation of programs and coordination of such programs at the state and local level;
- The establishment of a local delivery model with local flexibility in delivering and operating employment and training services; and
- Delivery of such services within local areas developed by and at the option of local governments.

CCI supports a workforce system under WIOA in Colorado that provides counties with the maximum flexibility in meeting WIOA requirements and allows for local control throughout implementation.

### **FINANCING GROWTH**

CCI supports allowing counties to meet the need for additional government services required by growth through mechanisms that mitigate the costs of growth, including fair and equitable impact fees and real estate transfer taxes. CCI also supports transferable/purchase development right programs and the use of conservation easements/leases.

### **SEVERANCE TAX/MINERAL LEASE FUNDS**

It is crucial local governments have the funds necessary to address the impacts of the energy industry and increase their economic viability. Therefore, CCI supports the continued allocation of severance tax and federal mineral lease revenues to areas of the state that are socially and economically impacted by the development, processing or energy conversion of minerals and mineral fuels. CCI is strongly opposed to any diversion or taking of the local government severance and/or mineral lease tax funds by the Governor

or General Assembly.

## **LIMITED GAMING**

CCI supports Colorado's constitutional provisions on limited gaming. Decisions by the Limited Gaming Control Commission should continue to provide appropriate and adequate support for limited gaming communities and contiguous communities to mitigate the direct impacts on those communities created by the growth and development of the gaming industry.

## **FEDERAL LANDS**

Recognizing Colorado's federal lands provide the amenities that support tourist/resort communities as back country, wilderness or ski areas, CCI supports legislation and appropriation of funds to compensate those communities for the loss of those lands on the county's tax rolls. CCI supports maximizing and fully appropriating federal payments and taxes due to Colorado counties related to the presence of federal property. CCI supports adequate and appropriate Payment In Lieu Of Taxes (PILT) to those impacted communities. CCI supports programs that provide assistance to those communities that exist at the edge of the public lands, that must accommodate the visitors drawn to that public land, but that may not directly benefit from PILT funds or other already designated funds. In counties where the presence of federal lands (whether BLM, U.S. Forest Service, national park, wilderness, or otherwise) enhance the opportunity for tourism and recreation, CCI supports federal agencies scoping and processing local government requirements for creation or enhancements of recreational amenities. Land swaps involving federal lands should be made within the affected county where feasible and should always provide adequate compensation of the affected entities, so the burden does not fall to communities.

## **TRANSPORTATION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

### **FEDERAL ROLE**

CCI believes the federal Highway Trust Fund should provide funds solely for highway programs authorized in federal highway legislation and not other non-highway purposes. CCI believes federal highway funding should not be contingent on state and/or local compliance with federal mandates. CCI supports giving counties more latitude in undertaking and concluding “off- system” road projects and giving the state and counties more flexibility in determining transportation solutions and funding categories, whether transit or highways. CCI believes federal review and approval authority should be limited to annual state plans and programs and not extend to individual projects. CCI further supports the passage of federal highway legislation that is in keeping with these principles. CCI supports the state transportation commission allocating the maximum allowable funds for “off system” bridges from the federal aid system.

### **STATE ROLE**

CCI supports county input into the development of state transportation plans and programs through the use of transportation planning regions (TPRs) or similar mechanisms. CCI believes TPRs should have access to state and federal planning dollars. CCI supports development of transportation recommendations and allocation of state transportation funds by the state transportation commission in a manner balancing both urban and rural needs. CCI recognizes that Colorado’s existing transportation infrastructure is insufficient and encourages the state to create additional funding and make adequate provisions for an expanded and improved transportation network.

CCI recognizes tolling may be an appropriate method of meeting transportation revenue needs in some circumstances; however, CCI is concerned about the impacts of tolling and supports requiring consultation with affected local entities prior to authorizing tolls on highways, bridges, tunnels, or other transportation facilities. CCI opposes tolling of any existing facility when there is no reasonable alternative route available to the traveling public. CCI supports the faithful implementation of 2005’s Referendum C, which stipulates that a portion of the additional state revenue is to be used for “roads, bridges, and other strategic transportation projects.” CCI also supports the implementation of appropriate accountability mechanisms to assure voter and statutory intent are honored.

### **LOCAL ROLE**

CCI believes counties are a proper forum for transportation planning. All boards of county commissioners should have an enhanced role in prioritizing regional and statewide projects in their area. CCI supports opportunities for counties to design their own transportation finance mechanisms to respond to local and regional transportation needs.

### **REVENUE ENHANCEMENTS**

CCI supports the use of the Highway Users Tax Fund (HUTF) funds solely for construction, maintenance and supervision of the highway system, which includes county roads and municipal streets, as provided in the state constitution, and the crediting of sales and use taxes attributable to motor vehicles and related items to the HUTF. CCI supports

methodologies including but not limited to bonding, public private partnerships and the issuing of state tax credits as options for expediting transportation projects. CCI believes counties should have a role in the selection and approval of transportation projects, transportation priorities and proposed sources of repayment for any transportation bonds that are issued. CCI supports using state general fund dollars for maintenance and construction of transportation projects.

CCI supports efforts to generate increased transportation revenue to address state and local transportation infrastructure needs – including a referred ballot measure to increase transportation revenues – provided that any new revenues generated are shared among state, county and municipal governments in the same proportions as current HUTF payments. As energy sources diversify, efforts should be made to ensure that historic funding sources remain solvent and allows for local governments to adequately fund transportation needs.

CCI supports an equitable HUTF allocation formula and restrictions on the use of “off the top” diversions. CCI is committed to ensuring local share back is provided for transportation projects from all transportation revenue sources and opposes funding mechanisms which eliminate or reduce local share back for transportation projects.

CCI believes state funding for transportation should be limited to projects identified through the statewide transportation planning process. CCI supports giving the Regional Transportation District and Regional Transportation Authorities flexibility to develop revenue enhancements to meet the demands of their residents. CCI also supports maximum local flexibility in administering funds available for local transportation projects.

## **MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION**

CCI supports the development and financing of multi-modal transportation plans and ensuring the protection and improvement of air and water quality as vital components of such plans. CCI recognizes trails as recreational needs, commuter routes and a component of community transit needs. Public transit is essential for those communities that depend on a transient or non-local work force. CCI supports legislation and programs that address and financially support efforts to provide affordable, safe and efficient public transportation in tourist/resort communities.

CCI supports development of a high-speed rail network within Colorado and designation of a rocky mountain high speed rail corridor.

## **AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT**

CCI supports full recognition of the ability of counties to plan and coordinate aviation with other modes of transportation and to control land use for airport development and operation. CCI also supports increasing the federal contribution amount on airport development projects. CCI believes revenues from taxes on aviation fuel should be used exclusively for aviation-related expenditures and supports the concept of returning 65 percent of fuel tax proceeds to the airport that generated them. CCI believes the state should better coordinate state and federal funds provided to counties with airports. CCI supports allowing the Division of Aeronautics to bid and negotiate contracts for

maintenance, construction and purchasing on behalf of local airports.

## **RAILROADS**

CCI believes counties should be given the authority and ability to protect rail lines and rights-of-way important to county needs. CCI also believes counties should be given the authority and ability to install crossings that address county needs and protect public safety. Relatedly, CCI supports continuation of federal funds to be used for rail crossing protection improvements and encourages the Colorado Department of Transportation and the Public Utilities Commission to work together to provide criteria for identifying hazardous rail crossings.

CCI supports rail maintenance, expansion, or relocation with county input and involvement.

## **TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

CCI acknowledges that not all areas of the state benefit from the same level of telecommunications competition and broadband services. Further, county governments are major consumers of telecommunications and broadband services, and changes in rates and regulations should balance the impact on county taxpayers and the benefits of deregulation. Reform of telecommunications policy should reflect a partnership of federal, state and local government. CCI believes counties should be involved in the planning and development of telecommunications services, to enhance economic, health care, and educational opportunities, as well as county operations and service delivery. CCI believes public subsidy of separate telecommunications systems for government, education, libraries and health care should be discouraged when it will have a detrimental impact on the competitive marketplace. In many areas of the state, public-private partnerships are a critical component in the local provision of telecommunication and broadband infrastructure, and any reforms to telecommunications policy need to recognize and encourage these partnerships. CCI opposes any state or federal regulations that restrict the ability of local governments to build, acquire or enter into partnerships for telecommunications infrastructure.

## **RIGHTS-OF-WAY**

When permission for use has been granted by a county, CCI supports the ability to obtain full cost recovery for the use of public rights-of-way by the private sector. Counties should be authorized to assess a fee for the commercial use of a county road right-of-way. Further, counties should be able to ensure transportation is not disrupted and the useful life of the right-of-way is not diminished. County or state fees for broadband access should not prohibit the provision of broadband services in rural areas of the state and we would oppose any new ongoing fees that would hinder the development of underserved areas of our state.

## **UNIVERSAL ACCESS**

CCI supports the adoption of telecommunications policy that ensures equitable access to telecommunications services and broadband services in both urban and rural areas but does not unduly burden any single segment of the telecommunications market. CCI supports the development of federal resources and other mechanisms to assist providing

telecommunications and broadband services, including data, video and voice transmission, to all areas. Universal service funds should be paid into by all communication service providers and should be used for the purpose of establishing and/or enhancing service in unserved and underserved areas of the state where costs are higher. CCI supports using these funds in a transparent manner.

## **PREEMPTION**

CCI opposes federal or state preemption of local taxing authority as applied to sales, services, and other transactions that make use of telecommunications services, software or hardware. CCI also opposes federal or state preemption of local land use authority as applied to the siting of towers, antennae or other receivers or transmitters necessary for the provision of telecommunications services.