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## **Local governments in Colorado team up to tackle climate change New resilience report outlines measures needed to reduce risks**

Representatives of local governments from across Colorado today released a report they described as “a call for action,” with 36 recommendations for actions by local governments and the state government to make Colorado’s communities more resilient to wildfires, heat waves, floods, ecosystem disruptions, and other climate-change-related risks.

Seventy-eight representatives from 30 local governments and six allied organizations, convened by the Colorado Climate Network and the Colorado Municipal League, worked for seven months to produce their consensus views in a Colorado Local Resilience Project report, outlining what local governments can do to assess and address climate-related risks, and what they need from the state government and others to do that.

“As the front line of direct contact with our state’s residents, local government plays a necessary and crucial role in addressing climate-related risks. As with any other risk to health, safety, and prosperity in our communities, local government must be an active participant,” said Karen Weitkunat, who just completed her term as mayor of Fort Collins and who participated in the project. “The local risks posed by climate change may be new, but local government action to reduce local risks has been important for as long as we have had local government.”

“These are the kinds of actions that have been taken in many other states,” said Sam Mamet, the executive director of the Colorado Municipal League. “In Colorado, though, this is the first time that local officials and staff—or anybody else—have come together to develop a comprehensive, detailed agenda of the climate preparedness actions that make sense here.”

Among the report’s recommendations are:

- That Colorado local governments assess their local climate-related risks and undertake preparedness planning and management actions to improve resilience in their communities.
- That local governments collaborate with one another and with the state and federal governments to coordinate the climate preparedness actions taken across jurisdictional boundaries.
- That the state government establish an ongoing process to assess in detail Colorado’s climate-related risks and prepare a comprehensive state-government-wide preparedness plan. Because a state preparedness plan is needed to provide a framework for consistent, coordinated local actions, as well as to guide state government actions, it is important that local governments (as well as other stakeholders) have opportunities to contribute to the development of a state plan.
- That the Colorado state government or another entity provide information to help local governments develop and implement effective preparedness actions.
- That the Colorado state government elevate the priority, funding, and staffing devoted to climate preparedness.

“The local officials and staff members and others who prepared this report have issued a call for action, beginning with more action by more local governments to take more action in their own communities to improve their local resilience,” said Stephen Saunders, the president of the Rocky Mountain Climate Organization, which administers the Colorado Climate Network. “Even more, though, the report lays out what local governments can do by working together and with the state government and others, because climate-related risks do not respect governmental boundaries and will take coordinated actions among all levels of government.”

The participants in the project come from seven of the 10 largest counties and seven of the 11 largest cities in the state, as well as smaller jurisdictions, plus other governmental and nonprofit organizations. The local governments represented in the project are El Paso County, the City and County of Denver, Jefferson County Open Space, the City of Colorado Springs, Larimer County, Boulder County, Douglas County, Pueblo County, the City of Lakewood, the City of Fort Collins, the City of Arvada, the City of Westminster, the City of Boulder, the City of Longmont, the City and County of Broomfield, Eagle County, the City of Golden, Pitkin County, the City of Durango, the City of Steamboat Springs, San Miguel County, the City of Aspen, the Town of Carbondale, the Town of Estes Park, the Town of Vail, the Town of Breckenridge, the Town of Frisco, the Town of Telluride, the Town of Nederland, and the Town of Dillon. Other entities represented in the project are the Boulder Valley School District, Denver Health, the High Country Conservation Center, Poudre Fire Authority, the Southwest Colorado Council of Governments, and the Tri-County Health Department.

Twelve staff members of state government agencies served as liaisons to the Local Resilience Project, attending the meetings of the project’s five work groups. Those work groups focused on cross-cutting issues, public health, infrastructure, natural resources and outdoor recreation, and wildfire preparedness and recovery.

The Colorado Climate Network supports efforts by local governments and allied organizations in Colorado to reduce and adapt to climate change. The Network is administered on behalf of its members (local governments and allied organizations) by the Rocky Mountain Climate Organization. The Colorado Municipal League is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization providing services and resources to assist municipal officials in managing their governments and serving the cities and towns of Colorado.

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