



**COLORADO**

**Governor Jared Polis**

January 25, 2022

**City of Louisville City Council**

Mayor Ashley Stolzmann, J. Caleb Dickinson, Chris Leh, Deborah Fahey, Maxine Most, Kyle Brown, Dennis Maloney

**Town of Superior Board of Trustees**

Mayor Clint Folsom, Mark Lacis, Ken Lish, Paige Hennen, Tim Howard, Neal Shah, Laura Skladzinski

To my colleagues, neighbors, friends, and residents of Louisville and Superior:

I watched in horror as the fire in Boulder County swept through communities destroying people's most valued possessions - all of their personal belongings, the entire content of their homes, and in some cases their beloved pets- the security they felt and the memories they made lost in a matter of hours. I mourn the loss of life from this horrible fire.

I understand and agree with the concerns that have been raised from members of the community, from your councils, from builders, and from others who have emphasized the absolute importance of building back as quickly and affordably as possible. The victims of this disaster are facing great uncertainty as they learn just how much, or sadly in many cases how little, resources will be made available through insurance and FEMA. We continue to work closely with these entities to maximize funding available and continue to move quickly in partnership with our federal representatives, recovery coordinators, and others to support you in this time of uncertainty.

Fortunately, the balance between speed, affordability, and rebuilding to the highest standards of modern energy efficiency and fire resilience are not trade-offs we have to make. We must find a solution that provides the opportunity to build back faster, cleaner, and stronger than ever. And my administration is committed to working with you and your communities to do just that.

As you continue to navigate the challenges of reconstruction and consider if or how to modify your building codes and regulations to support fast reconstruction, I am writing to convey the fullest support of the State of Colorado in ensuring your communities serve as a model for sustainable recovery to reduce utility bills, prevent future fires, and build back at record speed.

To do so, I will partner with the legislature to introduce legislation this session for funding for sustainable and resilient recovery for your community and others in the future. I will also pursue the full extent of resources available to us, including federal funds from the Bipartisan

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and existing state resources so that no resident has to choose between speed, affordability, sustainability, and resilience. We will ensure that the City of Louisville and Town of Superior have the necessary technical assistance, including building officials and permitting support, to expedite approvals so that construction can get underway even quicker.

### **BUILD BACK FASTER**

Regulatory barriers can impede housing development and my Administration has supported local governments to overcome these barriers with financial support. Construction and land costs, restrictions on accessory dwelling units or parking requirements, permitting fees or timing delays in the approval process all decrease the speed of producing new or replacement housing and can increase the costs of producing housing that Coloradans, especially those impacted by the fires, desperately need.

We are coordinating with FEMA and insurance companies to provide on the ground support to process claims. We are committed to working with communities, the legislature, and the federal government to get money on the table quickly to help. In order to ensure we are doing this coordination quickly, with the full weight of the Governor, we are hiring new positions to manage and direct this coordination, and they will report directly to the Chief of Staff.

The Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) continues to offer support to planners from Superior, Louisville, and Boulder County, and are working to support immediate needs for neighborhood meetings and initial planning for rebuilding through funding, advising, and education resources. We must work to avoid paperwork delays and significantly shorten the normal review process.

Inflation, supply chain disruptions, and labor shortages are all real challenges for a fast and affordable recovery. We continue to work with homebuilders, appliance manufacturers, and other entities to ensure a robust market with many choices at an affordable price throughout the rebuilding.

### **BUILD BACK CLEANER AND SAFER**

Homeowners in your communities also have the opportunity to build back in a more fire resilient way that will save them money on their utilities, water bills, and general cost of home ownership. My administration is actively organizing existing resources and exploring new funding and financing to help build back to - and even beyond for those individuals who want to- the ambitious water efficiency, building and energy codes of Louisville and Superior. Louisville has already demonstrated leadership in adopting the IECC 2021 codes with amendments including electric vehicle charging and zero energy residential building provisions. I encourage Superior to follow-through with your commitment for a similar level of ambition.

These investments- weatherization, high-efficiency electric appliances, rooftop solar, EV-ready homes- save residents significant money over time - and I commit to not letting up-front costs prevent your communities from aspiring to the highest performing and lowest cost buildings possible, and save money in utility bills in their new homes.

We are in active conversation with federal agencies, NREL, local stakeholders and policymakers, equipment manufacturers, and utilities all of whom are willing partners to

provide technical assistance, discounted products, and financial support to support this vision. Through legislation to allocate new funding as well as existing financing programs at the Colorado Energy Office, we will work to ensure no one must choose between a home that is affordable to build and a home that is green.

### **BUILD BACK STRONGER**

We have to face the fact that a changing climate and rapidly increasing development in the Wildland Urban Interface increases the potential and likelihood of future catastrophic fires and wildfires. We can take steps to avoid these events by investigating how we can build back smarter. Because the challenge of catastrophic wildfire has touched numerous states across the West in particular, there have been paths forged in places like Oregon, and consensus policy approaches produced that I hope we can draw from - while working to produce innovative solutions that work specifically for Colorado. A key part of the solution is not only how structures are built, but where they're built and how communities invest in and strengthen infrastructure and defensive barriers to protect homes and communities. This is why last session my Administration prioritized funding HB21-1271 to incentivize local communities and remove barriers to adopt best practices for housing development.

I hope you will consider and share in this vision for recovery from the Marshall Fire, and please know we stand at the ready with resources from the State of Colorado to support you. I look forward to working with you and the Colorado Legislature to find solutions for this, and future, recovery efforts.

Sincerely,



Jared Polis  
Governor  
State of Colorado