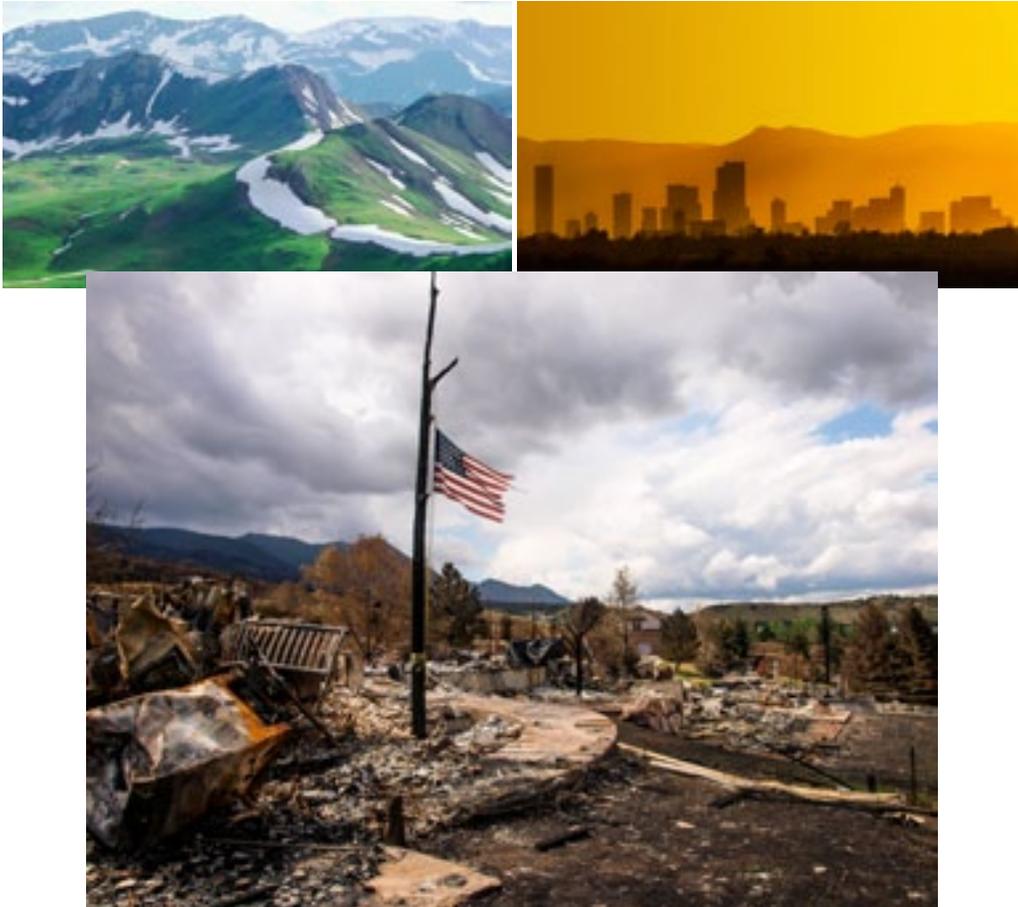


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SUMMARY OF THE REPORT OF THE COLORADO LOCAL RESILIENCE PROJECT



Convened by
The Colorado Climate
Network
and
The Colorado Municipal
League

April 2015

Read the full report at
[coclimatenetwork.org/
resilience](http://coclimatenetwork.org/resilience)

Colorado
Climate
Network
supporting local programs



The Voice of Colorado's Cities and Towns

THE COLORADO LOCAL RESILIENCE PROJECT

This report of the Colorado Local Resilience Project expresses the consensus views of 78 project participants representing 30 local governments and six other related local organizations, convened by the Colorado Climate Project and the Colorado Municipal League. Our conclusions and recommendations identify what can be done to make our state's communities more resilient to climate-change-related risks.

Local governments have a unique and crucial role in addressing climate-related risks, just as they do in facing any other local risks that could threaten the safety and prosperity of their communities and residents. The type of 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.

This report outlines a path forward in how Colorado local governments can make our communities more resilient to the climate-related risks we face. The report is a call for action, beginning with a call for more local governments to take action in their own communities to improve their local resilience. Even more, though, our conclusions and recommendations focus on what local governments can do by working together, and on the partnerships we need with the state and federal governments and others to be effective in our climate preparedness actions. Climate-related risks do not respect governmental boundaries, and coordinated actions among local governments and with other levels of government will be essential to improve the resilience of Colorado's communities.

OVERARCHING STATEMENTS

We make six overarching statements—conclusions about fundamental principles that should guide local climate preparedness actions in Colorado.

- Climate change poses major risks to Colorado, and preparedness actions can reduce those risks.
- We emphasize the importance of reducing emissions of heat-trapping gases enough to avoid the most severe potential impacts of climate change.
- Local governments have essential and unique roles in preparing for and managing the risks posed by climate change, and it is important that they act to improve the resilience of local communities and resources.
- Climate preparedness actions need to be targeted to reduce risks to particularly vulnerable people.
- Climate preparedness actions have many co-benefits.
- Local governments in Colorado need additional information, technical assistance, funding, and other resources to help them better manage the new risks posed by climate change.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend the following 36 actions, arranged in four categories:

Assessing, Planning, and Managing for Resilience

- 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 when appropriate in assessing, planning for, and managing climate-related risks.
- That collaborative efforts among local governments include regional collaboration among neighboring jurisdictions within particular areas of the state. These regional efforts usually will be more effective if they involve partnerships not only among local governments but also with other levels of government and other organizations.
- That local governments collaborate with the state and federal governments to coordinate the climate preparedness actions taken at the different levels of government.
- That local governments collaborate with businesses, nonprofit organizations, and other entities in developing and implementing climate preparedness actions.
- That local governments draw on experts to help shape local preparedness actions.

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- That the state government establish an ongoing process to assess in detail Colorado's climate-related risks.
 - That the Colorado state government prepare a comprehensive state-government-wide preparedness plan.
 - That the state government consider climate-related risks in major and/or systemic decisions (including planning, policy, management, and spending decisions) that could affect or be affected by climate-related risks.
 - That the scope of state and local emergency plans be broadened to encompass the full range of climate-related risks that could lead to future natural-hazard emergencies.
 - That the state and local governments work to ensure food security in Colorado.
 - That eight additional actions to address climate-related risks in specific sectors (public health, infrastructure, natural resources and outdoor recreation, wildfire, and cross-cutting issues).

Developing and Sharing Information

- That the Colorado state government, the Colorado Climate Network, and/or another entity catalogue and distribute information to help local governments develop and implement effective preparedness actions.
- That, as one method of distributing information, there be created and maintained a single, comprehensive online clearinghouse of information on climate change, climate impacts, and climate actions in Colorado, for the use of local governments and others.
- That there be a statewide climate change preparedness conference to engage participants from local governments, the private sector, nonprofit organizations, and others with responsibilities for resilience actions, on what they can do to improve resilience in Colorado.
- That three additional sector-specific actions be taken.

Engaging the Public and Stakeholders

- That Colorado-specific background and messaging materials on climate-related risks and preparedness be developed to be adapted and used by local governments.
- That local governments work with the state government and others in engaging with stakeholders, other organizations, and the public to increase awareness of climate-related risks and to help bring about community-wide preparedness actions.
- That one additional sector-specific action be taken.

Building Capacity

- That, to enable local governments to afford new climate preparedness activities, local governments work with one another and with the state and federal governments, the private sector, private foundations, and others, so that local actions are highly cost-effective; support allocations of public and private funds to help local governments meet unfunded local needs; and seek to obtain such funds to help meet unfunded local needs.
- That the state government and other organizations provide technical assistance and information to help local governments, related organizations, and private individuals increase their capacity to manage the risks posed by climate change.
- That the Colorado state government elevate the priority, funding, and staffing devoted to climate preparedness.
- That the state government establish mobile disaster response teams to provide recovery assistance to communities in Colorado.
- That five additional sector-specific actions be taken.

Coloradans have a growing awareness of the climate-change-related risks we face. In recent years, we have personally experienced unusually hot and dry conditions, severe wildfires and floods, and widespread infestations of tree-killing beetles. A growing number of government and scientific reports link these and other developments to climate change and project even greater impacts in the future. This project was prompted by that growing awareness of our climate-related risks.

The project also builds on many recent developments:

- the work of several local governments in Colorado to assess and address their local climate-related risks, and the interest of many additional local governments in what they, too, can do;
- work in recent years by the state government, water utilities, and others in considering climate-related risks to Colorado’s water sector—a model for similar work in other sectors;
- a 2011 report by the Western Water Assessment program at the University of Colorado Boulder to the state government, cataloging potential climate change preparedness actions;
- legislation enacted by the state legislature in 2013, declaring that “climate change presents serious, diverse, and ongoing issues for the state’s people, economy, and environment” and calling for annual reports to the legislature on “proposals to prepare the state for the effects of climate change;”
- a White House Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience, comprised of governors and local and tribal officials, which in 2014 made recommendations to the President on how the federal government can better support local climate preparedness actions; and
- a 2015 state government-commissioned *Colorado Climate Change Vulnerability Study* by the University of Colorado Boulder and Colorado State University, which documents the climate-related risks facing Coloradans.



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Waldo Canyon fire, Colorado Springs, 2012

The Colorado Climate Network

The Colorado Climate Network supports efforts by local governments and allied organizations in Colorado to reduce and adapt to climate change. Learn more at www.coclimatenetwork.org.

The Colorado Municipal League

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. Learn more at www.cml.org.