



2023 Policy Statement

2023 POLICY STATEMENT OVERVIEW

CCI's *2023 Policy Statement* was developed through a broad-based, membership-driven policy development process. In July 1997, counties changed CCI's committee structure in order to expand the opportunities for commissioners to shape CCI policy and allow policy to be adopted earlier in the year. The new committee structure retained CCI's seven existing steering committees – Agriculture; Wildlife and Rural Affairs; General Government; Health and Human Services; Land Use and Natural Resources; Public Lands; Taxation and Finance; and Transportation and Telecommunications. The new structure, however, also created a Legislative Committee to consider legislative proposals and policy statement changes recommended by all of the steering committees before the beginning of each legislative session. As restructured, CCI's steering committees – as well as the Legislative Committee – include a representative from every member county.

In 2003, a new Tourism and Resorts steering committee was formed to focus on the myriad county issues related to tourism. Tourism and Resorts is CCI's eighth steering committee. In 2005, this steering committee's name was changed to Tourism, Resorts and Economic Development to better reflect the scope of issues assigned to it. In 2014, a new Justice and Public Safety steering committee was formed to focus on county issues related to safety.

The *2023 Policy Statement* was developed with input from all nine steering committees and provides general direction to CCI and its steering committees. The nine steering committees will convene regularly during the 2023 session of the General Assembly and are charged with the responsibility of adopting CCI's position on specific legislation as it is introduced. This statement serves as a guide to those committees as they debate issues and take a "CCI position."

CCI's legislative program is a year-round, ongoing activity. This statement guides CCI staff positions pending specific action by a steering committee and serves as a guide to those committees as they debate issues and take 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 | 23 |
| Tourism, Resorts and Economic Development..... | 25 |
| Transportation and Telecommunications | 29 |

LEGISLATIVE PRINCIPLES

The principles outlined below are the result of discussion held at all five district meetings in August 2009. They are meant as self-enforcing principles that allow CCI members to make final determination in each instance. All meetings will be run in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order as indicated in the CCI Bylaws. 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.

CCI's steering committees should be presented, through staff assignment of legislation, those bills which will clearly have an impact on county responsibilities and interests. 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. Bills that could have an effect on 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.

CCI-initiated legislation should be realistic and closely related to the conduct of our members' responsibilities if we are to retain a high level of credibility. 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.

All issues for deliberation 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.

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 AND THE REAL COLORADO INITIATIVE

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.

The state and federal government must exercise fiscal restraint and responsibility. 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.

CCI also 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.

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 also 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.

INTEGRITY OF THE RULE-MAKING PROCESS

County officials oppose any administrative effort to promulgate rules and regulations that interpret the law in a manner negatively impacting counties. We believe county commissioners are important and necessary stakeholders in any rule-making process and will oppose any efforts to exclude counties from participating in legislative and regulatory efforts.

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 more than an administrative arm of state government. We support efforts to provide counties with the greatest autonomy and flexibility possible. 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.