



Board of County Commissioners

January 22, 2019

Senator Michael Bennet
1244 Speer Boulevard
Denver, CO 80204

Dear Senator Bennet:

We write today to ask that you continue to work with your colleagues to end the partial shutdown of the federal government as quickly as possible. This prolonged shutdown is having increasingly harmful impacts on Boulder County residents that if allowed to continue will be devastating to the most vulnerable members of our community and to the many federal employees and contractors who reside here.

Boulder County is home to more than 322,000 residents, many of whom are being directly or indirectly impacted by the shutdown. In addition to the many federal employees whose lives and incomes are being severely impacted due to being furloughed (and in many cases, required to continue working without pay), we have residents who rely on federal programs for a range of essential benefits.

We are especially concerned about the impacts that a protracted shutdown will have on the most vulnerable residents of Boulder County. The shutdown is placing at serious risk the health and welfare of our 16,700 residents who rely upon the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for their daily nutritional needs, 37% of whom are children and 12% of whom are over the age of 64. The shutdown similarly threatens nearly 3,000 Boulder County residents (including over 1,600 children) who rely upon the Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) for access to healthy foods, nutrition information, and other services. Also at risk is the county's Housing Choice Voucher program that 775 households rely upon for access to safe and affordable housing. Federal funding for each of these programs will lapse on March 1 unless this shutdown is ended, placing in jeopardy the availability of food and shelter – basic human needs – for our most vulnerable residents.

Disaster relief is another area where Boulder County is directly experiencing the impacts of the government shutdown. The county is actively working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and other federal agencies to recover from the devastating floods that hit our community in 2013. Because of the shutdown, this work is at a standstill. For example, important work with FEMA and U.S. Fish and Wildlife staff about the required environmental review for a critical hazard mitigation

Deb Gardner *County Commissioner*

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Matt Jones *County Commissioner*

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reservoir project is not happening due to the federal employees in question being furloughed. This environmental review is a key step in advancing this project in a timely manner so that it is completed in time for the 2020 irrigation season.

Similarly, Boulder County has a number of recovery projects for which an estimated forty to fifty million dollars in funding is in question due to the inability of furloughed FEMA staff to provide updated policy guidance in the wake of enactment of the Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018 (despite the congressional delegation's letter of Oct. 31, 2018 to FEMA asking for this to be addressed promptly), or to act on time-sensitive extension or amendment requests.

Boulder County residents are also being harmed by the impact the shutdown is having on the many federally-funded facilities that are located here. This includes the direct impact on federal employees who have been furloughed as well as the indirect impacts on the private contractors who provide a range of services to these federal facilities. The City of Boulder alone is home to more than a dozen federally-funded facilities, including the Department of Commerce's National Institute of Science and Technology, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Center for Atmospheric Research, and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. Important work at each of these facilities has been halted, and most of their staff furloughed, with the exception of functions necessary to protect life and property. In most cases that work is being done by federal employees who are not being paid.

Finally, the shutdown is having a negative impact on Boulder County's natural and scenic resources. The County is home to a portion of Rocky Mountain National Park, as well as the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests, Indian Peaks Wilderness, and James Peak Wilderness. These priceless public spaces are all at risk due to the shutdown preventing furloughed federal employees from maintaining and protecting them. While most attention has been focused on immediate maintenance needs that are going unmet, such as unplowed roads and uncleaned bathrooms, the shutdown has also halted work on critical long-term priorities such as wildfire prevention and mitigation. Seasonal firefighters are not being hired or trained, and firefighting aircraft are not being contracted for. The shutdown is also making it more difficult for the millions of families who enjoy these public spaces each year from being able to do so.

These are just some of the detrimental impacts that the residents of Boulder County are experiencing as a result of the prolonged government shutdown. We ask that you work to quickly bring this shutdown to an end and remove the uncertainty and disruption that this situation has created for so many of our residents.

Respectfully,

Boulder County
Board of County Commissioners



Elise Jones
Chair



Deb Gardner
Vice-Chair



Matt Jones
Commissioner



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January 22, 2019

Congressman Ken Buck
900 Castleton Road, Suite 112
Castle Rock, CO 80109

Dear Congressman Buck:

We write today to ask that you continue to work with your colleagues to end the partial shutdown of the federal government as quickly as possible. This prolonged shutdown is having increasingly harmful impacts on Boulder County residents that if allowed to continue will be devastating to the most vulnerable members of our community and to the many federal employees and contractors who reside here.

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Board of County Commissioners

January 22, 2019

Senator Cory Gardner
721 19th Street, Suite 150
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Senator Gardner:

We write today to ask that you continue to work with your colleagues to end the partial shutdown of the federal government as quickly as possible. This prolonged shutdown is having increasingly harmful impacts on Boulder County residents that if allowed to continue will be devastating to the most vulnerable members of our community and to the many federal employees and contractors who reside here.

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Chair



Deb Gardner
Vice-Chair



Matt Jones
Commissioner



Board of County Commissioners

January 22, 2019

Congressman Joe Neguse
2503 Walnut Street, Suite 300
Boulder, CO 80302

Dear Congressman Neguse:

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