

2026 Legislative Priority Proposal
Updated: 9/15/25

2026 Amendment to Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code	
Delta County (Commissioner Wendell Koontz)	
Preferred Contact:	wkoontz@deltacountyco.gov
Co-Sponsoring Counties/Commissioners:	Craig Fuller and Mike Lane; Delta County Commissioners.
Who is your subject matter expert?	Kris Stewart; Delta County emergency Manager.
Has this proposal been approved by your BoCC?	Yes.
Have you reviewed the CCI Instructional Memo?	Yes.
Describe the problem your proposal will solve.	The 2025 Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code (CWRC) requires adoption by 1 April 2026 and enforcement by 1 July 2026. CWRC identifies Counties, Municipalities, and Fire Districts as the Governing Body required to implement, perform inspections, keep detailed records, and enforce the codes which are essentially building codes. For the 15 counties in Colorado that do not have building departments or staff and for the municipalities that are understaffed, and for the Fire Districts that are staffed by part-time volunteers, the timeline is unobtainable. There are not enough qualified staff or funds available to develop a department, fund the operation, and staff it. Additionally, the maps approved by CWRC are inaccurate, misleading, and confusing. Land parcels of the same topographic and vegetation types may have up to three different wildfire risk classifications. The Wildfire Resiliency Code Board recognized the mapping issues even at adoption of the CWRC.
Areas of Impact:	Day-to-day operations of the county; Power/Authority/Mandate of county government.
What is the ultimate source of this problem?	problematic rulemaking and insufficient funding.
What is your initial proposal to solve this problem?	The first request is to allow the Governing Bodies (Counties, Municipalities, and Fire Districts) to phase in the 2025 CWRC through 2028. This will provide a systematic budgeting and staffing process. Governing Bodies with existing building codes and departments will be able to adopt and enforce as in 2026 or sooner and provide best practices for as others develop that program.

	<p>Second request is to redevelop the CWRC maps for accuracy and postpone enforcement based on the current maps.</p> <p>The third request is to provide funding to hire, train, equip and staff required by the CWRC. Funding would be needed through the startup phase and for five years of operation of the building departments.</p>
Please provide sample language for this solution.	I will need help drafting specific language.
Are there any solutions that do not require state-level legislation? Has your county explored these alternatives?	Yes. The wildfire risk maps could be redeveloped by the CWRC Board.
Has CCI or any other organizations sought a solution to this problem before?	I am unaware of other organizations working on this issue.
What possible organization(s) would support your proposed solution?	<p>The fifteen counties without building departments. They include: Baca County, Cheyenne County, Costilla County, Custer County, Delta County, Dolores County, Kit Carson County, Mineral County, Montezuma County, Phillips County, Prowers County, Saguache County, Sedgwick County, Washington County, and Yuma County.</p> <p>Additionally, CML representing municipalities and rural Volunteer Fire Departments.</p>
What possible organization(s) would oppose your proposed solution?	Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Board and insurance companies.
Have you spoken with any legislators about your proposed solution? If so, what was their response?	Not yet.
What are the financial implications of this problem to your county?	<p>Developing a brand-new department with 3 to 5 staff members, training, office space, equipment, and vehicles will require +\$500,000 annually.</p> <p>The phased in development and requested funding will allow for a systematic budgeting and logistical solution.</p>

Are there any financial implications to this solution either?	
<p>What are the financial implications of this problem to any other impacted parties?</p> <p>What are the financial implications of this solution to any other impacted parties? <i>Please consider any relevant Colorado State Departments.</i></p>	Unknown.
Staff Feedback	<p><u>Risk/Difficulties:</u> High – The lead sponsors & proponents heard many of these concerns when the original bill went through the legislative process and were not sympathetic. In addition, a small delay to implementation was granted to counties last legislative session. A new voice (rather than counties) to lead this charge would go a long ways to achieving new reform.</p> <p><u>Time Commitment:</u> High – It will require significant time to again convince sponsors, other legislators and proponents of these concerns; why last year’s delay was insufficient; and why the work of the Code Board is insufficient, especially when opportunities were provided to stakeholders to provide input. To make waves on this issue will require building a new, large coalition.</p>