

2026 Legislative Priority Proposal
Updated: 9/15/25

Opt-in Provision for Frontier Colorado Counties to Use a Different CPI when Determining Elected Salary Increases	
Mineral County (Commissioner Ramona Weber)	
Preferred Contact:	comm.dist3@mincocolo.com
Co-Sponsoring Counties/Commissioners:	R. Scott Lamb, Mineral County Commissioner, Zeke Ward, Mineral County Commissioner, Dolores County, Hinsdale County
Who is your subject matter expert?	Janelle Kukuk, County Administrator, Mineral County, 719-658-2360, countyadmin@mincocolo.com
Has this proposal been approved by your BoCC?	Yes.
Have you reviewed the CCI Instructional Memo?	Yes.
Describe the problem your proposal will solve.	Slows the impact on County budgets of mandated increases in Elected Official salaries.
Areas of Impact:	Day-to-day operations of the county; Functionality of county programs or services; Power/Authority/Mandate of county government.
What is the ultimate source of this problem?	Using a higher CPI adjustment than is realistic for frontier counties for the mandated increases, butts heads with the mandated tax revenue cap and threatens staff jobs and services provided.
What is your initial proposal to solve this problem?	Allow Frontier Counties (definition used for these purposes is a population density of 10 people or less per square mile) to opt-in to use the Bureau of Labor Statistics West Mountain Region CPI instead of the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood CPI to calculate mandated increases to Elected Officials salaries. Supplemental Material: Counties by the Numbers .
Please provide sample language for this solution.	Amend C.R.S. 30-2-102 (2.3)(b) - ...shall adjust the amount of each annual salary in each category specified in paragraph (a) of this subsection (2.3) in accordance with the percentage change over the period in the US Dept of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPI for Denver-Boulder-Greeley, all items, all consumers or its successor index. Add: "Frontier Counties" (defined as less than 10 people per square mile based on Census Data) may opt-in to use US Dept of Labor, Bureau of Statistics, CPI for Mountain West Region, all items all consumers, or its successor index. Opt-in must be submitted at time of budget submission to the Department of Local Affairs. (Potentially Opt-in sunsets every 10 years and must be re-submitted when new Census data is released.) (First

	<p>sunset would be 2030, subsequent sunsets would be in 10 year increments.)"</p>
<p>Are there any solutions that do not require state-level legislation? Has your c10-yearxplored these alternatives?</p>	<p>Any solution to this problem will require state-level legislation. The only other option available is for a County to drop a category which is not always a popular option.</p>
<p>Has CCI or any other organizations sought a solution to this problem before?</p>	<p>In 2024 Dolores County submitted a similar proposal to mitigate the impact of the higher CPI.</p>
<p>What possible organization(s) would support your proposed solution?</p>	<p>31 Frontier Counties (those with a population density of 10 people or less per square mile).</p>
<p>What possible organization(s) would oppose your proposed solution?</p>	<p>The other 33 Counties. There are 10 Counties with a population density of 20 people or less per square mile that could/should be included in the opt-in opportunity.</p>
<p>Have you spoken with any legislators about your proposed solution? If so, what was their response?</p>	<p>Senator Cleave Simpson and Representative Matthew Martinez have been contacted.</p>
<p>What are the financial implications of this problem to your county?</p> <p>Are there any financial implications to this solution either?</p>	<p>The mandated increases with a CPI that does not reflect the economic condition of our County will be in direct conflict with the mandated tax revenue cap as early as 2026 and will for sure in 2027 and beyond. Doing quick calculations, the potential increase in taxes will be less than the potential increase in elected salaries in 2027 using the current CPI. The budget crisis that this creates will threaten employee morale, services and staff jobs. We have narrowly averted making service and staff cuts for the last two years. Currently wages/salaries in our General Fund budget make up 45% of the budget. The salaries of the eight elected officials make up 36% of our wage/salary budget in the General Fund, the wage budget for the other twenty-one staff members make up the other 64%. Mineral County has for several years given our employees a modest cost of living raise. These budget constraints will limit, if not eliminate this practice. The mandated increases in elected official salaries has often nearly doubled those increases for staff.</p>

	<p>The solution does not solve the problem, but it will slow the race to the cliff. We are hoping it will make budgeting more manageable and give us more time to make other adjustments to the budgets, i.e., shift some of the insurance burden or find less costly insurance, identify additional efficiencies in our everyday tasks, etc., to live in the unfunded world in which we live.</p>
<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? Please consider any relevant Colorado State Departments.</p>	<p>The assumption is all Frontier Counties are suffering some of the same issues we are, to what degree we don't know. Conversely, the hope is that the other counties could experience the and benefit from easing up on the rate of increases as we would.</p> <p>We acknowledge that this change would/could increase the workload on DOLA but we believe it would be a minimal increase, i.e. processing opt-in paperwork and communicating with legislative council to identify the Counties who have opted in. If there is a sunset provision, there would be a repeat of this work every 10 years.</p>
Staff Feedback	<p><u>Risk/Difficulty:</u> Low – If the bill is written in a narrow way, I think there will be very little resistance to this policy, especially if it is simply an option for Frontier counties. We would need to ensure that other county-wide officials would be supportive of a county using a lower CPI to calculate salaries. Another factor to consider, this bill will create a fiscal note, as there will be an FTE associated with the change. In such a tight budget year, I anticipate any bill that has a fiscal note to face challenges.</p> <p><u>Time commitment:</u> Medium – This will require drafting, securing sponsors, and stakeholding, including creating a coalition to support the bill. CCI would also need to engage labor organizations to ensure they are neutral.</p>