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HOME BUILDERS
ASSOCIATION
of
METRO DENVER®

October 31, 2022

Larimer County
Board of County Commissioners
200 W. Oak Street
Fort Collins, CO 80521

Dear Commissioners Kefalas, Stephens and Shaddock-McNally:

I am writing to submit formal comments on the ongoing legal challenges surrounding the Thornton Water Project.

These comments are being provided on behalf of the Home Builders Association of Metro Denver and the Colorado Association of Home Builders.

The HBA of Metro Denver represents over 500 homebuilders, developers, remodelers, architects, mortgage lenders, title companies, subcontractors, suppliers, and service providers in the eight metro-area counties we serve. The Colorado Association of Home Builders has over 2,000 members across the state, representing over 40,000 jobs that play a crucial role in providing housing for Coloradoans.

For many years, Colorado has established itself as one of the best places to live, work and raise a family. Colorado has a proud history of communities working together to tackle tough issues, solve problems and improve the prosperity of all its residents through collective reciprocity and regional collaboration. Be it in politics, business or our shared civic responsibilities, we have always prospered because of that reason – We work together.

However, we have grown concerned that this spirit of regional collaboration and problem solving is being threatened over a critical issue in northern Colorado.

By refusing to allow Thornton to access the water it has owned for nearly forty-years, Larimer County is impacting the livelihood and ability for families and individuals to live closer to where they work and inadvertently exacerbating Colorado's housing attainability crisis along the front range.

The City of Thornton has held water rights that originate from the Poudre River, North of Fort Collins in Northern Colorado since the mid 1980's. Given that Thornton's population is projected to expand by over 100,000 residents in the coming years, it is imperative the City is granted access to the high-quality water that they own – through a water pipeline. This issue has been going on for more than four years since Larimer County's initial denial of the 1041 Permit to the City of Thornton.

Across the front range, builders have seen water resource and connection fees escalate to unprecedented levels due to a decrease in water availability. These costs have contributed greatly to Colorado's growing housing affordability crisis, currently threatening not only our industry but our regional economy and our collective prosperity.

The ongoing delays associated with Larimer County's denial and refusal to work something out with Thornton are only increasing these costs and adding needless delays – carelessly pricing thousands of aspiring homeowners in Colorado out of the market in the process. The National Association of Home Builders' latest "Priced-out Estimates" from January 2022 indicate a \$1,000 increase in the cost of a median-priced new home will further price 2,310 Colorado households out of the market.

Other cities, such as Aurora, Greeley, Colorado Springs and Pueblo, have undertaken similar successful efforts to bring quality water to the residents of their communities without the legal challenges currently experienced by the City of Thornton.

In the spirit of regional cooperation and housing attainability in Colorado, we respectfully request that Larimer County work in earnest with the City of Thornton to come to an agreement on this issue that has gone on far too long.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,



Ted Leighty
Chief Executive Officer
Home Builders Association of Metro Denver
Colorado Association of Home Builders

Cc: Lorenda Volker, County Manager
Eric Fried, Chief Building Official