

## Chaffee County Economic Development Corporation

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### Public Policy Committee Pillar Position Statement

**Date:** August, 2022

**Issue:** Water and Wastewater

#### **Background:**

Water is a valuable resource and a critical component in the lifecycle and economic sustainability of communities. For example, in Chaffee County, water is a key driver of our recreational/tourism economy, supports development, and is critical in supporting agricultural producers and our growing beverage industry. Ensuring appropriate access, and preserving flows, is critical to sustaining our economy. Further, as our region continues to grow, we must ensure appropriate water service is available for both commercial and residential use. Colorado water law, historic water rights, and interstate compacts drive decisions in this area. Specific to wastewater, communities require sound, functional infrastructure to ensure the safety of their citizenry. Further, growing communities require forward-facing decision making to ensure appropriate actions are occurring to prepare for future residents and businesses. In most cases, since water and wastewater infrastructure is generally not visible, residents and businesses do not delineate between one community and the next regarding the provision of services. Rather, they simply expect such services to occur in a safe and responsible manner.

#### **Position:**

The EDC encourages sound water policy and investment in water infrastructure as critical to ensure the long-term sustainability of the communities and businesses in Chaffee County. The EDC encourages forward-looking investments to both water and wastewater policy and infrastructure that anticipate future needs in support of the economic diversity of our communities over the long term.

#### **Rationale for Position:**

If water is not accessible for business, industry or residents, communities in Chaffee County will not survive. If fundamental infrastructure is not in place a community does not meet the basic needs of future residents or new/expanding business/industries (and their employees who require housing), on which local government relies for tax revenue to fund services. Simply said, water – in all forms – is the lifeblood of communities.