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Jill Hunsaker Ryan, MPH
Executive Director
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
4300 Cherry Creek Drive South
Denver, Colorado 80245

Ms. Ryan:

The BoCC appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on recommendations the Environmental Justice Action Task Force will make to the Colorado General Assembly this fall. Environmental justice (EJ) directly impacts the people of Adams County. The efforts of the task force align with Adams County's vision to be the most innovative and inclusive county in America for all families and businesses. In addition to the BoCC's thoughts below, to support your effort, we have distributed this request to Adams County residents.

Environmental Justice was designed to ensure the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies to ensure changes that support the health and well-being of disproportionately impacted communities. As a majority minority county with four superfund sites and PM2.5 levels in the western part of our county at 60% and higher within historically marginalized communities of color, the BoCC has great interest in EJ and the benefit it should bring residents. We recognize, however, the intent of EJ is not always realized. EJ should be practiced in a manner to always achieve its fullest intent.

The county recognizes the definition of "disproportionately impacted communities" varies across federal agencies from Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The definition impacts the county's work within community planning, affordable housing, and community development. Additionally, the county's newly established Adams County Health Department will focus on disproportionately impacted communities through a commitment to health equity and community engagement. Adams County recommends aligning definitions to be that which is most inclusive of all impacted communities and accommodates the unique demographics and costs of living of communities throughout the state.

When industry violates environmental requirements, the BoCC recommends the community advise how funding is used to extend beyond protecting the environment to include the overall health of residents of the community, recognizing factors such as access to health care, community design, education, income, and jobs also affect overall health and well-being. Community engagement best practices that leverage trusted relationships and partnerships with local public health agencies and remove barriers to providing feedback, such as time, cost and inclusive practices that recognize cultural practices, must be used. Adams County residents should face no barrier to engage in EJ decision making, feel welcome and comfortable in the

process, and provide meaningful input that informs the decisions. Funding allocated to study how EJ is addressed should include engaging communities in the process, all factors that impact health and focus on those facing systemic barriers to positive health outcomes. Additionally, all research and resulting tools should be informed by community members, in order to be accessible and useful to the communities impacted so they have the information to recommend best remediation strategies for the community.

Adams County welcomes the opportunity to be part of any future work of this task force.

Sincerely,



Commissioner Eva J.
Henry, District 1



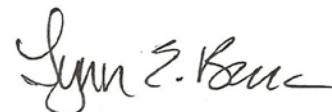
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“Chaz” Tedesco, District 2



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District 4



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