

LARIMER COUNTY | BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

P.O. Box 1190, Fort Collins, Colorado 80522-1190, 970.498.5700, Larimer.gov

Environmental and Science Advisory Board MINUTES

Date: January 13, 2026

Time: 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Location: Hearing Room, 200 West Oak St., Fort Collins, Colorado

Contact: Heidi Pruess, pruesshb@co.larimer.co.us, 970-498-7138

MEMBERS		STAFF		GUESTS
Rodger Ames	X	John Kefalas *	X	
Tasha Carr - Chair	X	Heidi Pruess †	X	
Anna Cloud		Scott Benton	X	
Jeremy Cooper		Rebecca Everette	X	
Leo Grassens - Vice Chair	X			
Matthew Haag	X			
Azmal Hossan	X			
Kathryn Inman	X			
Joe Izaguirre III	X			
Michael Lee Jones	X			
Jared McGlothlin	X			
Nicole Poncelet-Johnson	X			
Cathelyne Powers	X			
Nathan Teich				
Chris Wood	X			

X = present; v= present virtually; * = Commissioner Liaison; † = ESAB Liaison; § = Climate and Sustainability Program; ‡=Youth.

Call to Order: 6:00 p.m.

- **Amendments or additions to the agenda** – None.
- **Introduction of members, staff and guests**





- **Commissioner's Update –**

- The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) has been rotated for the 2026 year, with Commissioner Shaddock-McNally now serving as Chair and Commissioner Kefalas serving as Chair Pro-Tem.
- The BCC worksession on January 12, 2026 included an overview of the annual workplan for the Community Development department. Working on data center regulations is part of the adopted workplan. Legislation in 2026 regarding data centers will overlap with this department workplan and that of the ESAB.
- A Climate Smart Future Ready Return on Investment study was presented to the BCC on January 12, 2026. A copy of this study will be provided to the ESAB.

- **Approval of Minutes –** Michael Jones motioned to approve the December 2025 minutes and Kathryn Inman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously

- **Updates and Round Table**

- As of January 1, 2026 new building codes, including updated energy, solar, and EV and wildfire resiliency codes went into effect. Have been awarded a CEO grant to hire an Energy Code Administrator that will conduct training and customer support for implementation of these new codes. These new codes apply to all new building permits (residential and commercial). Insurance impacts due to these new codes are hoped to benefit from these new rules. State legislation is expected to be offered by the Commissioner of Insurance to lower rates for those that include these new regulations. Costs for implementing the new solar and EV ready code implementation may have been calculated but staff will need to follow-up.
- Environmental Stewardship Awards will be discussed at the February meeting.

- **Discussion Items**

December Working Session -

- **Air Quality group** - The goal of this group is to develop a one-page synopsis of the history of ESAB and County involvement in the air toxics and ozone topic, highlighting community concerns. Recommendations to be incorporated into this synopsis include:
 - opening a line of communication with Weld County,
 - advocating at the State level for emission reductions in municipalities outside of but impacting Larimer County, and
 - focus on public education of air quality issues in Larimer County.

Next steps for this group are to develop questions for the March ESAB meeting air quality presentation such as:

- Would it be valuable to have a longer term precursor monitoring program?
 - What is the composition of air coming into Larimer County and larger municipalities?
 - Are there recommendations regarding EJ impacts of air quality such as additional ozone monitoring?
- **Land Use group** - The sub group focused on the impact of large scale data centers.

Of particular concern was “Artificial Intelligence Data Centers” or “High Impact/Large Load Infrastructure Facility”. Their impact is dramatically higher than that of regular “Data Centers” (data servers, email servers and ISP)

The group discussed addressing development of this type of industry through processes outside the existing 1041 review process. It would be better to come up with a separate legal process. The following “Land Use” implications of large AI Data centers were identified:

- Public service strain (Electricity and Water)
- Water deprivation / Water use
- Use of non tributary water (GW level, wells)
- Light pollution
- Noise emissions
- Air pollution
- Impact on the job market
- Carbon emissions
- Traffic impact
- Wildlife and ecological impact
- Thermal footprint and “heat index”.
- Aesthetic impact
- End of life guarantees
- Waste Water treatment (AWTP)
- Cultural impact
- Wastewater

The plan is for this subgroup to expand on each of these items and generate a report. We will work then with the Larimer County “Land Use Team” to integrate this into their work planned for 2026. Other ESAB members in other sub-groups asked about : investigating economic impact in terms of jobs for only the skilled workers (similar to solar facilities) which could influence level of support in terms of policy and less so incorporated into regulations.

- **Carbon capture/sequestration group** - The group refreshed previous meeting information regarding the topics of food waste prevention and food waste diversion. Food waste was previously identified as one of the technological carbon sequestration opportunities not currently being addressed by Larimer County. The following next steps were identified by this group:
 - Research and develop questions for the County Solid Waste team regarding PFAS “forever chemicals” that may contaminate organic wastes in the composting process as well as the emission management and management of carbon in the biomass processing system.
 - Research the relationship of greenhouse gas emission impacts from existing programs like methane capture and planned programs like waste diversion.

- Review previous responses from the Solid Waste Director (or municipalities) and identify future questions regarding food waste prevention and any gaps in addressing biomass at the new landfill.
 - Request a tour of the new landfill for the entire ESAB.
 - Explore what other communities are providing as incentives (e.g., tax break) to farmers for cogeneration plants using food waste.
 - Feedback on worksession format - continue to have worksessions; some pre-meeting planning and preparation before the next worksession meeting.
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- **Agenda Topics for Future Meetings** – The February meeting will include discussion of Environmental Stewardship Award Nomination Opening, possible Water Team updates, possible Circular Economy updates.
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- **Adjourn** – The meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM.