



LANCE WARING

San Miguel County Commissioner
Colorado
Elected 2018



WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF AS AN ELECTED OFFICIAL, AND WHAT DO YOU STILL HOPE TO ACHIEVE BEFORE YOU LEAVE OFFICE?

I'm proud of my board for recently voting unanimously to update the county's 30-year-old housing impact mitigation fees, which are assessed on new construction in the unincorporated county near the ski resort. (Fees are based on a calculation incorporating the square footage of the home and a sliding percentage of the total number of new employees required to build and maintain the new structure.)

Prior to the change in fee structure, San Miguel County collected about \$1 million over the last decade—at current building prices, that's about enough to build a two-bedroom condo. Revenue from the increased impact mitigation fees will eventually provide the county with the funds to make significant investments in workforce housing, so more people can live near where they work. This will reduce the region's commuting carbon footprint and also foster community, because instead of jumping in a car right after work, citizens can play town league softball, partake in an evening arts event, or even attend a public meeting to help shape local government policy.

In the remainder of my term, I hope to see continued advances in regional climate policies and the creation of community housing. Concurrently, I'll work to ensure the continued provision of all the county's essential services that protect—or improve—the health, safety, and welfare of San Miguel County's citizens.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES FACING YOUR COMMUNITY?

Changing climate is a significant challenge for San Miguel County. Increased temperatures impact ranchers and farmers in the west end of our county. Decreases in average snowpack reduce agricultural output and harm Telluride's ski resort economy. Our scenic viewsheds are marred by forests impacted by beetle kill and sudden aspen decline (SAD) syndrome. Wildfire is now a grave concern at all elevations, and the fire season has extended deeper into the spring and fall.

Along with adapting to climate shift, workforce housing is a high priority issue—particularly around the resort towns of Telluride and Mountain Village, where approximately 50% of the existing homes are either unoccupied second homes or rented short-term. The housing shortage has exacerbated morning and evening rush-hour traffic on hazardous mountain roads as workers commute distances ranging from 60 to over 200 miles a day.

Last year, San Miguel County adopted a new Community Housing (CH) zone district designed to streamline the process for potential workforce housing development. So far, the new CH zone district has been granted to two separate parcels, both within three miles of the towns of Telluride and Mountain Village. Even with an expedited process, we face challenges with NIMBYism, building and land costs, limited construction labor force, and high interest rates. Time will tell.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE SOMEONE RUNNING FOR OFFICE FOR THE FIRST TIME?

Do your homework, and ask questions. Seek out those who disagree with you, and walk a mile in their shoes before making firm judgments. Listen more than you talk—you have two ears and one mouth for a reason. Finally, grow thick skin, because whatever issue is on the table, you'll upset somebody when you make a decision.

IS THERE A CONSERVATION, CLIMATE OR DEMOCRACY-RELATED POLICY, RULE OR IDEA YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE IMPLEMENTED AT THE LOCAL, STATE OR NATIONAL LEVEL?

I'd like to see the 30x30 program adopted at the federal level. Enacting and enforcing the initiative would be difficult at many levels, but I believe the net gain for future generations would be well worth the effort.

