

**Public Comments RE: Unincorporated Boulder County Minimum Wage  
(Public Hearing 10/18/2025)**

A	B
1 What do you think about Boulder County's local minimum wage? / ¿Qué opina sobre el salario mínimo local del Condado de Boulder? (límite 500 words / límite de 500 palabras)	Share your experience of Boulder County's minimum wage for you, someone in your household, or your business. / Comparta su experiencia con el salario mínimo del Condado de Boulder, ya sea para usted, alguien de su hogar o su negocio.
2 I think it is an undue burden on businesses in unincorporated Boulder County to bear such a wage when every other municipality is lower. I have watched business after business close in Niwot, often due to these wages.	As a patron of many of Niwot's businesses, I have seen pricing skyrocket, and, as a consumer, have reduced my spending, so these businesses are at risk.
3 From a personal and business perspective, this increase will not affect me. However, I am concerned that rural and small businesses in Boulder County will find this to be unsustainable. The proposal to raise the minimum wage in 2030 assumes a 10% increase each year and that projection seems high for any industry.	
4 County has absolutely no right to meddle in private marketplace issues!!!!	
5 This decision negatively impacts small businesses in unincorporated areas of Boulder County. I live in Niwot and the businesses here will be crushed by this change. It speaks volumes that the decision does not apply to the city of Boulder. Furthermore, I do believe this will push companies in the direction of replacing personnel with technology in which case there will be fewer jobs for the humans.	When have minimum wage jobs ever kept up with the cost of living? They are minimum wage for a reason - meant for students etc looking to learn skills and advance to other opportunities.
<p>Dear Commissioners,</p> <p>I am writing to share my strong support for Boulder County's local minimum wage ordinance and urge you to maintain the current wage schedule adopted in 2023.</p> <p>Boulder County remains one of the most expensive places to live in Colorado. Housing, groceries, healthcare, and transportation costs continue to rise. A strong local minimum wage ensures that workers in unincorporated Boulder County can meet their basic needs, live with dignity, and participate fully in our community. When workers earn a fair wage, they spend those dollars locally, which strengthens small businesses, farms, and the broader local economy.</p> <p>I recognize that some businesses and farming operations have expressed concerns about wage increases. However, research shows that higher wages reduce turnover, improve retention, and can ultimately lower training and recruitment costs. Aligning downward with the City of Boulder's wage schedule, or pausing increases, would place the burden on our lowest-paid workers at a time when they are already struggling to afford essentials. That approach would move us backward rather than forward.</p> <p>The county's stated goal of creating a regional minimum wage across Boulder County is the right path. A consistent standard reduces confusion and promotes fairness. However, until that regional standard is realized, unincorporated Boulder County should not reduce or pause its commitment to supporting workers through a livable wage.</p> <p>I urge you to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain the current wage schedule that increases to \$25/hour by 2030.</li> <li>Avoid pausing or lowering scheduled increases, as this would harm working families.</li> <li>Continue engaging workers, businesses, and farmers in dialogue about regional alignment, but only in ways that protect dignity and basic needs.</li> <li>Consider support strategies for small businesses and farms-such as tax credits, training programs, or transition assistance-rather than rolling back wage protections.</li> </ol> <p>When our lowest-paid workers thrive, our whole community thrives. I ask that Boulder County stay committed to the promise of a fair, livable wage that reflects our local cost of living and protects the dignity of all workers.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p>	<p>Dear Commissioners,</p> <p>I want to share my perspective on Boulder County's local minimum wage, not only as a county resident and worker, but as someone with a family, bills to pay, and a deep understanding of what it actually costs to live here.</p> <p>The truth is simple: the current minimum wage in Boulder County does not match the reality of our cost of living. Whether it is rent, groceries, utilities, childcare, healthcare, or transportation, every major expense continues to rise year after year. For households like mine, every dollar counts, and falling behind is easy even when you are doing everything "right" - budgeting, cutting back on extras, and working full time.</p> <p>I've experienced this personally in my household. Even with two incomes, we have had to make hard choices: what bills to prioritize, when to hold off on car repairs, and how much we can actually set aside for savings or emergencies. I've also seen coworkers and neighbors stretched to the breaking point, relying on credit cards or food assistance to fill the gaps that wages don't cover. It is not because they don't work hard; it's because wages are simply not keeping pace with the reality of Boulder County's economy.</p> <p>When the commissioners passed the local minimum wage ordinance in 2023, it was a step toward fairness. It recognized the dignity of the lowest-paid workers in unincorporated Boulder County and acknowledged that survival here costs more than in many other parts of Colorado. A wage that eventually rises to \$25 by 2030 is not radical - it is realistic. Without it, too many people will continue to be pushed out of the community they help sustain.</p> <p>Some argue that businesses and farms cannot handle these increases. I want to be clear: I support small businesses and local farms. They are part of what makes Boulder County special. But the solution cannot be to hold down wages for the people who are already struggling the most. Research consistently shows that fair wages reduce turnover and increase employee stability, which actually saves businesses money. And when workers have more income, they spend it locally, which supports those same businesses and farms. Instead of shifting the burden onto workers, the county should explore support programs for employers - tax credits, grants, or training assistance - so that businesses can adapt without cutting into the livelihood of their employees.</p> <p>Rolling back or pausing wage increases now would undo the progress we have made and send a message that the dignity of low-wage workers is negotiable. It would widen the gap between those who can afford to live here and those who can't. It would tell the people who clean, cook, build, and care in this county that their survival is less important than short-term business concerns.</p> <p>I urge you to keep the current wage schedule intact. Workers cannot wait. Every delay means more families falling behind, more workers commuting from farther away, and more stress on the very people who keep Boulder County running.</p> <p>When the lowest-paid workers thrive, our entire community thrives. I ask you to stand by that principle and keep Boulder County moving forward, not backward.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and for considering my experience.</p>
6	
7 The Commissioners should not be acting as arbiters of this. It imperils our local small, unincorporated-area business owners. Please bring the minimum wage in line with Boulder and Longmont.	
8 It discourages businesses from hiring young inexperienced people.	
9 I believe that if not modified, the current annually increasing minimum wage schedule for Unincorporated Boulder County will continue to wreak havoc on small independent businesses. Annual minimum wage raises should instead correlate with the Consumer Price Index so that business income can keep up with expenses.	<p>Located in Unincorporated Boulder County, the Colorado Mountain Ranch Children's Summer Camp has served local families for over 75 years, and has been continuously operated by the Walker family since 1947. In order to stay open year to year, program fees grow annually with increases based on the Consumer Price Index. The intention is to keep up with inflation.</p> <p>My family and I have always supported minimum wage increases to benefit all workers. However, as a small family business, meeting the new Unincorporated Boulder County minimum wage requirements renders our business model unsustainable. Even with our attempt to adapt with a redesign to hire a smaller staff team for 2025, our payroll expenses have continued to increase substantially.</p> <p>Please adjust minimum wage increases to help keep both the new and long-time Boulder small businesses alive!</p>
10 While minimum wage laws may seem helpful and compassionate, they have a long history of ending up with negative consequences, both for those intended beneficiaries who end up unemployed, and for the general public which ends up paying much more for goods and services. When the government raises wages, well above the "market rate", and at a pace well above the inflation rate, several negative things happen: 1 Employers will find every way possible to simply replace workers with machines. This automation of the work keeps the product/service price competitive, so that the employer can stay in business and hopefully not have to go bankrupt and fire ALL employees. 2. When municipalities within the County compete to offer higher and higher minimum wages, workers keep moving to the highest wage locale, more and more to the detriment of the rest of the public paying ever more for higher cost products and services. In the end, everyone loses. 3. As Boulder gets a reputation of having very high minimum wages, more and more unemployed people move here, at a time when the number of minimum wages jobs is declining, due to items # 1 and 2 above. This will end up compounding the already major homeless problems more evident every day in Boulder.	The already very high minimum wage laws raise the cost of my business, making me less competitive, making me constantly search for ways to automate, hire remote workers, etc, to stay competitive with companies competing with me from other places outside Boulder.
11 Boulder County should adopt the Boulder City minimum wage schedule. It is unfair to penalize businesses in the County with higher requirements than other local businesses.	
12 My concern is that the accelerated minimum wage schedule is not solving any of the commissioner's goals (living wage, affordability) while punishing the few small businesses and farmers in Boulder County. Most of the small businesses and farmers that are in Boulder County are barely able to afford to run their businesses and many still cannot even afford to live where they work. It is incredibly unfair for the county to put the burden of affordable living solely on the shoulders of small business owners for the sake of a policy that sounds good on a ballot but does not actually solve any issues. These farms and businesses will soon close up and we will lose one of the things that makes Boulder County so special. Please consider a pause that aligns with the surrounding towns!	My teens have been so fortunate to find jobs since they were 14 in our local community (Niwot). These small businesses (bike shop, restaurant, and ice cream shop) have been the most amazing place for our teens to have their first jobs. Because these businesses were so small, they were immediately given lots of responsibilities, much more than working at a large corporate business or retail store. It has shaped them in so many ways. At the same time, because of the minimum wage and tip policies, there were many shifts where at age 15, my boys were making effectively \$25/hour. Since they are in high school and living at home, this is an exorbitant amount of money for a teen. The true value in these jobs is the skills and responsibility they are learning. While it sounds great to make that much, eventually these jobs will no longer be worth the risk of hiring teens that need more training and opportunities for first jobs will disappear. Please consider that minimum wage jobs are often not intended to be the sole source of income for many people and to burden the shop owners with this is not right.
13 It is not sustainable by local small businesses. It will put even more restaurants and shops out of business. Yes, a higher wage would be nice, but, not by being artificially raised.	It's put several local small businesses out of business already. If the minimum wage keeps being escalated, Boulder County will suffer for small businesses.
14 I run an environmental nonprofit in Boulder County and would respectfully ask for 501c3 nonprofit organizations to be exempt from the local minimum wage. We currently pay staff a minimum of \$19/hr (most get paid more), but with 30+ seasonal summer water conservation technicians a \$25/hr requirement would cost nonprofits like ours \$100k/year more. We would have no choice but to hire fewer staff to balance the budget, which would negatively impact local water conservation efforts. While our office is located adjacent to unincorporated county land, a \$25/hr min wage will likely influence neighboring municipalities considering similar rules, which will have a negative impact on nonprofits like ours. Please consider allowing local nonprofit organizations to be exempt.	

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15	<p>I have been a business owner in Boulder County for 25 years. I currently own The Garden Gate Café in Niwot, and in that time I have seen firsthand how policies affect both workers and small businesses. I can say without hesitation that Boulder County's local minimum wage ordinance is devastating to Niwot and other unincorporated towns. First, Niwot is not Boulder. We don't have the university, the tourism industry, or the dense urban population to support this kind of wage structure. We are a tiny, unincorporated town of small businesses and local farms, with no city council or mayor to represent us. This law was imposed by three commissioners who don't live here and have shown little willingness to listen. As a result, Niwot has become a test case for a policy that doesn't fit our reality. The stated goal of this ordinance was to help workers live in the communities where they work. In practice, none of my employees live in Niwot-and that has been true for decades. My staff commute from Longmont, Lyons, Broomfield, even Northglenn. They earn their wages in Niwot and spend them elsewhere, where housing and goods are more affordable. Raising our wage floor hasn't changed that dynamic. Instead, it has raised prices in Niwot to the point where customers drive to Longmont or Lafayette to avoid paying \$20 for a hamburger they can get for \$15 just a few miles away. The unintended consequences are real and severe. Two of Niwot's busiest restaurants have already closed, citing unsustainable labor costs. Others are barely hanging on, raising prices, cutting jobs, or reducing hours just to survive another year. I personally know businesses in mountain towns-Gold Hill, Hygiene, Eldora, Allenspark-that have laid off staff or shortened their seasons because of this policy. These communities don't have corporate chains to fill the gap when local businesses disappear. Once they're gone, they're gone. Worse still, this policy freezes out young and entry-level workers. We used to hire high school students as bussers and hosts, or retirees looking for a few part-time hours. At \$25/hour, those jobs are gone. Businesses can't afford to train beginners at premium wages. And because a dishwasher must now earn the same as a skilled chef, wages across the board rise in a domino effect that small businesses simply can't sustain. This wage mandate creates an economy where only big corporations can survive. Chains can absorb losses, spread costs across hundreds of locations, and keep prices competitive. Niwot's independent cafés, retailers, and farms cannot. What was intended as a policy to help workers has instead pushed small communities toward closures, vacancies, and eventually ghost towns. I am asking you to pause this ordinance and keep unincorporated Boulder County at the state level. We cannot and should not be forced to compete with Boulder and Longmont. This policy is harming the very communities it claims to help.</p>	<p>The way this ordinance was developed and implemented has been deeply unfair to our town. The meeting at the Niwot Grange-where it was claimed the community was represented-was misleading and exclusionary. As a member of the Niwot Business Association (NBA), I can say with certainty that if Niwot had been properly involved, it would have come up at our monthly meetings, been discussed, and addressed as a community. Instead, we were blindsided when the ordinance was suddenly implemented, and it has been a dominant topic of concern ever since. Since then, the NBA has done everything possible to elevate our voice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•We've hosted discussions at every monthly meeting.</li> <li>•We've placed the issue prominently on our town website.</li> <li>•We've printed and distributed postcards and letters for residents to send to commissioners.</li> <li>•We've organized task forces, gathered signatures, and presented data.</li> </ul> <p>And yet, despite all these efforts, our concerns are continually ignored. State Senator Judy Amable has engaged with us surprisingly more than our own commissioners, which speaks volumes. The most frustrating part is that outside advocacy groups-Family Resource Centers such as Sister Carmen in Lafayette, OUR Center in Longmont, and EFAA in Boulder-seem to carry more weight in this decision-making process than the actual residents and businesses of Niwot. These organizations are well-funded and organized, and they advocate for their own causes and communities, not for ours. We are not Lafayette, Longmont, or Boulder. But their voices are being used to dictate policy for Niwot and other small, unincorporated towns. Meanwhile, local data from Niwot-our surveys, our economic realities, our on-the-ground stories-has been dismissed or scoffed at. Larger polling done by outside organizations has been given priority, even though it does not reflect the day-to-day impact on Niwot or on mountain towns in unincorporated Boulder County. The result is clear: Niwot and other unincorporated communities have been excluded from shaping a policy that disproportionately harms us. Those closest to the consequences have been given the least voice, while those furthest away have been amplified.</p>
16	<p>This is government overreach. Unincorporated Boulder County already had structural headwinds which make it more difficult to operate a successful business such as lower traffic than municipal areas. Forcing these businesses to pay higher minimum wages will, at the very least, decimate profitability of small business, necessitate layoffs and in many cases it will be the catalyst that forces them out of business.</p>	<p>I am a restaurant owner in Niwot. This forced wage increase will force us to pay our servers (who already clear \$30+/hour with tips) an additional several dollars per hour. We will not be able to sustain this in addition to recent tax, labor, food, lease and energy cost increases we've already absorbed. We cannot increase menu prices anymore than they are presently or we will lose customers. This will make it impossible for us to remain in business after existing in Niwot for over 25 years. This is unfair and will not accomplish what it is intended to. On the contrary it will reduce employment and ultimately state and county tax revenue. I personally have not been able to take a distribution of income (nor do I draw a salary) since 2019 in an effort to keep this business afloat. What business is it of government to regulate wages for a business when they know nothing about the business, market or environment they propose to regulate? I strongly decent!!!</p>
17	<p>My name is Steve Gaibler, owner of The Garden Gate Café in Niwot. Over the past several weeks I have visited the mountain towns and small unincorporated communities across Boulder County to speak directly with business owners and see, firsthand, how the county minimum wage ordinance is affecting them. What I found was alarming but not surprising: every business I visited is in survival mode. Owners described layoffs, reduced hours, higher prices, and difficult choices about whether to keep their doors open. In virtually every case, they have already taken the short-term measures that will keep them afloat for perhaps one more year-cutting staff, cutting hours, raising prices-measures that thin the margin between surviving and closing. Many told me they simply cannot absorb another increase; another scheduled hike would be the end for them. Every single business I spoke with is firmly opposed to this ordinance. These are not abstract complaints - they are concrete actions owners have taken to stay alive and protect the few jobs they still have. Students and entry-level workers are being frozen out of employment. Seasonal farms and small retailers that cannot shift pricing or volume are being pushed to the brink. The pattern is consistent and urgent. Attached to this message is the letter and signatures collected by our mountain-town group documenting these concerns. I respectfully ask you to consider this material and the lived experience of these communities. Please pause further implementation of the ordinance and work with us to find scalable, practical solutions that protect workers without destroying the small businesses and towns that make up unincorporated Boulder County.</p>	<p>Over the past weeks, I have personally visited and spoken with the following businesses in unincorporated Boulder County - each one firmly opposed to this wage ordinance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peaceful Valley Ranch</li> <li>• El Dorado Gas Station</li> <li>• El Dorado Resort</li> <li>• Last Stand Tavern</li> <li>• Canyon Tavern</li> <li>• Eldora Lodge</li> <li>• Eldora Mountain Resort</li> <li>• Arapaho Ranch</li> <li>• Colorado Mountain Ranch</li> <li>• Gold Hill Inn &amp; Café</li> <li>• Gold Hill Beer Garden</li> <li>• Highland Presbyterian Camp</li> <li>• Fern Cliff Food &amp; Fuel</li> <li>• The Grill Guy</li> <li>• Mountain Fountain</li> <li>• Café Fritz</li> <li>• Low Rider Gift Shop</li> <li>• Hygiene Feed &amp; Mercantile</li> </ul> <p>Let's be clear: in many of these areas there are only a few businesses total. These are remote, small, independent operations - far from organized networks, far from the city, with limited visibility and resources. Many of these owners told me that Niwot's organizing gives them hope, because on their own they've had no voice.</p>
18	<p>I do not reside in Boulder County but I work in Boulder County. I am an organic vegetable farmer who simply cannot afford to live in Boulder County. The argument that agricultural workers do not deserve this increase in minimum wage is ludicrous to me. We perform back-breaking manual labor and can barely afford to live. Our work is also seasonal so we are forced to find additional work in the winter. If the county concedes to the requests of farm owners, they are essentially passing the financial burden down to the lower paid employees already struggling to get by. The majority of these workers are also people of color. Denying a minimum wage increase perpetuates the exploitation of farm workers that originated with slavery. Instead of revamping their business strategies to increase worker productivity and employee retainment, farm owners are pressuring the government to perpetuate a system of exploiting manual laborers.</p>	<p>In those conversations, a pattern emerged: layoffs, shorter hours, raised</p> <p>I currently make \$25 per hour as the manager of a farm in Lafayette. I am unable to live comfortably off just this and work a second job once a week to supplement it. I work 7 days per week doing exhaustive manual labor. I can't afford to replace the broken glass on my windshield. I can't afford the surgery to remove my wisdom teeth. I am scraping by and I am already being paid the proposed minimum wage limit for 2030. Farm owners are using their positions of power to retain their profitability without having to rethink their business models. The food system is clearly broken but why must the lowest paid, hardest working people face the consequences of it? While the county can't change federal or state level policies, it has the ability to support the lowest paid, marginalized communities that are suffering the most.</p>
19	<p>I understand the overall concept and vision. The reality of implementation for small farm businesses is devastating when they are already struggling to be economically viable. I am deeply concerned about friends and families who are trying to make local agriculture work--another great vision of the county. They may not be in business next year. I believe that options should be considered to keep agriculture viable in Boulder County.</p>	
20	<p>I think that the county should match the city. The city did significantly more research into this matter than the commissioners have done (at least based on the information that's been published).</p>	<p>I own a small business in Boulder county. I only have one employee, who I pay higher than minimum wage, but she is incredibly skilled and experienced. I could not imagine paying someone with no experience that amount of money, and this will never put myself in a position where I have to hire someone with no experience.</p>
21	<p>It should be the same for the entire county, including all towns and cities within Boulder County and not just unincorporated areas.</p>	
22	<p>I think that the county should match the city. The city did significantly more research into this matter than the commissioners have done (at least based on the information that's been published).</p>	<p>I own a small business in Boulder county. I only have one employee, who I pay higher than minimum wage, but she is incredibly skilled and experienced. I could not imagine paying someone with no experience that amount of money, and this will never put myself in a position where I have to hire someone with no experience.</p>
23	<p>I think the current schedule increases wages too much, too fast. It doesn't do any good to increase wages too fast because it causes companies to raise prices and not hire or layoff workers. For example, I used to eat out frequently, a few times a week. Now the prices are so high, I only go about once a week if it is a special occasion.</p>	

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24	Boulder County's local minimum wage needs to increase. The cost of living continues to climb, making it hard for families to remain here. Do not pause the scheduled wage increase or switch to a lower wage schedule.	
25	I think it will deter companies from coming to Boulder County. Wages should be based on the market, not an arbitrary number.	
26	It's time for Boulder County to move beyond a minimum wage and adopt a living wage. The minimum wage might meet the letter of the law, but it doesn't meet the cost of living. A living wage means that people who work here can also live here, raise their children here, and contribute to the community they sustain every day. Workers should not have to work two or three jobs just to survive while employers and landlords profit from their labor. When wages reflect the real cost of housing, healthcare, and food, the whole community benefits. We see lower turnover, stronger local businesses, and greater social stability. I don't think Boulder County should lose sight of its priorities and values in the face of an autocrat in the country's highest office - <del>quite the contrary</del> .	
27	It needs to be in line with all surrounding communities, including Denver, so that all businesses can be on a level playing field. We need our small businesses I our small towns, so we are not forced to travel to larger towns for essential goods and services. It is already hard for them to compete with big box stores on pricing. Forcing them to pay higher wages is the final nail in the coffin.	Our local grocer will be forced to increase prices and reduce hiring of inexperienced workers. This will ultimately affect to viability of continuing to serve the comm7nity. It would be devastating to lose our local grocer.
28		<p>Dear Commissioners,</p> <p>I am writing on behalf of Left Hand Animal Hospital, a locally owned veterinary practice in Boulder County. We take pride in serving our community by providing compassionate, high-quality medical care for pets and support for the families who love them.</p> <p>We are deeply concerned about the proposed increase in the county's minimum wage to \$25.00 per hour. While we fully support fair compensation and strive to offer competitive, livable wages to our team members, this level of increase is not financially sustainable-either within our practice or across the veterinary industry as a whole.</p> <p>Veterinary medicine already faces significant cost pressures. Rising supply costs, staffing shortages, and increased operational expenses have made it increasingly challenging to maintain affordable care. Most veterinary practices operate on very modest profit margins, and labor costs represent our largest expense. A jump to \$25/hour across all support staff positions would necessitate substantial increases in service fees simply to stay operational.</p> <p>Unfortunately, these increased costs would directly impact pet owners. Many families already struggle to afford preventive and emergency veterinary care. If prices must rise further, we fear many pet parents will be forced to delay or forgo necessary treatment for their animals-or seek care outside the county-making veterinary care less accessible for our community and threatening the viability of local clinics like ours.</p> <p>We respectfully ask that you reconsider the proposed minimum wage increase or explore a more gradual, industry-informed approach that allows small, service-based businesses like veterinary practices to adapt without sacrificing accessibility of care or local jobs.</p> <p>We share your commitment to supporting workers and maintaining a strong local economy, but the current proposal would likely have the opposite effect-placing unbearable strain on small employers and limiting access to essential veterinary services for Boulder County residents.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration. We welcome the opportunity to discuss the realities of our industry further and to work together toward solutions that are fair, sustainable, and supportive of our community as a whole.</p>
29	I think it is ridiculous to set the minimum wage so high. The minimum wage is designed for starter jobs not jobs to support a family with. Raising the wage like this will drive businesses out of Boulder County and force farmers to quit farming and sell their properties to developers	
30	We urge you to support the COFA Policy Proposal. Help keep small farms viable!	Our boys earn minimum age for farm work. It is all we can afford, plus they get food for free.
31	<p>I've worked as a cook in Niwot for years, and I've seen a lot of changes, but nothing like this wage ordinance. Before, I could focus on cooking and doing my job well. Now, because labor costs are so high, we can't afford to have enough people on staff. That means I'm cooking meals while also having to do the dishes, clean up, and cover extra work just to keep the restaurant running.</p> <p>I don't mind working hard-I've always worked hard-but this isn't sustainable. A skilled cook shouldn't be doing two jobs because a small restaurant can't afford to hire a dishwasher anymore. That's not "progress." It's burnout, and it hurts both the staff and the customers.</p> <p>The commissioners keep saying this ordinance helps workers. From where I stand, it's doing the opposite. Instead of creating more good jobs, it's eliminating them. Instead of giving people opportunities, it's forcing fewer people to do more work for the same money. And if the restaurant doesn't survive, then none of us have jobs.</p>	

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<p>I am writing to you today with an urgent plea on behalf of the small businesses, families, and residents of unincorporated Boulder County. We ask you to pause the county's minimum wage ordinance and reconsider its application in our towns.</p> <p>Unincorporated Boulder County is not Boulder. It is not Longmont. We do not have the same population base, density, or number of jobs to support city-level wage structures. Our communities are made up almost entirely of locally owned, independent businesses - family-run restaurants, shops, and farms. We cannot compete on the same playing field as large cities with universities, tourism, and corporate infrastructure.</p> <p>This ordinance, as applied, is dismantling the foundation of our small-town economy. It is already forcing closures, cutting off opportunities for young people to get starter jobs, and driving prices higher than our customers can bear. And unlike larger towns or cities, Niwot and the mountain communities will never attract big-box chains to replace what is lost. We are too small. When our local restaurants or shops close, they will not be replaced - they will simply leave behind empty storefronts. Ghost towns.</p> <p>The unintended harm of this ordinance is clear:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. It places disproportionate burdens on the smallest and most vulnerable businesses.</li> <li>. It freezes out entry-level workers and students who rely on these jobs for experience.</li> <li>. It drains life from our main streets, creating vacancy and decline instead of opportunity.</li> </ul> <p>We are not opposed to fair wages. We are opposed to being forced into a city-level policy that does not fit our scale, our economy, or our</p>	
<p><b>33</b> Bad idea. Unintended consequences. Read up on other cities/states that have tried it.</p>	
<p><b>34</b> I understand that farmers and ag-business owners are resisting the proposed minimum wage increases. I support these local businesses and I source a great deal of my food supply locally. However I do not want underpaid workers raising my fruits, vegetables, and grains. I am willing to pay more for locally produced food so that farm and ag workers can have a living wage.</p>	
<p><b>35</b> The current wage increase plan threatens the viability of small local businesses that source locally produced materials and goods, sell local products, or provide local services. The County's local minimum wage is bad for workers, bad for businesses, bad for food security, and bad for the environment. I support small local businesses and fair pay for workers and urge you to find a way forward that protects the viability of both. Please adopt a fair, balanced, pragmatic, and sustainable approach that mirrors the City of Boulder's schedule and ties wages to inflation rather than simply raising it to a set dollar amount by a set date.</p>	<p>As a childcare worker, I understand what it's like to work for less-than-desirable wages. I am in this line of work by choice but have been in the workforce for 30 years, have a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, and a teaching license. Yet under the current minimum wage plan, my hourly pay is the same as CU undergraduate students who have no degree, no teacher's license, and no professional experience!</p> <p>If you mandate my employer to pay workers like me and those below me \$30/hour, the people above me all the way to the top will expect similar pay increases, and that is not feasible in the childcare industry. My employer would not be able to pay higher minimum wages without raising prices for the services we provide. Our families would not be able to afford more expensive childcare services (they are already pinched to pay for childcare). Ultimately, under the County's minimum wage plan, we would lose childcare business and childcare workers.</p>
<p><b>36</b> Please keep minimum wage on current schedule to increase. MIT's living wage calculator says the living minimum wage should be closer to \$25 in Colorado. <a href="https://livingwage.mit.edu/states/08">https://livingwage.mit.edu/states/08</a></p>	<p>Broomfield resident who works in Boulder City. Doesn't directly apply to me. But it applies to my fellow CO residents.</p>
<p><b>37</b> I believe this plan will make it impossible for farms to run as sustainable businesses in this county. Without becoming non-profits in order to fund salaries, there is no way to compete with prices for vegetables, meat, or value added products from neighboring counties and keep up with increasing input prices (such as feed, seed, and infrastructure needs). This focused rollout only on unincorporated Boulder County is a failure to address the root problem - that housing in this county is not affordable or ample enough for working class people.</p>	<p>We scrape by with minimum wage, but have the luck of a financially sound family willing to help us achieve our farming dreams. Off farm jobs are necessary in order to build a life in this county, and farmers are exhausted. If we cannot hire help at reasonable rates, we will have to give up on cultivating and sustaining the land in favor of making money to survive.</p>
<p><b>38</b> The minimum wage is too high. I recently relocated to Boulder County last year from the San Francisco Bay Area. Boulder reminds me of what San Francisco was 15-20 years ago. It was great back then and I enjoyed living there. The City is a complete mess now. Lots of businesses have shut down and homelessness and crime has increased greatly.</p> <p>CA recently raised their minimum wage to \$20/hr. In the following years since, we've seen higher cost passed onto consumers. This has lead to some businesses shutting down due to lower sales and reduce margin/profits.</p> <p>Instead of min wage workers demanding a higher minimum wage, they need to learn new skills to move onto a higher paying non entry level job. Financial education is also key. Instead of fighting for a few dollars extra per hour (only to have it be negated by higher cost of services that's passed onto consumers), advocates for a higher minimum wage wage should learn how to invest their money. The stock market has returned over 20% the last couple of years.</p> <p>Having more money is not going to solve their problems. Financial education will.</p>	<p>As a business owner, I did not consider opening up in Boulder due to the unfriendly business environment and the high min wage. Higher wage should be earned through value added skills, not mandated.</p>

**Public Comments RE: Unincorporated Boulder County Minimum Wage  
(Public Hearing 10/18/2025)**

	A	B
1	<p><b>What do you think about Boulder County's local minimum wage? / ¿Qué opina sobre el salario mínimo local del Condado de Boulder? (límite 500 words / límite de 500 palabras)</b></p>	<p><b>Share your experience of Boulder County's minimum wage for you, someone in your household, or your business. / Comparta su experiencia con el salario mínimo del Condado de Boulder, ya sea para usted, alguien de su hogar o su negocio.</b></p>
	<p>I am writing in direct response to Commissioner Stolzman's recent remarks regarding the minimum wage issue that was quoted in the Left Hand Valley Courier. With all due respect, the framing of that meeting and the input used to justify this policy are deeply unfair to Niwot and the unincorporated towns you are imposing it on.</p> <p>The organizations cited-Sister Carmen in Lafayette, the OUR Center in Longmont, and the Emergency Family Assistance Association (EFAA) in Boulder-do not represent unincorporated Boulder County. They serve residents of incorporated towns and cities, which already have their own councils, governments, and voices in this process. Those organizations have large budgets, professional staff, and lobbying reach. Meanwhile, Niwot, Hygiene, and the mountain communities have none of that. We are not incorporated. We have no city council, no mayor, no formal way to be represented in this debate. We rely on you as our direct representatives-and instead, we are being drowned out by well-funded outside voices speaking for their own communities, not ours.</p> <p>The fact that the Grange was "filled" with people advocating for \$30/hour wages is not evidence that Niwot supports this mandate. It is evidence of how lopsided and coordinated the outreach has been. Our towns did not get the same notice, access, or resources. There were no open houses, no public hearings, no surveys directed at the communities most impacted. Instead, a law was imposed on us that is crippling our businesses, erasing jobs for students and entry-level workers, and pushing long-standing family-owned establishments to closure or relocation.</p> <p>We are not Boulder. We are not Lafayette. We are not Longmont. We are small, unincorporated towns with no corporate chains, no large-scale employers, and no tourism base to help absorb these costs. Burdening Niwot, Hygiene, and the mountain towns with wage policies designed for urban centers is not "equity." It is economic erasure.</p> <p>We urge you to pause this ordinance immediately, and going forward, keep unincorporated Boulder County tied to the state minimum wage rather than lumping us in with cities whose economies we cannot match. If you continue on this path, you are not lifting up the vulnerable-you are hollowing out the very communities you were elected to serve.</p>	
39	<p>I love the idea of raising minimum wage, however I think we need to be very careful about what the unintended consequences may be. Many small local food farm owners have a hard time making minimum wage themselves. The largest problem I am aware of in the local food system is local farms going out of business due to insurmountable financial strain. If we force these folks to pay higher wages, they will go out of business faster. I think we need to build some exceptions into these new rules to protect us from the downside possibilities. The first and most important exception is if the farm/ business is not profitable and the owners are making less than twice minimum wage themselves they need an exemption or we need to subsidize the increased wages. Our own farm business has not ever been profitable nor have we ever paid ourselves. It is a labour of love and we hope to become profitable soon. We are able to offer free housing and free food and a great lifestyle along with small wages and huge learning opportunities. Under the circumstances, we think this is a great deal. If we were profitable, we would absolutely be paying more and we hope to soon. If we had had to pay these higher wages in the past, we simply would have quit farming as it would have been too much. Some potential ideas to help make these situations work would be things like carveouts for apprentices, interns, and summer help, anything that would give beginning farmers opportunities to help and learn for a wage that's more in line with what they are able to offer given the understanding that they are being taught and that this is generally a low income line of work. Another potential unintended consequence is regarding the value of non-cash benefits which can amount to a lot in Boulder county in the case of housing in particular. Agricultural employees do not have to pay withholding taxes on the food and lodging they receive. This can be a better package deal - If we had to charge rent to our housed employees this benefit would be negated offsetting the cash benefit of a higher wage.</p>	
40	<p>Dear Boulder County Commissioners,</p> <p>We write to you today on behalf of the Niwot Business Association (NBA)-a collective of business leaders working to preserve the economic and cultural health of our unincorporated community in Boulder County. For the past several months, our association has taken proactive, peaceful, and organized action in response to the local minimum wage ordinance passed by the Boulder County Commissioners. And yet, despite our best efforts, our community's voice continues to be ignored.</p> <p>We are not a city. We have no mayor, no council, no formal representation in the legislative process that brought this wage hike to our door. The NBA has tried to fill that gap. We have printed and distributed postcards for residents to send to their county officials. We have written letters, held meetings, and brought together hundreds of voices to make a simple point: this law, as written and applied, is harming Niwot.</p> <p>Our businesses-many of which have operated here for decades-are now facing existential decisions. Restaurants, retailers, coffee shops, service providers, and even essential businesses like our locally owned grocery store are caught in a policy that was not designed for communities like ours. We are not Boulder. We are not Longmont. We are a town of small businesses held together by community trust, personal investment, and narrow margins. This policy is dismantling that foundation.</p> <p>We are not opposed to fair wages. In fact, we've always worked to treat our employees with dignity and generosity. But we cannot survive a wage structure imposed from above without context, compromise, or conversation. We cannot raise prices fast enough to keep up. And we cannot keep asking our customers to shoulder the burden of Boulder County's political strategy.</p> <p>This wage mandate creates an economy that only big corporations can survive in, while small, independent businesses are pushed out. Large chains have the resources, scale, and brand recognition to absorb higher labor costs, spread expenses across hundreds of locations, and weather temporary losses. Small-town restaurants, retailers, and farms do not. We operate on razor-thin margins, often with just a handful of employees, and every dollar matters. By setting wages at unsustainable levels for rural and unincorporated areas, the county is effectively tilting the playing field toward corporate giants and against the local businesses that give our communities their character. The result is predictable: closures, vacancies, and eventually ghost towns where small businesses once thrived.</p> <p>We are the closest thing Niwot has to a government. And we are telling you: we are in crisis.</p> <p>Sincerely, President: Jim Ditzel (Summit Commercial Real Estate)</p>	
41	<p>I run a business in both Niwot and Longmont, and I want to tell you firsthand how differently this minimum wage issue plays out between the two places. In Longmont, it's tough, but it's doable. There are more people, more foot traffic, and a bigger economy to spread costs across. Raising wages there doesn't come without challenges, but the city has enough of a customer base to make it work. Niwot is not Longmont. It's small. Really small. There are no big corporations, no steady stream of tourists, no university crowd. When costs go up here, we can't just add more customers to balance it out - because there aren't more customers. Every extra dollar in payroll means raising prices higher than our neighbors, and when that happens, people simply drive down the road to Longmont. That's the reality. And here's the part that really worries me: when Niwot businesses close, there isn't a Starbucks or a Walmart waiting to swoop in and take their place. Empty storefronts stay empty. That's how main streets die. I need you to understand this: Niwot and other unincorporated towns cannot keep pace with Boulder or Longmont. We don't have the same population or economic base, and treating us as if we do is setting us up to fail.</p>	
42	<p>Please pause this ordinance for unincorporated areas and align us with the state minimum wage. We want to keep our doors open, keep people employed, and keep our towns alive - but we</p>	

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A	B
1 What do you think about Boulder County's local minimum wage? / ¿Qué opina sobre el salario mínimo local del Condado de Boulder? (limit 500 words / límite de 500 palabras)	Share your experience of Boulder County's minimum wage for you, someone in your household, or your business. / Comparta su experiencia con el salario mínimo del Condado de Boulder, ya sea para usted, alguien de su hogar o su negocio.
43 It would make our ice cream shop go out of business. We are already struggling with the cost of staffing and we only hire high school students and each shift only has one employee working. If the minimum wage was raised to the proposed level we would have to shut our doors immediately.	We pride ourselves for hiring and training high school students. We have three kids in high school currently and it's nearly impossible for them to find jobs. We believe it's important to the next generation to learn customer service skills and have jobs in high school. However, if the minimum wage hits the proposed level, we wouldn't be able to keep our doors open.
44 I am in favor of lowering the wage. The restaurants and small businesses are leaving here! Please consider this as we are struggling to maintain. Stop imposing restrictions on Niwot that are not imposed in Boulder.	I serve an several boards and community service efforts. This is all I hear anymore out of small businesses frustration.
45 I believe it will put my small business under. We are a small restaurant in Niwot and my average employee are high school and college students. With minimum wage and tips they will be making more than we are as owners. It will be devastating as I can only raise prices so much and keep customers.	For our business it will put us under.
46 Having been heavily involved in the town of Niwot ever since 1986 when we began meeting with Ron Stewart and the Transportation Department about drainage, sidewalks and lighting for Old Town, I have witnessed the ups and downs of Niwot merchants over the years. But nothing could have cut us off at the knees more than the recent wage requirements imposed by the BOCC. All of the original thought and consideration that went into creating the historic district and business district back then have been ignored, all to the detriment of the small businesses and restaurants that are trying to keep their financial heads above water.	
47 I believe it will put my small business under. We are a small restaurant in Niwot and my average employee are high school and college students. With minimum wage and tips they will be making more than we are as owners. It will be devastating as I can only raise prices so much and keep customers.	For our business it will put us under.
48 I am pretty sure that if this goes thru, my restaurant will either 1.) not survive. or 2.) I would have to let go of my entire front of house which is made up of people that have worked here for years. I would have to go to a self-service pick-up window. Also, we employ many people for their first jobs ever. That will not be happening anymore. How can I justify paying that for someone with zero experience. Also, my entire kitchen would need a raise because they are not going to work for as much as a guy who has never worked before and is 16 years old. Trust me I firmly believe in living wages. But small business wages are not the issue here. Affordable housing is and that is not my small restaurant's fault.	It needs to be fair to both parties. Look at the bigger problem here, affordable housing.
49 I think that \$25 an hour for only unincorporated towns will cause a great disadvantage to them. The minimum wage for Boulder County needs to be more universal. If this means everyone adopts the Boulder City, then that is what should happen. I believe unincorporated Boulder County should get a pause on their increase for next year until a county wide approach is reached. That was the basis for the ordinance in the first place to have a countywide minimum wage.	My brother and I own a small grocery store in Niwot. Unincorporated Boulder County. If the wage goes to \$25 an in 2030 it will be a struggle for us. Our payroll will go up more than 30 percent. We will cut jobs and will no longer hire high school or college students. We will have to raise prices in an already expensive economy. Large corporations that are all around us will be paying their employees much less than we do. Please consider how this will affect the small business in these towns and how this is not solving the problem of affordable living in Boulder County.
50 Thank you up for moving forward with a review of minimum wage standards in Boulder county. The high minimum wage here is ruining our economy. Please balance wages in the county with Weld County or Boulder City!	I hate that our local businesses can no longer afford to give our highschool students their first jobs because the minimum wage is so high! The kids new that intro job experience!
51 Well I trust the fact that we must raise wages, I myself I'm 70 and self-employed and I've suffered from too low wage my entire adult life. However, I'm also a food activist who has been closely involved with farms and community support in agriculture. We have to accept the sophisticated nuance that's different in each industry, and farming has to get special consideration for how we can manage to pay well. I'm asking for more attention to be paid to the details. At least to consider aligning with the way the city of Boulder has arranged it... As I understand the farmers are willing to work that way for a while. But to always keep an effective change as the goal, not just a published change, a literal and linear change... It's all much more non-linear than that. We are at the effective weather and we are all at the effective supply chain. The supply chain everywhere is poor, and people don't realise that includes food. We have to keep a healthy local food shed. I appreciate the work that the commissioners experts and farming families and farmers are doing. But having worked for decades in the field I'm asking everybody to stay attentive to each other's needs, be good listeners, don't let the small detail slip away because they can puncture a program if they're not properly considered. Together it can be done. In open dialogue it can be done. With trust for each other it can be done. And it's crucial that this get done. Our food shed is far more vulnerable than people understand. A primary issue around climate change is the food chain, and the food shed. Forward! Onward! And thank you to all who have their shoulder against this wheel.	
52 \$25/hr is too high for minimum wage. Please let the business owners determine what to pay workers.	I've worked in many restaurants and they can't survive on 25/hr.
53 The proposed hourly wage increase is too large. Please seriously consider reducing it to align with the hourly wage of the city of Boulder. With a good benefits package the wage is more than competitive with surrounding communities and private businesses. Our human resources are important, but the proposed increases are too aggressive and compound significantly over time, leading to future possible layoffs. Thank you.	
54 Both the county and the city waste an amazing amount of time trying to social engineer the local economy with no identifiable results and tons of unintended consequences. Let the state decide minimum wages. That way businesses that compete on regional basis can be competitive and the free market will determine wages. We owned a skilled trade construction company that paid well above minimum wage. When the minimum wage increased, our pool of workers decreased because young, trainable workers preferred to take "low stress" minimum wage jobs rather than invest their mental capital into something that was "hard" and had a longer term payback....learning a trade.	We employed between 10 and 20 people for 13 years in Boulder County. All were paid above minimum wage, but minimum wage definitely had an impact on our candidate pool.
55 I am submitting a statewide report that I produced through my role as state produce specialist for CSU Extension. The report captures 2025 responses from Boulder County but doesn't filter to the county level to provide some anonymity for farms and ranches. The intention is to help provide the BOCC with some research based perspective on the wage challenges that farmers are facing and how they are responding to these challenges. Long term, and especially for labor intensive farms, these findings indicate that ongoing adverse business conditions may result in the cessation of labor intensive ag products (vegetables, fruit, beef, etc.) and/or the exit of farm and ranch businesses in Boulder County. Please let me know if I can further explain the study and report. 970-491-6968. See link to report below: <a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WJGTA4IzhEcE2Pt1VW-Cb3ewj3d6w9DI/view?usp=drive_link">https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WJGTA4IzhEcE2Pt1VW-Cb3ewj3d6w9DI/view?usp=drive_link</a>	The BOCC with some research based perspective on the wage challenges that farmers are facing and how they are responding to these challenges.
56 I support fair wages, thriving farms, and a healthy local economy.	I appreciate and love that our local farms and the work they do providing healthy, locally grown food to our communities. Let's support them.
57	We love our local CSA and it would not be able to run if the wages increase in the manner you have laid out. Please support local small businesses and farms.
58 Please listen to the local farmers regarding their needs. They are sincere about their support for fair wages, thriving farms, and a healthy local economy. Thank you	
59 It should not be amended. It should stay on a path to \$25 by 2030, with inflation-adjusted raises in 2031 and beyond.	
60 I am a retired person so no longer an employer or employee. I am, however, the recipient of a seemingly endless stream of requests from nonprofit "safety net" organizations that help supply food, shelter, health care, and other basic needs to county residents. Many of the people in need of help are working long hours, sometimes in more than one job, The cost of living rises out of proportion to their wages. In 2023, you, our County Commissioners, adopted a bold schedule of minimum wage increase that approaches self-sufficiency wages. Unfortunately the municipalities other than Boulder made no such move. It seems unlikely that they will in 2026 or even farther into the future. Longmont, Lafayette, and Erie councils want more input. Longmont council held a "fishbowl" discussion which did not result in any action. Louisville council voted in a straw poll in September 2024 not to consider raising the minimum wage. Your action showed respect for workers and their contributions to our economy. Their should not have to rely on tax-funded government programs and private charity. According to the Oct 14, 2025, Memo "Consideration of Amendments to Local Minimum Wage Ordinance #2023-004," pressure to repeal the ordinance comes from some Niwot employers and some farmers in the county. You passed Ordinance 2023-004 after thorough consideration of available data. I urge you not to yield to pressure from a few employers. Please do not ignore the county-wide economic data and community feedback and abandon the interests of Boulder County's hard-working population. Do not repeal or modify Ordinance 2023-004.	

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1	<p><b>What do you think about Boulder County's local minimum wage? / ¿Qué opina sobre el salario mínimo local del Condado de Boulder? (límite 500 words / límite de 500 palabras)</b></p>	<p><b>Share your experience of Boulder County's minimum wage for you, someone in your household, or your business. / Comparta su experiencia con el salario mínimo del Condado de Boulder, ya sea para usted, alguien de su hogar o su negocio.</b></p>
61	<p>The scheduled changes to the minimum wage? It is great and necessary. Farm workers are working part-time without any actual benefits outside of fresh veggies - no paid leave, no health insurance, often working in terrible conditions due to climate or disasters (hail, rainstorms, high winds, terrible air quality from nearby fires, etc.), and not likely to be employed yearlong. The pay increase is necessary in order for farm workers to afford to live in the county, and enjoy their time as county residents. With that said, how it was implemented? This is where the Commissioners need to help financially and be transparent. 1. What is the county doing to continue conversations with neighboring cities on matching the pay increase? What are the current challenges - share them with public. It cannot be a "we tried" - it appears this conversation has been occurring a long time and is going nowhere so give us actionable items on how we can join the battle. Biggest reason - most of our clients are living in the cities and they already feel the cost of food is too high, especially at a time when the federal government is terrorizing low-income households by taking away their supportive initiatives. This is not the time to increase costs of operations for locally-grown food WITHOUT the local government subsidizing farms for growing locally. 2. Examples of subsidies: (a) fund internships specifically for farms located in unincorporated areas to help cut costs for each farm; (b) add a tax or delivery fee for all food sold in Boulder County but not grown in Boulder County - use that tax to help fund initiatives to help reduce the costs of operations for those in unincorporated areas; add a tax on all incorporated areas within Boulder County when purchasing from farms located in unincorporated county - that tax can be used to help fund ways to decrease costs of operations; (d) create county-wide budgets that can be used to purchase leftover food from farmers at wholesale price and have a team/kitchen to convert that food into shelf-stable or frozen goods (effectively extending the season for nutritious food availability in the county); (e) remove the tax on food for home consumption for all farms in Boulder County and increase it for food from out of state - help balance the discrepancy in prices to recognize the higher costs of operations due to state and County policies, (f) have a more equitable distribution system for funds for grants - why can't it be divided up more, go to newer farmers? I am a farmer. I currently pay our employees between \$19.50-\$25.50 (from no experience to specialized experience). However, only reason I can do that is because we are paying ourselves \$5/hour, eating scraps, ignoring health needs, and have no goals in mind for personal or professional desires. We are surviving at a small scale out of necessity and could do much more with a tiny bit of financial support.</p>	<p>My partner has previously worked for farmers located in unincorporated Boulder County for VERY LITTLE PAY. If it wasn't for living with me who had a full-time job outside of agriculture and funding our housing bills, he would not have been able to find a place to rent, pay rent, or enjoy living in the county. And, my partner had managerial roles and responsibilities due to having 10+ years of experience as a farm worker in various other organizations...and still was making the bare minimum wage for many years. When sick, he was asked to come into work or risk being fired. He worked through hail, heavy winds, wildfires just a few miles away, heavy smoke and terrible air quality, COVID concerns - all without access to PPE and fear that asking for PPE could result in him being fired. There is no HR on these farms outside of the owner and it is very clear that you are an at-will employee. You are also asked to work "under the table" or for cash so that you don't go overtime on paper or asked to consider the produce for home consumption as part of the pay. The environment is toxic. In recent years, the state has released additional parameters that farmers must provide for farm worker safety - and even these are being seen as unnecessary by some farmers in the area because they've never needed these types of protections before or they just don't understand how impossible it is with a farmers' schedule to take breaks or give days off. There is no holiday observations or scheduled breaks to take vacations during the season. Everything in life is expected to be put on pause once the season starts...this is not fair or reasonable.</p> <p>I share this because - passing such a ruling without any real education, financial support, or just accountability for all involved (including neighboring cities) will make this measure fail and push agriculture to our neighboring areas. I fully support this measure continues, but not if the small business owners are left alone in figuring this out on their own without support from the county, transparency for the city residents on why they need to prioritize local, etc. We cannot overthrow decades of destruction done by the industrialization of agriculture on such a small scale without support for all avenues.</p>
62	<p>Raising the minimum wage will result in the desolation of farms. I do not think it should be increased. No farms no food. Go after something else, and consider the consequences of what you're proposing for the local agricultural community.</p>	<p>I make minimum wage and I get by fine.</p>
63	<p>Raising the minimum wage will result in the desolation of farms. I do not think it should be increased. No farms no food. Go after something else, and consider the consequences of what you're proposing for the local agricultural community.</p>	<p>I make minimum wage and I get by fine.</p>
64	<p>To the Boulder County Commissioners: I write today to express serious concerns about the county's accelerated minimum wage schedule, which creates an unfair competitive disadvantage for family businesses in unincorporated Boulder County compared to employers operating within city limits. Boulder County's minimum wage-\$16.57 in 2025, rising to \$25.00 by 2030-places unincorporated county businesses at a severe disadvantage. The City of Boulder set its 2025 minimum at \$15.57, while Longmont follows the state minimum of \$14.81. County businesses face labor costs 12% higher than Boulder city and 19% higher than Longmont.</p> <p>Family farms, independent grocery stores, and locally-owned restaurants in unincorporated areas face substantially higher labor costs than chain retailers operating blocks away in incorporated cities. This disparity is particularly troubling given the governance structure. Cities like Boulder and Longmont have large city councils with robust public input processes. Boulder County, governed by just three commissioners, has chosen to lead rather than follow, setting wages that exceed both state law and neighboring municipalities. This ignores the reality that unincorporated county businesses often operate on thinner margins than urban counterparts while facing identical competitive pressures.</p> <p>Minimum wage positions have traditionally served as entry points for young people gaining first work experience. These jobs teach responsibility, work ethic, time management, and practical skills no classroom can replicate. When labor costs rise nearly 20% higher than neighboring jurisdictions, employers reduce positions, and entry-level jobs held by teenagers disappear first. We risk creating a generation unable to access formative summer employment. This burden falls disproportionately on family businesses in unincorporated Boulder County-multigenerational family farms, independent grocery stores serving rural communities for decades, and family-owned restaurants where locals gather. These businesses operate on modest margins and compete directly with chains inside city limits enjoying significantly lower labor costs. This is not an argument against fair wages. Our farm already pays adult workers above county minimums because competitive wages are essential to attracting quality employees. We believe in fair compensation. However, there is a fundamental difference between market-driven wages and government mandates that ignore competitive realities across jurisdictional lines.</p> <p>A sensible approach would position Boulder County's minimum wage alongside-not surpassing-municipalities within its borders. Let cities with larger councils and robust deliberative processes set the pace. Allow unincorporated county businesses to compete equally with employers in Boulder, Longmont, and other municipalities. This respects local decision-making while preventing county policy from disadvantaging small businesses that form the backbone of rural and agricultural communities. The county's minimum wage schedule may be well-intentioned, but it creates real harm for family businesses competing while maintaining youth employment opportunities. I urge the commissioners to reconsider this trajectory and align county wages with surrounding municipalities rather than racing ahead of them.</p>	<p>Our family farm sits just outside Longmont's city limits in unincorporated Boulder County. This geographic distinction-merely which side of a street we occupy-now determines whether we can afford to continue our youth employment program that has served our community for years. Each summer, we employ around sixteen high school students who gain meaningful work experience: early mornings, physical labor, responsibility for living plants and animals, and the satisfaction of contributing to food production. Many have never held jobs before. They learn punctuality, teamwork, and that their efforts have real consequences. Parents regularly tell us how transformative these summer positions have been.</p> <p>The county's minimum wage schedule forces us to reconsider this program's viability. At \$16.57 per hour-19% higher than Longmont's \$14.81 state minimum-rising to \$25.00 by 2030, the math becomes increasingly difficult. Sixteen teenagers working summer months represents substantial labor costs that continue growing under the county's mandate.</p> <p>Meanwhile, grocery stores, fast-food restaurants, and retail chains in Longmont operate under state wage requirements at \$14.81 per hour while we face the county's \$16.57 minimum. This creates a bitter irony. Large chain employers with deep pockets and professional HR departments get the benefit of lower municipal or state wage rates. Our family farm, operating on agricultural margins in unincorporated county land, must meet wage requirements 19% higher. The same is true for the family-owned restaurant down the road and the independent grocery store that has served this area for generations. We all compete for the same teenage workers, but we do so with one hand tied behind our backs by county policy while chain businesses across the street operate under more favorable wage structures.</p> <p>The likely outcome with the current rate increases is reducing our youth employment program-perhaps significantly. We may cut from sixteen positions to ten, eight, or fewer. Each reduction means another teenager who will not learn what farm work teaches, will not understand where food comes from, or experience the dignity of earning a paycheck through honest labor. Our adult employees earn above county minimums because the market demands competitive wages for experience, reliable workers. We have no problem with competitive wages-we pay them voluntarily. But mandating wages exceeding surrounding cities while applying them only to unincorporated county businesses creates an uneven playing field hurting the smallest employers. We are not asking permission to underpay workers. We are asking for fairness-to compete for labor on equal terms with employers across the street in Longmont.</p> <p>Let cities set wage policies through their council processes, and let the county follow rather than lead. Teenagers who benefit from our summer employment program deserve consideration in this policy debate. They are losing opportunities not because we do not value them, but because county policy has made their employment increasingly unaffordable. I respectfully urge the commissioners to reconsider the county's wage trajectory and align it with surrounding municipalities to preserve employment opportunities for the young people who benefit so much from the work experience.</p>
65	<p>I do not support this.</p>	<p>Drove a tractor and miscellaneous ag work; knowing how tight margins are, I was glad to have state and fed wages than NO wages at all.</p>
66	<p>Having the minimum wage higher in unincorporated Boulder County is not fair to the the businesses in unincorporated Boulder County! Why should it be higher than all the cities nearby, such as Boulder, Longmont, Louisville, Lafayette, etc?! It puts the business owners in unincorporated Boulder County at a huge disadvantage. Most if not all of the businesses in unincorporated Boulder County are already struggling since they do not have the foot traffic the cities have. Unincorporated Boulder County be at the state of Colorado's minimum wage!</p>	
67	<p>As a small nonprofit that has served Boulder County for 43 years, the recent increases in the local minimum wage have placed a significant financial strain on our organization. While we fully support fair and livable wages for employees, the rapid escalation in hourly rates has been extremely difficult to absorb. To adjust, we have had to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduce our workforce by 17%.</li> <li>- Scale back our benefits package, passing more insurance costs to employees, something they've expressed is increasingly burdensome.</li> <li>- Raise the minimum hours required to qualify for benefits in order to offset rising payroll expenses.</li> </ul> <p>Our organization does not charge for our services, which means we have no way to increase revenue to offset these mandated wage hikes. Additionally, we have not seen an increase in funding from the community members who rely on our services, leaving a widening funding gap that jeopardizes our ability to meet the needs of the wildlife and people we serve. The current wage trajectory is unsustainable for small nonprofits like ours and ultimately reduces our community impact. We respectfully urge the commissioners to consider pausing or moderating future wage increases, or aligning with the City of Boulder's slower schedule, to allow small employers and nonprofits providing essential services to remain viable.</p>	<p>As the leader of a long-standing local nonprofit, this change has had both professional and personal impacts. I've had to make difficult decisions and painful conversations with valued team members, including talented interpreters who helped us serve non-English-speaking community members. Losing them has deeply affected our ability to reach all residents who need our help. The loss of a portion of our workforce has been devastating to morale and has been keenly felt across our tightknit group.</p> <p>From an organizational standpoint, the impact has been crippling. We have reduced our workforce by 17%, scaled back benefits, shifted more insurance costs to employees, and increased the minimum hours required to receive benefits, none of which align with our values or goals. Because we do not charge for our services, we have no way to offset these mandated wage increases, and community giving has not risen at the same pace. This has left a widening funding gap that forces us to operate in survival mode rather than growth, limiting our ability to serve the public effectively.</p> <p>We share the commissioners' belief that all workers deserve dignity, fair pay, and the ability to meet their basic needs. However, without relief for small nonprofits and mission-driven organizations, the current wage trajectory risks undermining the very services that uplift our community's most vulnerable residents. We ask the county to consider a more sustainable approach, whether through aligning with the City of Boulder's slower schedule, temporarily pausing future increases, or introducing small business and nonprofit assistance programs as mentioned in recent commissioner discussions. By balancing compassion for workers with practical support for the organizations employing them, Boulder County can ensure that both thrive together, protecting livelihoods while preserving the essential services that strengthen our community.</p>
69	<p>Do not lower wages!</p> <p>I love the idea of having a single minimum wage rate for the County so that everyone is on equal footing. Unfortunately, that did not happen and the County decided to still move forward with increases to \$25 by 2030. I have seen first hand the affects on our small business owners in Niwot closing because of an increase in costs, most stating planning for \$25 in 4 years as the primary concern. This is not sustainable for our locally owned businesses and farmers. The County should stay at its current rate until the other regions come up to the existing level and then we all move forward together. Unincorporated Boulder County is NOT Boulder and should not be more than the City of Boulder. Ideally I think we should be less than the City of Boulder. Please do not ruin our small town feel by putting out of business our restaurants and retailers that make our town special.</p>	<p>We have seen our children's bookstore close, the loss of three restaurants (one moving to Longmont with a lower minimum wage but still keeping their Niwot Pizza name), Several small retail outlets. We are losing our small town feel. Now is not the time to stifle small business, but support it.</p>

**Public Comments RE: Unincorporated Boulder County Minimum Wage  
(Public Hearing 10/18/2025)**

	A	B
1	<b>What do you think about Boulder County's local minimum wage? / ¿Qué opina sobre el salario mínimo local del Condado de Boulder? (límite 500 words / límite de 500 palabras)</b>	<b>Share your experience of Boulder County's minimum wage for you, someone in your household, or your business. / Comparta su experiencia con el salario mínimo del Condado de Boulder, ya sea para usted, alguien de su hogar o su negocio.</b>
70	I am fully in support of keeping the minimum wage increases as they currently are. I am a small business owner and single parent in Louisville providing organic landscape maintenance. I have struggled to raise my family here on about \$50,000 a year. Farm work/ landscaping is incredibly hard work, especially with the increasing temperatures, and people deserve to make a decent living. I don't think most business owners really understand what it's like trying to live on under than \$20/hour.	The only way to survive here on low wages is to rent a room in a house with many other people, forget having healthcare or dental care or under report your wages so you don't get kicked off of Medicaid, and work like a dog with no hope of ever getting off the hamster wheel. The only people who can do it are students whose parents are supplementing their income
71	I am fully in support of keeping the minimum wage increases as they currently are. I am a small business owner and single parent in Louisville providing organic landscape maintenance. I have struggled to raise my family here on about \$50,000 a year. Farm work/ landscaping is incredibly hard work, especially with the increasing temperatures, and people deserve to make a decent living. I don't think most business owners really understand what it's like trying to live on under than \$20/hour.	The only way to survive here on low wages is to rent a room in a house with many other people, forget having healthcare or dental care or under report your wages so you don't get kicked off of Medicaid, and work like a dog with no hope of ever getting off the hamster wheel. The only people who can do it are students whose parents are supplementing their income
72	The minimum wage in the county should be held and not increased. You are killing businesses in Niwot, Hygeine, etc. High schoolers that work at many of these places are out of work, do not need higher minimums as they live at home and easily commute into town. Boulder is attempting to squeeze out other area of the county to become a monopoly. Disgusted.	We have lost several restaurants and business in Niwot. 1914, boutique/resale shop, etc. There is no tax on tips and our young people need to have jobs that they can access close to home ie. Niwot but not if it is a ghost town. We have families priced out of Boulder living in the county and now Boulder commissioners are squeezing the county. Sad. Hold the wage and stop please.
73	It's too low.	I know too many farmers who can't get by.
74	Please just let the market do its thing. I understand the desire to provide a floor under workers' wages, but unfortunately minimum wages, especially at the levels we're considering, distort the market in harmful ways. Do we really think a high school kid working after school for \$15 an hour is a bad a thing? Do we really want restaurants to be unable to serve lunch because they can't make a profit at enforced wage rates?	
75	Please support our local farm communities by focusing on more affordable housing. Raising the minimum wage will put many of these farms out of business. Their wages are already in line with the city of Boulder. These farmers work extremely hard to provide healthy, nutritious food and face many obstacles, not least are more extreme weather events. Let's support them in every way we can!	
76	As my attached comment details, I would suggest leaving the minimum wage as scheduled for 2026, leaving any changes to the minimum wage to be considered through early/mid-2026, to take effect in 2027 or later.	
77	I am in favor of lowering the wage. The restaurants and small businesses are leaving here! Please consider this as we are struggling to maintain. Stop imposing restrictions on Niwot that are not imposed in Boulder.	i serve an several boards and community service efforts. This is all I hear anymore out of small businesses frustration.