



LETTER OF SUPPORT

January 21, 2026

To the Awards Committee:

I'm pleased to provide this letter of support for the **Imagine Alamosa County Comprehensive Plan** to be nominated for the **VERNON DEINES AWARD FOR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OR SPECIAL PROJECT PLAN**. This recent **Imagine Alamosa County** project provided a crucial update to a 2008 master plan, and intentionally focused on water availability as the limiting factor to development and the most important facet of strategic planning for future land uses. Since 2008, Alamosa County and the broader region have faced substantial changes to the legal and physical availability of water, changes which threaten our agricultural heritage and community values. Additionally, we have seen substantial utility-scale solar development, challenges with housing, increasing tourism, and a recent influx of new residents responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

From the onset of the eighteen-month process, Alamosa County staff and the consultant team utilized creative and meaningful ways to engage the community to discuss community values and vision. This included the **Community Advisory Committee** which comprised individuals from the business, healthcare, tourism, and agricultural sectors, in addition to elected officials and representatives of non-profit organizations. It also effectively engaged our youth by incorporating students in Alamosa High School government classes throughout the entire project. These students connected their family, friends and neighbors to the planning process, and researched and presented on specific topical issues to their peers and to county leadership. As an elected County Commissioner, I fully appreciate the value of an engaged community to the decisions we make.

As a community champion working to maximize the economic benefits of renewable energy development to our county, I was also appreciative of the work done by the project team to explore how best such developments fit our changing landscape. The water challenges we face will inevitably transition actively farmed land out of production, and photovoltaic solar projects can be a viable alternative for our landowners. Energy developments can be very complex, and are impacted not only by land availability, but also transmission infrastructure, natural resources, and neighbor concerns. The **Imagine Alamosa County Comprehensive Plan** explored these issues and includes an Energy Overlay that maps areas of the county that are considered ideal for future solar farms. This innovative approach helps guide potential development and provides a framework for decision making by the County Commission. Since adoption last July, we have heard positive feedback from the solar industry and other jurisdictions are looking to this as a model approach to strategic planning.

I would be excited for the **Imagine Alamosa County Comprehensive Plan** to receive recognition as I feel out community engagement, combined with scenario planning for particular uses like utility scale solar is a useful approach that will benefit other rural communities and counties. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lori Lee Laske
Commissioner, District 1
Alamosa County