

State Representative
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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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MAJORITY CO-WHIP
Vice-Chair:
Energy & Environment
Committee
Member:
Transportation, Housing & Local
Government Committee
Appropriations Committee

June 17, 2026

Glenwood Springs City Council 101 West 8th Street Glenwood Springs, CO 81601

Re: Fire Safety for the People Held at 100 Midland Avenue, Suite 210

Dear Mayor and Members of Council,

I am writing to you to express serious concern about people in our own community who were locked inside a building that cannot keep them safe. For too long, too many of our neighbors have been left behind, and the people held on behalf of Immigration and Customs Enforcement at 100 Midland Avenue are among them. They were placed in a building that does not meet the fire-safety and evacuation protections our law requires whenever a person is held against their will. When someone cannot open the door for themselves, the building has to do the work of keeping them alive. This one was never built to. Fire evacuation and emergency communication are not abstract issues for me.


I chair the Wildfire Matters Interim Committee, and I have spent my time in office working to ensure that when an emergency comes, no one in our communities is left without a way out. The people held at 100 Midland have no such protection. Because the building is used to detain people, the International Building Code treats it as a Group I-3 facility, the category reserved for places where the people inside cannot let themselves out. That classification carries the strictest fire and evacuation requirements in the code, written for exactly this situation: occupants who cannot flee and who must be protected where they stand. The City's own records show this building has no valid certificate of occupancy for that use.

Strip away the paperwork, and the truth is simple. If a fire starts in that building, the people locked inside cannot escape it. They depend on protections that are not there. On April 28, the Planning and Zoning Commission revoked the permit for this facility. Nearly seven weeks have passed, and the danger has not been addressed. The building still stands, still uncorrected, still capable of holding people it cannot keep safe. I have always believed in working with local government to find real solutions that fit our communities, and I am asking you to act now.

Please direct the City Manager, the building official, and the fire authority to inspect this building, to apply the City's unsafe-building provisions, and to ensure that no one is held there

again unless and until it fully meets the fire-safety and evacuation standards its use requires. We are strongest when we refuse to leave anyone behind, including the people whose safety is easiest to overlook. No one should be locked inside a building they cannot escape. I am grateful for your service to our community, and I trust you to do right by everyone who depends on this City's protection.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Velasco". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

Elizabeth Velasco
State Representative, House District 57