

**Second Regular Session  
Seventy-fifth General Assembly  
STATE OF COLORADO**

**INTRODUCED**

LLS NO. 26-0331.01 Jed Franklin x5484

**SENATE BILL 26-052**

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**SENATE SPONSORSHIP**

**Roberts and Catlin,**

**HOUSE SPONSORSHIP**

**Lukens and Mauro,**

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**Senate Committees**  
Agriculture & Natural Resources

**House Committees**

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**A BILL FOR AN ACT**

101      **CONCERNING COAL TRANSITION COMMUNITIES, AND, IN CONNECTION**  
102                **THEREWITH, PROVIDING A HIRING PREFERENCE FOR COAL**  
103                **TRANSITION WORKERS IN COAL TRANSITION COMMUNITIES AND**  
104                **EXPANDING THE ALLOWABLE WAYS IN WHICH A PUBLIC ENTITY**  
105                **MAY DEPOSIT OR INVEST JUST TRANSITION MONEY.**

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**Bill Summary**

*(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <http://leg.colorado.gov>.)*

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.  
*Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.*  
*Dashes through the words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law.*

The bill establishes a first and preferred opportunity for available employment for coal transition workers (hiring preference). A business entity located in a coal transition community that is engaged in the business of constructing or operating railroads, utilities, energy generation facilities, or advanced manufacturing facilities (covered business) is required to comply with the hiring preference. A covered business does not include the state government or a local government.

A covered business is required to make good faith efforts to provide a hiring preference to a coal transition worker who meets the minimum qualifications for an employment position (qualified coal transition worker). A covered business may hire an individual who is not a qualified coal transition worker only if either a qualified coal transition worker did not apply for employment with the covered business or each qualified coal transition worker declined a job offer from a covered business.

A covered business is required to report annually to the executive director of the department of labor and employment or their designee (executive director). The executive director is required to adopt policies and procedures to implement the bill.

Currently, a public entity is not allowed to invest public funds in certain types of investments, such as equity instruments, instruments convertible to equity, or equity interests, or to deposit public funds with any person except certain depository institutions, which are primarily banks. The bill authorizes a public entity to deposit or invest, either directly or through an investment firm or other third party authorized by the public entity, public funds from a payment or settlement that the public entity has received to offset the socioeconomic impacts to a community or government from the closure of a coal mine or coal power generating station in any investment permitted by an investment policy approved by the public entity.

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1     *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2             **SECTION 1. Legislative declaration.** (1) The general assembly  
3     finds and declares that:

4             (a) Coal transition workers have powered the state for decades,  
5     and the loss of coal-related employment has profound economic and  
6     personal impacts on workers, their families, and the communities that  
7     depend on them. These impacts are concentrated in specific regions of the  
8     state and result directly from the planned and regulated decline of

1 coal-fueled generation and extraction.

2 (b) Coal transition workers possess specialized, high-value skills  
3 that are directly transferable and critical to the state's transportation,  
4 infrastructure, clean-energy, manufacturing, and industrial future,  
5 including skills developed through years of work in highly regulated,  
6 safety-sensitive, and technical environments;

7 (c) As coal facilities wind down and close pursuant to state policy,  
8 regulatory approvals, and statutory clean-energy requirements, the state  
9 has a legitimate and compelling interest in mitigating the foreseeable  
10 economic harm to workers and communities that results from those  
11 state-directed actions;

12 (d) Displaced coal transition workers should have clear, reliable,  
13 and timely pathways into new careers of equal quality, including  
14 comparable wages, benefits, and job security, within or near the  
15 communities in which they live;

16 (e) The state's clean-energy economy already employs nearly  
17 70,000 workers, which is more than twice as many as the fossil-fuel  
18 sector, and state and regional climate workforce analyses identify  
19 significant shortages across at least twenty climate-critical occupations,  
20 requiring thousands of additional skilled workers, including electricians,  
21 construction laborers and managers, HVAC and building technicians,  
22 wind and solar technicians, power-line workers, electric-vehicle  
23 technicians, and other skilled trades, to meet the state's statutory climate  
24 goals, including the goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050;

25 (f) The state is simultaneously experiencing a substantial shortage  
26 of construction workers, with construction trades projected to grow  
27 significantly through 2030 and employers needing to fill tens of

1 thousands of high-demand positions. These workforce gaps make it  
2 imperative that just-transition policy deliberately and efficiently align  
3 displaced coal transition workers with existing and projected labor needs  
4 in clean energy, construction, transportation, and related sectors.

5 (g) Economic development, transportation, energy, and  
6 infrastructure projects in coal transition communities must prioritize  
7 reemployment opportunities for qualified coal transition workers so that  
8 the economic transition does not come at the expense of the individuals  
9 and communities that built and sustained these regions; and

10 (h) A targeted, qualification-based, and narrowly tailored hiring  
11 preference, implemented through good faith efforts and tied to state  
12 interests in economic recovery and workforce development, is a lawful  
13 and necessary tool to ensure that coal transition workers directly benefit  
14 from ongoing and future development in their communities and are not  
15 left behind.

16 **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 8-83-507 as  
17 follows:

18 **8-83-507. Hiring preference - coal transition workers -**  
19 **definitions.**

20 (1) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE  
21 REQUIRES:

22 (a) "COVERED BUSINESS" MEANS A BUSINESS ENTITY OPERATING  
23 IN A COAL TRANSITION COMMUNITY THAT IS ENGAGED IN THE BUSINESS OF  
24 CONSTRUCTING OR OPERATING RAILROADS, UTILITIES, ENERGY  
25 GENERATION FACILITIES, OR ADVANCED MANUFACTURING FACILITIES. A  
26 "COVERED BUSINESS" DOES NOT INCLUDE THE STATE GOVERNMENT OR A  
27 LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

1           (b) "HIRING PREFERENCE" MEANS A FIRST AND PREFERRED  
2 OPPORTUNITY FOR AVAILABLE EMPLOYMENT.

3           (c) "QUALIFIED COAL TRANSITION WORKER" MEANS A COAL  
4 TRANSITION WORKER WHO MEETS THE MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS FOR AN  
5 EMPLOYMENT POSITION WITH A COVERED BUSINESS.

6           (2) (a) ON AND AFTER JANUARY 1, 2027, A COVERED BUSINESS  
7 SHALL PROVIDE A HIRING PREFERENCE FOR A QUALIFIED COAL TRANSITION  
8 WORKER TO A PROSPECTIVE NEW EMPLOYEE.

9           (b) A COVERED BUSINESS MAY HIRE AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS NOT A  
10 QUALIFIED COAL TRANSITION WORKER ONLY IF:

11           (I) A QUALIFIED COAL TRANSITION WORKER DID NOT APPLY TO BE  
12 EMPLOYED BY A COVERED BUSINESS; OR

13           (II) EACH QUALIFIED COAL TRANSITION WORKER TO WHOM THE  
14 COVERED BUSINESS EXTENDS AN OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT DECLINES THE  
15 OFFER.

16           (3) A COVERED BUSINESS SHALL CONSULT WITH THE JUST  
17 TRANSITION OFFICE, OPERATORS OF EXISTING COAL-FUELED GENERATION  
18 FACILITIES SCHEDULED FOR RETIREMENT, AND ORGANIZATIONS  
19 REPRESENTING QUALIFIED COAL TRANSITION WORKERS TO IDENTIFY  
20 QUALIFIED COAL TRANSITION WORKERS.

21           (4) A COVERED BUSINESS SHALL REPORT ANNUALLY TO THE JUST  
22 TRANSITION OFFICE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION REGARDING THE PRIOR  
23 YEAR:

24           (a) THE TITLE OF ANY POSITION FILLED BY A QUALIFIED COAL  
25 TRANSITION WORKER;

26           (b) THE NUMBER OF QUALIFIED COAL TRANSITION WORKERS WHO  
27 FILLED POSITIONS AT THE COVERED BUSINESS;

1 (c) THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE NOT QUALIFIED COAL  
2 TRANSITION WORKERS WHO FILLED POSITIONS AT THE COVERED BUSINESS;  
3 AND

4 (d) EFFORTS UNDERTAKEN BY THE COVERED BUSINESS TO RECRUIT  
5 QUALIFIED COAL TRANSITION WORKERS.

6 (5) A COVERED BUSINESS SHALL MAKE GOOD FAITH EFFORTS TO  
7 COMPLY WITH THIS SECTION.

8 (6) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OR THEIR DESIGNEE SHALL DEVELOP  
9 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS SECTION.

10 **SECTION 3.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 24-75-601.1, **amend**  
11 (5) as follows:

12 **24-75-601.1. Legal investments of public funds - definition.**

13 (5) ~~Nothing in this section applies to public funds held or invested~~  
14 ~~as part of any payment or settlement to offset the socioeconomic impacts~~  
15 ~~to a community or government from the closure of a coal mine or coal~~  
16 ~~power generating station.~~ NOTWITHSTANDING ANY LAW TO THE  
17 CONTRARY, IN ADDITION TO ANY OTHER DEPOSIT OR INVESTMENT OF  
18 PUBLIC FUNDS ALLOWED BY LAW, A PUBLIC ENTITY IS AUTHORIZED TO  
19 DEPOSIT OR INVEST, EITHER DIRECTLY OR THROUGH AN INVESTMENT FIRM  
20 OR OTHER THIRD PARTY AUTHORIZED BY THE PUBLIC ENTITY, ANY  
21 PAYMENT OR SETTLEMENT FUNDS THAT THE PUBLIC ENTITY HAS RECEIVED  
22 TO OFFSET THE SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS TO A COMMUNITY OR  
23 GOVERNMENT FROM THE CLOSURE OF A COAL MINE OR COAL POWER  
24 GENERATING STATION AND THE INTEREST, INVESTMENT INCOME, OR GAIN  
25 EARNED THEREON IN ANY INVESTMENT PERMITTED UNDER AN INVESTMENT  
26 POLICY ADOPTED BY THE PUBLIC ENTITY. FOR PURPOSES OF THIS  
27 SUBSECTION (5), UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES,

1 "INVESTMENT FIRM" MEANS A BANK, BROKERAGE FIRM, OR OTHER  
2 FINANCIAL SERVICES FIRM CONDUCTING BUSINESS IN THE STATE, OR ANY  
3 AGENT THEREOF.

4 **SECTION 4. Safety clause.** The general assembly finds,  
5 determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate  
6 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety or for appropriations for  
7 the support and maintenance of the departments of the state and state  
8 institutions.