



DELTA COUNTY, COLORADO

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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Dist. 1: C. Douglas Atchley - Dist. 2: C. Bruce Hovde - Dist. 3: J. Mark Roeber

February 6, 2017

RE: Support of SB 17-022: Rural Economic Advancement of Colorado Towns

FROM: Delta Board of County Commissioners

The Delta Board of County Commissioners wishes to thank the committee today for the opportunity to provide this letter of support for SB 17-022: Rural Economic Advancement of Colorado Towns.

Delta County is located in west central Colorado and is 57 percent federal land. The economy is based on agriculture, coal mining and tourism. The mines in our county and surrounding area have very innovative and have even implemented ground breaking power generation by converting methane to electricity and received national awards for safety and reclamation.

Mining in Delta County historically employed 1200 families and supported thousands more by those employed in the service and supply businesses within the county. The majority of families, whose livelihood depends on mining, lives and works in Delta County. There are approximately 7800 households in Delta County therefore mining represented 15 percent of the families in Delta County prior to 2012. Since 2012, Delta County has lost over 1000 mining jobs and 3 supporting businesses. The direct mining jobs alone represent a 42 percent decrease in jobs. If we were extrapolating those numbers and equate them to the Denver Metro Area, it would equal a loss of 31,000 jobs. 31,000 jobs in Denver would garner the attention of the nation and Delta County asks that the same consideration be given to our smaller communities that continue to bear the brunt of energy policies that do not include coal.

Delta County businesses' have been very successful in the recent REDI grants and have increased the number of jobs and provided for additional market access. We fully anticipate that the Rural Economic Emergency Assistance Grant Program would provide the same results for our businesses in Delta County. The program could provide funds for reemployment and training services to offer support to displaced workers.

Delta Board of County Commissioners

C. Douglas Atchley, Chairman

J. Mark Roeber, Vice Chairman

Don Suppes, Commissioner



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Senator Neville, Chair and Fellow Senate Finance Committee Members:

Pitkin County Board of County Commissioners supports the Rural Economic Advancement of Colorado Towns (REACT), Senate Bill 17-022. Rural communities across Colorado have experienced significant economic challenges and have not been afforded the same growth and prosperity other parts of the state have experience.

SB-17-22 will direct the Department of Local Affairs to continue its Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) to help rural communities strengthen and diversify their local economies. The codification of the REDI program through SB-17-22 is a critical component to ensure communities across Colorado are positioned to address challenging circumstances today and into the future.

On behalf of rural communities that continue to face economic hardships, Pitkin County urges you to support SB 17-22.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George Newman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "G" and "N".

George Newman, Chair, Pitkin County Board of Commissioners