



April 9, 2020

The Honorable Michael Bennet  
United States Senator

The Honorable Cory Gardner  
United States Senator

The Honorable Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress

The Honorable Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress

The Honorable Scott Tipton  
Member of Congress

The Honorable Ken Buck  
Member of Congress

The Honorable Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress

The Honorable Jason Crow  
Member of Congress

The Honorable Ed Perlmutter  
Member of Congress

Dear Colorado Congressional Delegation:

Thank you for your work to provide necessary relief for Colorado families and emergency support for those temporarily out of work due to closures required by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. We appreciate your responsiveness to Colorado's interests in future Congressional stimulus packages. Below are the short-term federal recommendations provided by the bipartisan Governor's Council for Economic Stabilization and Growth. In addition to more funding for the Small Business Administration's Paycheck Protection Program, we hope you will consider these recommendations as you work to provide relief for Coloradans.

- **Extension and Refundability of the Production Tax Credit (PTC) and Investment Tax Credit (ITC):** Colorado is at the epicenter for renewable energy development. In addition to the thriving small-scale solar industry, our utilities have adopted plans for about 3000 megawatts of wind and solar over the next five years. Many of these projects were timed to make project finances work by using the PTC and ITC, but delays from both the immediate crisis and longer-term economic fallout threaten the ability to meet the deadlines for phase down of the credit, and the economic conditions have locked up the market for tax credit financing. In order to address this, the tax credits should be made fully refundable and extended for five years.
- **Evaluate Permit Processing Expediency and Relief Where Appropriate:** We encourage you to evaluate opportunities to expedite permit approvals or provide permit relief in instances that would support the immediate COVID-10 response efforts. These case-by-case evaluations for expediting approvals or providing relief should evaluate a

number of additional criteria, including but not limited to maintaining protections for public health, safety, and the environment.

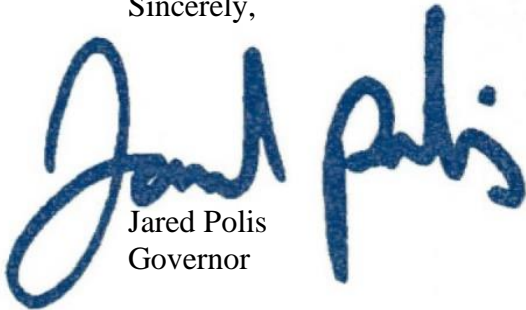
- **Support Transportation Relief in Federal Stimulus Package:** Utilizing existing formula programs, we encourage you to ensure a fair share for Colorado through programs that provide flexibility for states with minimal federal red tape. In addition, shore up important credit and Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) programs, and investment in job training to bring new workers into high-paying construction jobs. Projects that are in operation have had significant reductions in cash flow in the short term. Allowing them to modify loan terms to reduce or defer interest could be beneficial to overcome short-term stress.
- **Support Federal Relief for 501(c)(6) Organizations in Federal Stimulus Package:** This relief would provide vital support for chambers and destination marketing organizations that play a critical role in attracting travelers to destinations across the state.
- **Support Efforts to Ensure All Coloradans get Economic Relief.** Some Colorado taxpayers, because of the failure of the federal government to provide a legal pathway to citizenship, were left out of federal relief packages, including access to stimulus payments and stabilizing pandemic unemployment income. We encourage you to ensure these Coloradans find relief during this difficult time, as it will be beneficial for the public's health and our community as a whole.
- **Secure Colorado's Share of \$2 billion in Discretionary Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding Designated by the CARES Act.** These funds are aimed at giving U.S. Housing & Urban Development (HUD) flexibility to help hard-hit states and localities to offset impacts of COVID-19 to support unmet needs that we identify that won't be supported by other federal funding streams -- for example, to support marketing grants for communities across the state to engage in tourism promotion as a disaster-relief strategy. The Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) secured similar support in the past to help Colorado recover from the 2013 floods.
- **Support Temporary Federal Relief for Ski Areas Located on Public Lands by Procuring a Waiver of Rental Charges Due to the U.S. Treasury From those Ski Areas:** With ski areas closing to aid in minimizing the spread of COVID-19, these areas face a significant decrease in revenue and the economic burden placed on them by this crisis could be aided with the temporary suspension of rental charges paid to the federal government for U.S. Forest Service leases.
- **Support Passage of the Great American Outdoors Act:** Passage would finalize bipartisan and bicameral legislation that provides critical funding resources needed to reduce the maintenance backlog on our public lands and provide dedicated funding to the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). This will have a long-term economic impact

and will increase the visitor experience tremendously once the worst of the pandemic is over.

- **Provide Financial Relief to States and Municipalities to Build Trails:** Support for outdoor infrastructure is greatly needed, particularly in underserved communities, so that all Americans have access to close-to-home recreation opportunities. This type of program is badly needed to help address the current inequities in who lives near and reaps the benefits of outdoor recreation, trail, and natural areas.
- **Consider Deployment of Civilian Conservation Corps:** A modern Civilian Conservation Corps would offer a win-win combination of jobs for Americans and restoration and stewardship of our public lands, as well provide crucial mental and physical health opportunities nationwide. The “stipended volunteer” reimbursement model used by AmeriCorps can inexpensively scale to large employment needs offering a fully-loaded program cost of \$16.50 dollars per hour of service delivered or \$4,125,000 dollars per season for 500 corps members providing 500 hours per season each. This program could immediately be grown to meet the needs of recently unemployed workers from various affected industries. It would offer not only immediate employment – but also a fulfilling opportunity for Americans to help their community in a time of crisis. Work opportunities could be expanded beyond natural resources to include career path training in healthcare, construction, disaster response, and climate resiliency services. Utilizing current state youth and conservation corps models a program could be rapidly deployed via existing cooperative agreements with federal agencies and state and local agencies.
- **Help Producers Navigate Loan and Financial Assistance Programs:** Producers need clear and concise guidance to determine what assistance may be available to them through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Small Business Administration (SBA), and the recently passed stimulus bill and how to apply to such programs.
- **Improve Access to Food for Colorado’s Vulnerable Population:** Urge USDA to expand programs enabling SNAP recipients to utilize benefits online so that vulnerable populations can order food from the safety of their homes.
- **Improve Producer Access to Farm Workers:** We encourage the U.S. Departments of Labor, Homeland Security, and other agencies to fast-track approvals and processes for H-2A workers to gain entry to the U.S. for purposes of farm work.
- **Establishing a Block Grant Program for States, Territories and Indian Tribes:** We understand direct payments to agricultural producers will likely comprise a significant portion of the funds disbursed by the USDA under the CARES Act. We are concerned these funds might not reach smaller and specificity producers which make up an important section of Colorado’s agriculture industry. As you determine the mechanisms and eligibility criteria for future relief funds, we urge you to keep in mind that this crisis

has touched every commodity group and sector of the farm economy. We strongly recommend that you earmark a portion of the relief funds to state departments of agriculture in the form of a community block grant program to be administered by departments of agriculture in the states, territories and Indian tribes. This will allow states to tailor solutions to meet the needs of their local community and ensure funds provided are not only used to provide immediate relief to local producers, but also to invest in agricultural market opportunities and local food systems across the food and agriculture supply chain.

Sincerely,



Jared Polis  
Governor



Federico Peña  
Former U.S. Secretary of Transportation & Energy  
Chair, Council of Economic Stabilization & Growth