



Dear Congressman Jason Crow,

I am writing in support of the Community College of Aurora's (CCA) request for \$2.5 million in federal funding through congressionally directed spending and urge you to secure these critical dollars for Colorado's citizens.

This funding will allow CCA to expand its Center for STEM, Power Mechanics, and Applied Technologies building. Through this second phase of the building, CCA will create nearly 25,000 square feet of new workforce and education training space and relocate its Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) classrooms and labs to this building. This project will expand critical programming in high-growth, high-demand career fields to address acute industry workforce needs and prepare Aurora and East Metro Denver residents for careers in STEM, construction, clean energy, power mechanics, and other applied technology fields.

Aurora is the most diverse city in Colorado and CCA is the most diverse institution of higher education in the state. Thirty percent of the Aurora population is comprised of racial and ethnic minorities and 20% of the population is foreign born. These groups need increased opportunities for retraining and upskilling for high-growth industries such as construction, diesel power mechanics, engineering, and clean energy. CCA's proposed project will create multiple on- and off-ramps for thousands of high school, traditional college-age, and adult learners each year to acquire the skill sets and recognized industry credentials and college degrees necessary to achieve greater economic mobility.

As you know, the construction, transportation, clean energy, and infrastructure industries have a significant and far-reaching economic impact in Colorado. According to the 2020 Colorado Construction Industry Economic Impact Report, Colorado's construction industry employed 173,096 people on average in 2018, accounting for 8% of all employees in the state, equating to 15,729 jobs and \$804 million in household earnings. According to Brookings 2022, "Transportation and clean energy sectors already represent a large share of the U.S. workforce and are anticipated to add hundreds of thousands of additional jobs per year." More than that, according to the 2021 STEM Job Growth Index, metro Denver is the top location in America for increasing STEM jobs.

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Despite this substantial contribution to Colorado's economy, the construction, transportation, clean energy and infrastructure support industries like power mechanics and engineering are facing a workforce crisis. CCA's proposed expansion to its Center for STEM, Power Mechanics, and Applied Technologies will directly help regional employers meet their demands for skilled talent. Given that CCA is partnering with BuildStrong Academy of Colorado and Aurora Public Schools' new ConstrucTECH program, as well as, many local STEM, construction, heavy equipment, trucking, and clean energy employers, I am confident that CCA's request strongly aligns with the Department of Labor's priorities. The Aurora Chamber of Commerce fully supports the proposed request and humbly asks for your support as well.

Sincerely,

Kevin Hougen

President and CEO