

**COLORADO****BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

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January 27, 2020

Representative Dylan Roberts, Chair  
House Rural Affairs & Agriculture Committee  
Colorado General Assembly, HCR 107  
200 E Colfax Avenue  
Denver, CO 80203

RE: HB20-1003 – Rural Jump-Start Zone Act Modifications

Dear Chairman Roberts and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Mesa County Board of Commissioners, I submit this Letter of Support for HB20-1003, which extends the Rural Jump-Start program for an additional five years, changes the competition clause to specify that a new business cannot compete with an existing business in the rural jump-start zone in which the new business will be located or in any distressed county that is contiguous to the zone, and allows economic development organizations to be authorized entities to manage Rural Jump-Start applications.

Since the inception of Rural Jump-Start, Mesa County has been a supporter because the program develops partnerships among institutions of higher education, start-up businesses and local government to facilitate economic development. In fact, Mesa County was the first county in the state to implement the program.

In Mesa County, 16 companies have been approved through the Rural Jump-Start program, creating approximately 55 new jobs in our community. However, Mesa County's economy continues to lag behind that of the Denver-metro area and northern Colorado communities. Extending the program would benefit distressed counties, like Mesa, to continue to diversify and increase economic development.

Additionally, HB20-1003 would help rural, distressed economies by changing the existing competition clause to specify that program benefits cannot compete with an existing business in a Rural Jump-Start Zone including counties that border one another.

Finally, the bill allows a business applying for Rural Jump-Start to go through an economic development organization for the application process. Under current law, the business can only submit its application to a state institution of higher education to participate in the program. Allowing economic development organizations to be able to manage applications will be beneficial to smaller communities.

We respectfully request that this Committee support HB20-1003.

Sincerely,

Rose Pugliese  
Mesa County Commissioner