

Support SB26-052 Coal Transition Community Investment

Sponsored by Senator Roberts & Catlin, Representatives Lukens & Mauro

The Problem:

Coal transition workers have powered Colorado for decades, and the loss of coal-related employment has profound economic and personal impacts on workers, their families, and the communities that depend on them.

These workers possess specialized, high-value skills that are critical to Colorado's transportation, infrastructure, clean-energy, and industrial future. As coal facilities wind down, it is essential that displaced workers have clear, reliable pathways into new careers of equal quality within their own communities.

Economic development, transportation, and energy projects in coal-transition communities must prioritize reemployment opportunities to ensure the economic transition does not come at the expense of the very people who built and sustained these regions. A targeted, lawful hiring preference is a necessary tool to ensure that coal transition workers directly benefit from ongoing and future development in their communities and are not left behind.

- **According to the [Colorado Office of Just Transition](#), approximately 2,000 Colorado workers will be laid off from family-sustaining careers.** And the communities where they work and live stand to lose significant percentages of their job base and property tax revenues.
- **These transitions are concentrated in 12 coal transition communities-** Delta, El Paso, Gunnison, La Plata, Larimer, Moffat, Montrose, Morgan, Pueblo, Rio Blanco, Routt, and San Miguel Counties.
- Job and economic losses are highly concentrated. For example, [Moffat County is anticipating 437 job losses and a 43% drop in property tax revenue](#) tied to the mine closure. Underscoring the scale of concentrated risk in coal-dependent regions.
- **Federal interventions are adding uncertainty.** The U.S. DOE [ordered Craig Station Unit 1 to remain operational](#) until March 30, 2026 (after a planned end-of-2025 retirement), reinforcing that coal communities face whiplash and need durable worker pathways.

Whether closures proceed on schedule or shift, workers and communities still experience instability and need clear, enforceable pathways into comparable jobs.

Currently, a public entity is not allowed to invest public funds in certain types of investment instruments, limiting their ability to ensure funds are invested in the best way for the community. This bill will provide flexibility so that communities can invest Just Transition settlement dollars in a wide variety of investment opportunities and maximize their impact.

For More Information Please Contact: Emma Bliesener 303-667-3624
emma@ebpublicaffairs.com

Colorado's Workforce Opportunity:

In 2019, the Colorado General Assembly created the [Office of Just Transition](#), declaring it a “moral commitment to assist the workers and communities that have powered Colorado for generations.” However, legislation is needed to ensure that coal transition workers directly benefit from ongoing and future community development and are not left behind.

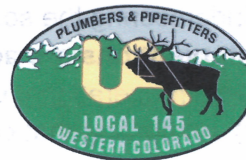
What the Bill Does:

- Keeps coal transition workers first in line for emerging and ongoing job demand by ensuring qualified workers receive a first opportunity for jobs in their community.
- Helps ensure the communities that powered Colorado aren't left behind as closures, conversions, and reliability decisions reshape local economies.
- Covered businesses must coordinate with the Office of Just Transition and relevant employers/worker-representing organizations to identify qualified coal transition workers.
- Allows for a reasonable off-ramp if no qualified worker is available.
- Requires yearly reporting to ensure good faith compliance.

Supported By:



**CLIMATE JOBS
COLORADO**



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