



COLORADO

Governor Jared Polis

Colorado's agriculture industry is the lifeblood of our state's economy, and critical to supporting countless rural communities across the state. That's why, as we build back stronger from the economic impacts of this pandemic, Governor Polis is working closely with farmers and ranchers to strengthen our agriculture community. Even beyond his strong support for agriculture, Governor Polis has also worked closely with Colorado legislators to help revitalize rural Colorado and ensure that as build back better, our rural communities are center stage in that recovery.

Overview

- \$132 million investment in rural Colorado, including key supports for our farmers and ranchers, small businesses, and healthcare
- \$69.5 million to boost agriculture and rural communities

Legislative Accomplishments

Agriculture:

- SB21-079, Deregulate Meat Sales Direct To Consumers. This legislation cuts through red tape and supports local farmers and ranchers by allowing for the direct sale of meat to consumers. Governor Polis advocated for similar legislation while in Congress.
- HB21-1262 Money Support Agricultural Events Organization: Supports the National Western Stock Show and other agricultural events including county fairs by providing \$28.5 million to aid in construction and assistance for the event.

Transportation

- SB21-260 Sustainability of the Transportation System: This legislation will reduce vehicle registration fees by \$11 next year and create a dynamic, 21st Century transportation system that will drive Colorado's economic comeback, establish a sustainable funding source to improve Colorado roads -- **including special investments in Colorado's rural roads** -- invest in electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and expand multi-modal and transit options to reduce congestion and improve air quality.

Broadband:

- HB21-1289 Funding for Broadband Deployment: Addresses critical gaps in our rural broadband infrastructure by providing \$75 million for middle- and last-mile broadband access.
- HB21-1109 Broadband Changes to Expand Broadband Service: Modifies the current Broadband Deployment Board, including creating a request for proposal process that allows the Board to identify and prioritize areas that lack access to broadband, and then fund projects through the Broadband Fund.
- HB20B-1001 Grants to Improve Internet Access in P-12 Education: This legislation ran in the special session and provided emergency spending totaling \$20 million to school districts to ensure their students could connect to the internet.

Economic recovery and growth:

- HB21-1223, Create Outdoor Recreation Industry Office, codifies the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office into statute to help grow good jobs in rural Colorado. The Joint Budget Committee recently voted to restore the Office's budget to pre-pandemic levels, allowing it to continue providing essential services to help rural Colorado, including assistance to rural communities through technical assistance and strategic funding for economic development strategies that provide job training, and create new jobs and investment.
- SB21-229, Rural Jump-start Zone Grant Program, allocates \$3 million for additional funding for the Rural Jump Start program to attract businesses and incentivize job creation in rural Colorado
- SB21-252, Community Revitalization Grant Program establishes a program that will provide funding to projects across the state that will create or revitalize mixed-use commercial centers
- \$15 million to create new job and economic development opportunities as part of the market driven transition away from coal
- \$5 million for the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) program

Wildfire Mitigation

- \$25 million for forest restoration and wildfire recovery projects and another \$20 million toward watershed restoration grants