



Office of Economic
Development and
International
Trade

John W. Hickenlooper, Governor
Kenneth W. Lund, Executive Director

Dear Sen. Rollie Heath

I am writing in support of of Senate Bill 13-218 "Concerning workforce development for key industries in Colorado". I am sorry I cannot be there in person today, but I am at the Colorado Space Symposium championing the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade's (OEDIT's) commitment to the state's advanced industries.

OEDIT is committed to strengthening Colorado's advanced industries through the Colorado Blueprint – the state's economic development plan. The key to our endeavor is to ensure greater collaboration between educational institutions, the business community and students, so that they are equipped with the tools necessary to help drive innovation and strengthen Colorado's economy. We believe that SB 218 will do just that, and ensure we have a strong workforce in these developing advanced industries.

Advanced industries are a prime driver of the U.S. and Colorado economy, accounting for 30 percent of the state's economy, 520,300 high-paying jobs, and hundreds of thousands of ancillary jobs. These industries are groundbreaking, technology-based industries that share common workforce skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Innovations in the advanced industries have ripple effects across the economy. Their applied R&D activities are the engine that drives long-term innovation and leads to a wide range of spin-off products in other sectors. To grow Colorado's economy most effectively, the state must increase capacity and global competitiveness in advanced industries.

By investing in our students and ensuring they are workforce-ready in advanced industries upon graduation, we are investing in Colorado's bright economic future.

Thank you for bringing this important legislation forward.

Sincerely,

Kenneth W. Lund
Executive Director
Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade

Please Support SB 13-218
CONCERNING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FOR KEY INDUSTRIES IN COLORADO

Sponsors: Senator Rollie Heath & Rep. Dave Young

Continued growth in the Colorado economy requires a flexible and efficient system that ensures that institutions of higher education provide the degree programs most needed to produce highly trained and ready workforce required by the state's key industries.

This system is best accomplished through collaboration between these key industries and institutions of higher education that strategically target resources to critical degree programs identified by specific workforce needs. Creating a system that fosters Colorado industry and higher education partnerships will help ensure that Colorado's citizens have access to the degree programs that they need to get hired or promoted, so that our key industry sectors do not have to turn to out-of-state residents for these skill sets.

The Colorado Key Industries Workforce Act invites key industry employers to partner with an institution of higher education on a grant proposal. The grant proposal must provide evidence that the industry business anticipates employing the students who complete the bachelor's degree program and that the business will provide a dollar-for-dollar match for the moneys that the institution receives through the program.

Institutions must enter in to agreements with other higher education institutions to ensure the transferability of credits earned, such that a student who earns a 2-year degree may enroll as a junior at a 4-year institution and complete a 4-year degree within two years.