



January 20, 2021

Kirk Keysor, Representative
U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration
P.O. Box 10032
Bozeman, MT 59719

RE: SUPPORT Funding for CWC Rocky Mountain Complex for Ag & Equine Sciences

Dear Mr. Keysor:

We write today to strongly and respectfully urge the Economic Development Administration's approval of funding for Central Wyoming College's (CWC) Rocky Mountain Complex for Ag & Equine Sciences (RMC) here in Fremont County, Wyoming. Our region's growing agriculture and equine industries support many small businesses and jobs: farms and ranches produce high-quality hay and beef cattle for the commodity market, and small to mid-scale value-added ag businesses grow food for our local communities.

Also known as Wyoming's Wind River Country, Fremont County, and Lander in particular, lies within an increasingly popular tourism corridor that connects Interstate 80 to Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks. Hoping to taste the flavors of the Lander Valley, visitors in 2019 spent \$38.5 million in Fremont County, seeking out local farmers' markets and eating at our restaurants. In the same year, the Lander Valley Farmers' Market hosted 20 markets, averaging 27 vendors and 480 customers per market. Vendors reported \$105,000 in annual sales and consistently sold out of food products.

There remain market opportunities within the local food market. The ESRI geodatabase recorded \$2 million in annual sales of fresh fruit and vegetables at Lander grocers in 2018. CWC's agriculture program includes technical fruit and vegetable production training and small business support crucial to local food and value-added ag entrepreneurs' success. Additionally, the college's Meat Science program to be headquartered in the planned Rocky Mountain Complex for Ag & Equine Sciences will provide the meat processing workforce to transition more of our ranchers' live animals from ranch to table.

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Within the equine industry, visitors enjoy experiencing the Wind River Mountains and Wyoming culture at Lander's guest ranches and with its outfitters. These employers require highly skilled wranglers and backcountry guides to safely lead guests on trail rides and horsepacking trips. CWC's equine science program trains the horse trainers, riding instructors, equine operation managers, and farriers required for dude ranches and outfitters to operate their businesses.

Once more, the Lander Chamber of Commerce voices its strong support for CWC's Rocky Mountain Complex for Ag & Equine Sciences and asks the Economic Development Administration to generously fund its efforts.

Thank you sincerely for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Owen M. Sweeney, Jr." in a cursive script.

Owen M. Sweeney, Jr.
Executive Director