

March 24, 2025

The Honorable John Hickenlooper  
U.S. Senator  
Colorado  
374 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Hickenlooper:

On behalf of the Douglas County Board of Commissioners and Sheriff Darren Weekly, we would like to express our sincere gratitude for the time you and your staff took to meet with us to discuss the challenges facing Douglas County and the broader state of Colorado.

We greatly appreciated the opportunity to provide a comprehensive overview of our Helitack team and the critical role our helicopter operations played in responding to the 33 wildfires we faced last year. Your openness to exploring the potential of establishing a regional facility for first responder training, which would also enhance our wildfire response capabilities, was especially encouraging. We believe this initiative could significantly strengthen our public safety infrastructure and improve wildfire suppression efforts across the region. We look forward to the possibility of working together on this important project.

In addition, we were pleased to find common ground on the important issue of keeping U.S. Space Command in Colorado. As we discussed, its continued presence is vital to both national security and the state's economic future. We are united in our support for this cause and deeply appreciate your ongoing advocacy for the defense and prosperity of Colorado.

We also appreciated the chance to discuss Congresswoman Lauren Boebert's *Human Trafficking Fingerprint Background Check Protection Act*. This proposed legislation, which would require owners and employees of massage wellness spas to undergo fingerprint-based background checks, is a vital step in the fight against human trafficking and in bolstering public safety. We fully support this bill and encourage you to collaborate with Congresswoman Boebert to help advance it.

Furthermore, we are enthusiastic about the potential for a biochar plant in our county. This facility would help mitigate wildfire risks and provide significant environmental benefits, contributing to the long-term health and safety of our community.

Lastly, we are excited about the opportunity to secure federal resources through Congressional Directed Spending requests and federal grants. As Douglas County experiences continued growth, both residential and commercial, the demands on our transportation infrastructure and public utilities are increasing. Among our immediate priorities are the widening of Highway 85 and improvements to critical interchanges, including those at Happy Canyon, Lincoln Avenue,

and Crystal Valley Ranch on I-25. Addressing these issues is essential to maintaining Douglas County's appeal as a place to live, work, and raise a family. We look forward to collaborating with your office to identify and potentially pursue the necessary funding to support these key infrastructure projects.

Thank you once again for your time, your thoughtful engagement, and your willingness to collaborate on these important issues. We are eager to continue working with you and your team to address the needs of our communities and help foster a prosperous future for our state.

Sincerely,

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Abe Laydon, Chairman

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Van Winkle', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the left.

Kevin Van Winkle, Commissioner

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'George Teal', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

George Teal, Commissioner

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Darren Weekly', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Darren Weekly, Sheriff