



April 27, 2022

Senate Finance Committee

Dear Committee Members,

On behalf of the Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce, an organization of over 850 mostly small businesses employing over 37,000 people in Mesa County, I ask that this Committee vote to approve House Bill 1301.

It is our understanding that this bill subject to being amended will reclassify personal property used to grow crops in a controlled environmental agricultural facility as agricultural property, which will ease the tax burden on farmers that choose to use this technology. This is important because for most farmers it doesn't make financial sense to invest in this new technology if they are responsible for such a large tax burden.

The benefits of the new investment in this technology spurred by this tax change would be two-fold. These facilities are more water-efficient than conventional farming methods, which will remain an important factor as our state continues to struggle with drought and water scarcity problems. CEA facilities also limit the losses that are suffered by farmers due to unfavorable weather conditions, meaning a larger number of independent farmers will face less financial uncertainty in unproductive growing seasons.

This technology is not yet widely used in Colorado, but this tax change would encourage investment and innovation in the agricultural sector, and build a stronger and more resilient economy in the state.

1301 has the potential to change many farmers' lives and businesses for the better, so I ask that it be sent to the full legislature for consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diane Schwenke'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'D'.

Diane Schwenke, President & CEO
Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce