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Ray Scott
Chair
Colorado Senate State Affairs Committee

Dear Senator Scott:

I write to you in support of HB 16-1279 requiring the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) to establish and maintain an international sister-state relationship program.

I am a partner in a boutique international business and investment law firm in Longmont, CO. I serve on the boards of directors of Denver Sister Cities International and the World Trade Center Denver where I also serve as that organization's trade policy committee chair. I also serve as the co-chair of the International Transactions subsection of the Colorado Bar Association. Before moving to Colorado three years ago I was a civilian employee at the Department of Defense in Washington, DC for ten years where I served as an Associate Professor of International Law and Strategy at the National Defense University and as a National Security Fellow in the United States Senate.

I support HB 16-1279 because in my judgment it offers a good return on investment in increasing Colorado's international business competitiveness, and thereby enhancing the state's prosperity and quality of life. As a former government employee I am generally skeptical of increasing the work load of the state government's diligent workforce. However, because this program can be accommodated within existing appropriations, I believe its benefits will more than outweigh the estimated 4 hours of work per week that OEDIT is expected to devote to it.

In my professional experience, cross-border business and investment flourishes where mutually beneficial relationships are fostered over time. Creating a forum for sustained goodwill, as well as educational and cultural exchanges has created countless business relationships within the context of Denver Sister Cities International. The state of Colorado can leverage this model to enhance international business statewide. While Colorado would not be limited to those provinces and prefectures that it establishes sister-state relationships with, these exchanges provide increased opportunities to enhance economic growth, trade, and investment. Indeed, the new direct flight between Munich and Denver creates an opportunity to reinvigorate the Colorado-Bavaria economic relationship and will provide an early "win" for the international sister-states program.

Although a number of strong sister-city relationships exist throughout Colorado, the program proposed in HB 16-1279 can strategically augment those existing relationships, strengthening and strategically coordinating the ones with Colorado's key trading partners such as Canada, Mexico, Japan, and China and extending them to areas where sustained relationships are currently lacking but would be strategically advantageous to Colorado with provinces in