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March 12, 2019

Dear Senator Rankin,

Thank you for your past support for early childhood initiatives to help our state's youngest learners succeed. We are writing to ask for your support to **advance the momentum of last year's state general fund investment in Colorado's 34 Early Childhood Councils with a \$3 million annual investment in next year's budget.**

Routt County believes in the importance of early childhood care and education, and we know this investment allows us to leverage diverse public and private funding streams to ensure comprehensive early childhood services across our rural communities. In Routt County, the local Early Childhood Council has a record of accomplishment for bringing partners together to improve the lives of children and support a strong and stable workforce. These investments support quality early care and learning along with expanded access to both preschool and the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program. We are currently working on a community plan to increase infant and toddler capacity, recruit and retain a fairly compensated workforce, increase community awareness on the importance of early childhood, increase specialized service providers, and engage employers in solutions.

Early Childhood Councils across the state have a history of collaborating with State Departments of Human Services, Education, and Health to improve the lives of Colorado's children. However, our reliance on federal block grant funding alone makes it increasingly challenging to effectively implement state-local partnerships. Based on the projections using the current Office of Early Childhood Allocation Formula, the following chart shows Routt County's projected decrease in the coming years. We are gravely concerned that the continued success of our Early Childhood Council will be jeopardized if additional funding is not allocated. The Updated amount reflects the \$1 million allocated last year for early childhood councils which delays the "cliff" our early childhood council faces.

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
<b>Original \$</b>	\$79,038	\$66,230	\$56,624	\$47,019	\$15,000
<b>Updated \$</b>			\$79,008	\$66,108	\$21,782

We urge you to support this funding proposal on behalf of young children in our state. Please reach out to us if you have any questions concerning early childhood in our county and region.

Sincerely,

Routt County Board of Commissioners  
 Beth Melton, Chair

First Impressions of Routt County  
 Stephanie Martin, Program Administrator