



April 7, 2022

**Colorado Department of Labor and Employment
633 17th St. Suite 1200
Denver, Co 80202-3660**

Attn: Office of the Future of Work

We would like to express our sincere support for the Colorado Rural Water Association Apprenticeship Program. This program will contribute to the professionalism of the industry. By adding apprenticeship into the water industry, we can develop well-rounded employees that will contribute to our system immediately. With close to 50% of water operators coming into retirement age, there is a growing concern that there will not be enough workers to take over for the aging work force. Apprenticeship provides an opportunity for workers with long term experience in the industry to share their knowledge with the next generation. Our rural communities will be faced with a situation where they might not operate their system/s successfully and within regulation, without suitable replacement workers.

Colorado Rural Water Apprenticeship is an asset for training and certifying water operators. They have years of experience training operators in Colorado and are well versed in delivering curriculum that is specific to the industry. With curriculum in water, the apprenticeship is designed to develop an operator that can work safely and efficiently in multiple areas of your system. By participating in CRWA's (Colorado Rural Water Association) Apprenticeship, our system will reduce turnover. Employees are statistically happier when their employer invests in their training and are more likely to stay for a longer time. Liability costs go down by having a work force that is familiar with the industry and has been taught industry safety standards.

With the opportunity to expand this program, I believe that CRWA can contribute to the overall safety and health of Coloradoans by assisting more water operators to be proficient in their system. This program is needed in all parts of Colorado; rural and metropolitan areas can utilize the program to keep their systems in compliance and fully staffed. We would like to see the program expand to other areas - i.e., working in local high schools to recruit young workers, presenting information to the public about these types of jobs, and creating a presence all over the state to sustain viable candidate pool in the water industry for all areas of Colorado.

Sincerely,

TOWN OF PALMER LAKE

William Bass
Mayor

Dawn A. Collins, CMC
Town Administrator/Clerk, CMC

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