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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**LEADERS IN NORTHWEST COLORADO COAL COMMUNITIES CALL FOR
COMMON-SENSE RETIREMENT ACCESS REFORM FOR
DISPLACED ENERGY WORKERS**

CRAIG, COLORADO (July 24, 2025) – The Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado (AGNC) and the City of Craig, Colorado are calling on Congress to immediately pass the **Energy Worker Penalty Waiver Act** - a federal legislative fix that would allow displaced coal workers to access their retirement savings immediately and without tax penalties. As coal mine and plant closures continue to reshape Northwest Colorado’s economy in 2025, this effort aims to provide urgent relief to workers losing jobs through no fault of their own.

“These are not early retirements - they are forced displacements,” stated Tiffany Dickenson, Executive Director of AGNC. “We are asking Congress to remove the penalty and tax burden so coal community workers can access their own savings to protect their livelihoods and survive a transition they did not choose.”

With the closure of Craig Station and the phased shutdown of Trapper and Colowyo mines, Northwest Colorado communities are confronting the loss of nearly 800 direct jobs and over 2,000 total livelihoods. For many displaced workers, early access to retirement funds is a necessary step toward staying housed, retraining, or supporting their families. Yet under current law, doing so triggers a 10% IRS penalty and added tax burden. Our ask - please sign the letter of support by visiting <https://agnc.org/policy-advocacy/voices-views/>.

“This is about fairness, not subsidies,” said Shannon Scott, Economic Development Manager, City of Craig, Colorado. “These workers built our energy economy. Now, during transition, they deserve access to their own resources, without the government taking another cut.”

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The proposed fix mirrors successful provisions from the CARES Act, enacted during the COVID-19 pandemic, and would not require any new government program or agency. It is a fast, fiscally responsible way to deliver relief to those bearing the brunt of the energy transition.

AGNC and the City of Craig have submitted formal letters to Colorado’s federal delegation, including Senators Bennet and Hickenlooper and Representatives Hurd, Boebert, Neguse, and others, urging immediate support for the **Energy Worker Penalty Waiver Act**.

This proposal offers a narrow, fiscally responsible exemption to existing tax penalties for workers displaced by mandated coal closures—workers who are now relying on retirement savings as a lifeline. Together, our leaders urge Congress to act without delay. Additionally, AGNC and the City of Craig stakeholders invite community leaders, local governments, business organizations, and residents across Colorado and other transitioning regions to join us in advocating for this common-sense policy solution.

Providing displaced workers with penalty-free access to their earned retirement savings is a necessary and fair step toward a more just energy transition. For details on this request to Congress, please visit AGNC’s website, [Voices and Views | Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado](#).

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About AGNC (www.agnc.org) The Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado (AGNC) serves as the Council of Governments for Garfield, Mesa, Moffat, and Rio Blanco Counties and functions as the Economic Development District (EDD), as designated by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) for those counties, with the addition of Routt County. AGNC’s mission is to advocate, inform, and reflect the needs of its members by promoting the values, industries, and economies of Northwest Colorado.

About The City of Craig, CO (<https://www.ci.craig.co.us/>) The City of Craig, located in the northwest corner of the state in Moffat County, prides itself on its small-town authenticity, and welcoming, friendly atmosphere. As the community is currently experiencing an economic transition away from legacy extractive industries, local leaders and community partners are committed to staying ahead of changing times, ensuring residents have the support to sustain their livelihoods and remain in a community where they have thrived for generations.