



BOARD OF
County Commissioners
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September 20, 2023

State of Colorado
Department of Transportation
Transportation Commission

Dear Transportation Commission:

We would like to have this letter serve as our official response in opposition to the recommendation by the Colorado Department of Transportation's (CDOT) to combine the Southeast Transportation Planning Region (SE TPR) with the South Central Transportation Planning Region (SC TPR).

SE TPR represents the counties of Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero and Prowers Counties and the municipalities within those six counties. It covers 9,570 square miles and collectively 26 municipalities within those boundaries.

SC TPR represents the counties of Huerfano and Las Animas Counties and the municipalities with those two counties. It covers 6,368 square miles and collectively 8 municipalities within those boundaries.

Needless to say, both cover enormous areas and have monumental tasks of representing their respective areas without adding additional counties.

Per statute, there can only be 10 TPRs and unbeknownst to us, CDOT conducted a reassessment of those 10 boundaries. In the process of the reassessment, we were not invited to the table to give input on what those boundaries should be and whether they should remain the same.

On August 23, 2023, CDOT requested an audience with SE TPR and SC TPR representatives via a Zoom call to garner the opinion of both TPRs on whether or not we would be open to the idea of combining the two TPR regions. Both TPRs made it extremely clear that we were not in favor of the suggested merger.

On September 19, 2023, again CDOT requested another call with both TPRs to have, what we thought, was another discussion to review the "study" or assessment that CDOT conducted. At this meeting, we were informed that it was going to be the recommendation from CDOT to the Transportation Commission to merge the two TPRs, which would then allow them to split the Intermountain TPR into

two and by statute stay at 10 TPRs. Not only were we very vocal in saying that we do not approve of that move, but we were informed that the Intermountain TPR was also not in favor of that move.

Although we were presented with data stating that we are the two smallest TPRs population-wise and in CDOT's opinion, it makes sense for them to combine us, we would like to give you our reasons for our staunch opposition.

1) Enormous Coverage area:

SE TPR covers 9,570 sq. miles and 6 counties

SC TPR covers 6,368 square miles and 2 counties

Combining them would result in 15,938 sq. miles and 8 counties, which is an unreasonably large area to manage.

Intermountain TPR covers 6,422 sq. miles and 5 counties, why would splitting them into two make more sense?

2) Loss of STAC representation:

Current:

SE TPR – 1 seat at the table

SC TPR – 1 seat at the table

Intermountain TPR – 1 seat at the table

Proposed:

Combined TPR (SE & SC) – 1 seat at the table

Intermountain TPR – 2 seats at the table

We are vehemently opposed to losing a voice at the table. We believe that this goes fully against the initiatives to include rural areas and encourage participation in state and federally funded programs.

3) Freight Corridor-Priority concerns:

The SE TPR has four integral Colorado freight corridors within its boundaries on SH 10, US 50, US 160 and US 287.

The SC TPR has three integral Colorado freight corridors within its boundaries on SH 10, US 160 and I-25.

These routes are part of the corridors that have been identified as part of the most critical routes to facilitate the movement of goods into, out of, and within Colorado.

Both SE TPR and SC TPR have extreme concern that priority will be shifted to I-25 and SH 50/287 respectively. They already get the least amount of attention in the State and to have it diluted even further is of grave concern.

4) Funding Concern:

Both TPRs are extremely concerned about the funding being further diluted and rotated as suggested. We were presented with the assurance that our Regional Priority Plan funding would remain at the same percentage, however, again we already have internal challenges to prioritizing funding within our boundaries and adding additional counties either direction will cause bigger challenges to getting projects funded and completed in a timely manner.

5) Planning Process:

The planning process is difficult with 6 counties and even 2 counties. Due to our large coverage area, we feel this will further inhibit our members from participating.



Roy Elliott
Crowley County Commissioner