

To Committee Members:

My name is Kristina Ericson and I am a disability policy advisor, a former Access and Functional Needs Coordinator for Denver County, and the daughter of disabled parents. I am writing in strong support of House Bill 25-1007.

I proudly work for the State of Colorado's Developmental Disabilities Council - a 24 member, governor appointed, Council that advocates for systems change for Coloradans with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families. Mandated under the federal Developmental Disabilities Act, we work to help make Colorado more accessible and inclusive, and to help Coloradans with disabilities live a meaningful life.

Access to safe, accessible, and affordable transportation is a major concern for disability communities across the nation, especially in rural areas. From securing transportation to a pharmacy or the post office, to evacuating a wild fire, there is a major lack of access to transportation in the State of Colorado for individuals with disabilities who are unable to drive or access their own vehicle. Year after year the families and individuals that we serve through the Council voice their fears and frustrations with us about the lack of paratransit in their communities, and this bill is a strong step forward in addressing those very real fears.

As a former AFN Coordinator I also stand in strong support of this bill's goal to implement better communication plans for emergency paratransit services in Colorado. Accessibility in evacuation situations is often an afterthought, which leads to disability communities being left behind, underserved, and put at higher risk in emergency situations. I strongly support this bill's dedication to bridging the gap between disability service providers, disability communities, and paratransit services. I believe that we bridge major service gaps through these partnerships, and make life more accessible for families and communities like mine.

Thank you for your consideration and your work in this space. Colorado is a national leader in accessibility, and I look forward to working with you to address the access barriers that our residents continue to face.

In community,

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Colorado Developmental  
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