

**Second Regular Session
Seventy-fifth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO**

ENGROSSED

LLS NO. R26-0860.01 Jessica Chapman x4636

HJR26-1018

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 26-1018

101 **CONCERNING THE DESIGNATION OF STATE HIGHWAY 86 THROUGH**
102 **ELBERT COUNTY AS THE PLAINS-TO-PINES SCENIC CORRIDOR.**

1 WHEREAS, Featuring an average altitude of just under 6,000
2 feet-several hundred feet higher than that of the Mile High City-State
3 Highway 86 through Elbert County offers Colorado residents, workers,
4 westbound travelers, and tourists unrivaled views of the east-facing
5 Rocky Mountains range, including:
6 ● The magnificent Sangre De Cristo subrange in Southern
7 Colorado;
8 ● The iconic Pikes Peak-elevation 14,115 feet-on which
9 Katharine Lee Bates composed the lyrics to "America the
10 Beautiful";
11 ● Mount Blue Sky-elevation 14,268 feet-which straddles the
12 Arapaho and Pike National Forests; and

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.
Dashes through the words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law.

HOUSE
Final Reading
February 26, 2026

- 1 ● Longs Peak-elevation 14,259 feet-located prominently in
2 the Rocky Mountain National Park Wilderness of Northern
3 Colorado; and

4 WHEREAS, The spectacular views of the Rocky Mountain Front
5 Range from State Highway 86 through Colorado's Eastern Plains, in all
6 their rural, pastoral splendor, are worthy of state recognition; and

7 WHEREAS, State Highway 86 is the scenic high-plains
8 thoroughfare between the Town of Limon on the east and the Town of
9 Castle Rock on the west, with approximately 61 miles lying within Elbert
10 County; and

11 WHEREAS, State Highway 86 is the functional main street
12 through Elbert County's largest municipality, the Town of Elizabeth,
13 which is also recognized as an official Department of Local Affairs
14 (DOLA) Colorado Main Street community; and

15 WHEREAS, Elizabeth is home to over 3,000 people, multiple
16 rustic, treasure-laden antique shops, the iconic Rambler Ranch, and the
17 lovely Carriage Shoppes Tea Room located in a historic livery stable that
18 serves as a cherished regional destination-a pastoral gathering place
19 where women and their daughters, grandchildren, and out-of-town guests
20 gather; and

21 WHEREAS, For the over 700 residents of the historic Town of
22 Kiowa, another DOLA Colorado Main Street community, State Highway
23 86 also serves as the functional main street; and

24 WHEREAS, Kiowa is the official seat of Elbert County
25 government and home of the Elbert County Historical Society and
26 Museum, which occupies the historic Kiowa High School building built
27 in 1921; and

28 WHEREAS, The Elbert County Historical Society and Museum's
29 Spring 2018 issue of the "Smoky Hill Express" newsletter features a
30 cover story summarizing the history of the Smoky Hill Trail and evolution
31 of transportation in Elbert County, including the development of State
32 Highway 86; and

33 WHEREAS, State Highway 86 is the primary access route for
34 various tourist attractions in the Elbert County region, including abundant

1 outdoor recreation and historically significant sites like Buffalo Groves,
2 Inc., the Bijou Basin open space, Castlewood Canyon State Park, the
3 Elbert County Fair-this year celebrating 92 years of cherished livestock
4 and agricultural traditions and wholesome 4-H opportunities for young
5 people-and a bevy of small, family-owned businesses that generate
6 essential tax revenues that benefit the people of Colorado; and

7 WHEREAS, The vast rolling hills and prairies of the eastern
8 portion of two-lane State Highway 86 through Colorado's high-plains
9 desert offer travelers serenely beautiful and unique vistas-frequently
10 including falcon, hawk, eagle, pronghorn, and deer sightings-that serve
11 as a pastoral alternative to the hullabaloo of four-lane I-70 and its
12 heavy-duty truck traffic; and

13 WHEREAS, In the centuries before European settlers arrived, the
14 Arapaho, Cheyenne, Kiowa, Ute, Comanche, and other First Nations
15 peoples of the Great Plains were the first to break in barely discernible
16 trails that later served as the basis for primitive wagon routes, like that of
17 the fabled South Branch of the historic Smoky Hill Trail, segments of
18 which later became the alignment for the landmark Leavenworth and
19 Pikes Peak Express stagecoach routes; and

20 WHEREAS, Prior to Colorado becoming a territory in 1861-and
21 long before achieving statehood in 1876, when much of what is now
22 Colorado was still part of the Kansas Territory-the 1858 Pikes Peak Gold
23 Rush led to a massive, four-year migration of prospectors, adventurers,
24 and, as prominent historian/professor/author Tom Noel described them:
25 "gold grubbers, town puffers, prostitutes, gamblers, and journalists," who
26 traveled on foot, on horseback, or by wagon or stagecoach through
27 Missouri and Kansas toward the Pikes Peak area of the Rocky Mountains
28 via the storied South Branch of the Smoky Hill Trail, large segments of
29 which are State Highway 86 today; and

30 WHEREAS, The Elbert County Board of County Commissioners
31 and the Mayors and Trustees of the Towns of Kiowa and Elizabeth
32 support designating State Highway 86 as Colorado's "Plains-to-Pines
33 Scenic Corridor"; now, therefore,

34 *Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Seventy-fifth*
35 *General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the Senate concurring herein:*

36 (1) That the entire portion of State Highway 86 through Elbert

1 County, Colorado, be officially designated and branded the
2 "Plains-to-Pines Scenic Corridor";

3 (2) That the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) is
4 authorized to accept and expend gifts, grants, and donations for the
5 purpose of placing initial markers, signage, and xeriscape landscaping
6 along portions of the route designated as state highway to aesthetically
7 brand and establish the "Plains-to-Pines Scenic Corridor"; and

8 (3) That CDOT is authorized to enter into one or more
9 intergovernmental agreements with the Board of County Commissioners
10 of Elbert County, the Town of Kiowa, and the Town of Elizabeth for
11 purposes of maintaining said markers, signage, and associated xeric
12 vegetation for the "Plains-to-Pines Scenic Corridor".

13 *Be It Further Resolved*, That copies of this Joint Resolution be sent
14 to Colorado Governor Jared Polis; CDOT Commissioners Diane Barrett,
15 Barbara Bowman, Shelley Cook, Cecil Gutierrez, Terry Hart, Elise Jones,
16 Juan Marcano, Todd Masters, Barbara McLachlan, Rick Ridder, and
17 Hannah Parsons; CDOT Executive Director Shoshana Lew; CDOT
18 Deputy Director Herman Stockinger; Elbert County Commissioners Mike
19 Buck, Dallas Schroeder, and Byron McDaniel; Elbert County Clerk and
20 Recorder Rhonda Braun; Elbert County Manager Shawn Fletcher; Elbert
21 County Director of Communications and Public Affairs Wendy Manitta
22 Holmes; Town of Kiowa Mayor Pro Tem Tammy Hart; Town of Kiowa
23 Trustees Mona Schantz, Jonathon Shafer, Trevor Smith, Constance Stahl,
24 and Baillie Wineland; Town of Kiowa Administrator Kimberly Boyd;
25 Town of Kiowa Clerk Sasha Davidson; Town of Kiowa Planning
26 Commissioners Wendy Frenzel, Todd Lane, Shannon Lane, Julie Mizak,
27 Lori Rafferty, and Sandy Kalish; Town of Elizabeth Mayor Angela
28 Ternus; Town of Elizabeth Mayor Pro Tem Tracy Hutchins; Town of
29 Elizabeth Trustees Michael Schroder, Loren Einspahr, Dave Conley,
30 Steve Gaither, and Cynthia Thye; Town of Elizabeth Administrators
31 Michelle Oeser and Jeff Engel; Town of Elizabeth Planning
32 Commissioners George Fick, Amy Schmidt, and Jim Santangelo; Elbert
33 County Chamber of Commerce President Megan Gardner, Vice President
34 Marjorie Engle, and Board Members John Gadeken, Steve Andreas,
35 Jennifer Maxwell, and Erica Hulm; Elbert and Highway 86 Metro District
36 President Karl Nyquist, District Manager Denise Denslow, and Board
37 Members Bradley Johnson, Mark Harding, Jim Marshall, and Brent
38 Brouillard; Ranchland News Publishers/Editors Nikki Lister and Jenna

1 Lister; and Elbert County News/Colorado Community Media Editor Scott
2 Gilbert.