

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

**REVISED**

LLS NO. R26-0860.01 Jessica Chapman x4636

**HJR26-1018**

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**House Committees**

**Senate Committees**

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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.**

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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.*

SENATE  
Final Reading  
March 3, 2026

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 Gadenken, 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.