



COLORADO

Department of Transportation

HB 23-1173

Modify Department Of Transportation Governance

Oppose

HB 1173 would change the makeup of CDOT's Transportation Commission and make the Commission an elected body, like RTD and the CU Board of Regents. The Transportation Commission has governed and managed fiscal policy for the DOT for the past 100+ years.

Electing Transportation Commissioners will harm rural Colorado and result in a Commission filled with competing political agendas for transportation funding and projects, instead of focusing on creating parity statewide. Perhaps most notably, the Western Slope would lose two of its three seats, the Pueblo area would lose its dedicated seat, and the Eastern Plains would be folded into a largely urban district instead of retaining the singular seat it currently has.

Given CDOT's significant responsibility for managing the state's vast network of rural roads, shifting financial resource decisions to a board responsive to the sole interests of front-range districts would make it virtually impossible for the commission to remain focused on stewardship of a statewide system, including those areas between high-population areas whose roles in the movement of the state's economy, agriculture, and supply chain are so essential.

Currently, CDOT has 11 Commissioners representing the diverse and nonpartisan needs of Coloradans' transportation needs. All are appointed by the Governor and serve four-year terms. CDOT's Commission is a bi-partisan, diverse group of individuals dedicated to serving the good of the state, many of whom have had long careers in public service at all levels of Government. By statute, they are supported by an advisory group of local government partners.

If HB 1173 passes, elected Commissioners will determine such things as hiring an Executive Director, prioritizing projects for the 10-year plan, and dedicating highway funding for their districts.

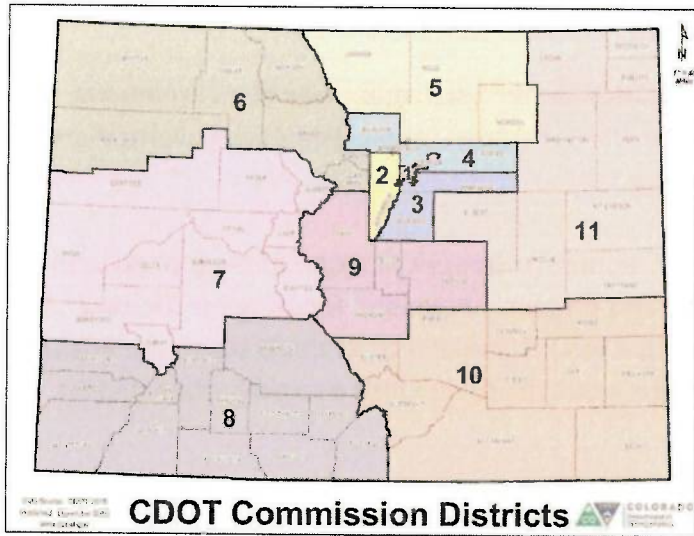
Elected Commissioners choosing the Executive Director of CDOT would not only set the department apart from other state departments, it could lead to competing interests between CDOT and other state departments within the Governor's cabinet. Moreover, years of experience at RTD have demonstrated that when Administrative staff reports to an elected board, it can become difficult to take on challenging conversations such as being candid about trade-offs about allocating limited resources in an accountable manner.

One of the worst outcomes of Hb 1173 is that it alters state representation for the Commission by *increasing urban representation on the Commission by sacrificing rural representation*. For example, on the Western Slope, HB 1173 consolidates three existing districts into one district for northwest, southwest, south central, and southeast counties.

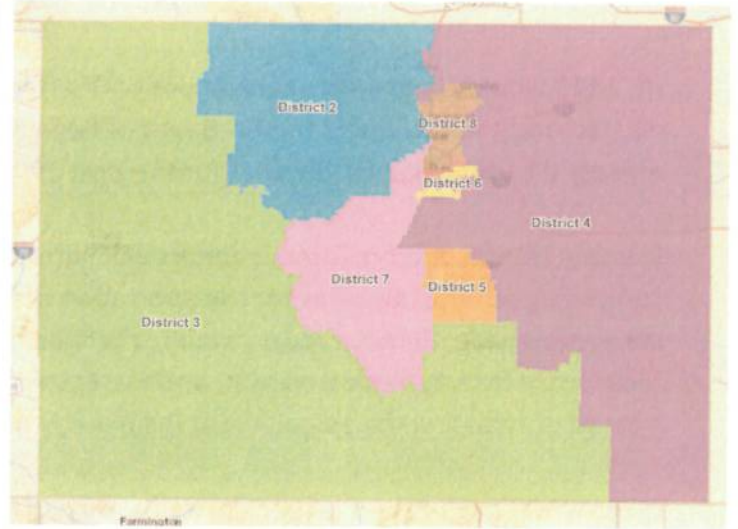
HB 1173 is a dangerous policy idea for Colorado and will lead to the politicization of the state's transportation system by having Transportation Commissioners elected instead of appointed.

Transportation Representation under HB 1173

Current Transportation Districts



New Transportation Districts Under HB 1173



Impacts to Coloradans

- TC districts 6, 7, 8, and 10 would all lose individual representation and instead become a large district encompassing multiple TPOs, MPOs, and many competing priorities.
- Glenwood Canyon would be in the same district as I25 south of CO Springs.
- Boulder County would be in the same district as Summit and Eagle Counties.
- El Paso County would become one TC district and Custer, Teller, Park, and Fremont would now have to share resources with Jefferson, Lake, and Chaffee Counties.
- Front Range, Larimer, and Boulder counties would be helping set priorities for Eagle, Summit, and Routt counties.
- The eastern plains would lose six counties from existing TC districts.
- The Front Range metro counties would become a confusing mix of cities and counties in districts drawn for political considerations and not transportation-related policy.

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