

**EL PASO**  **COUNTY**  
**COLORADO**

COMMISSIONERS:  
MARK WALLER (CHAIR)  
LONGINOS GONZALEZ, JR. (VICE-CHAIR)

HOLLY WILLIAMS  
STAN VANDERWERF  
CAMI BREMER

**EL PASO BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

February 26, 2019

The Honorable Senator Faith Winter  
Colorado State Senate; Transportation & Energy Committee  
200 E Colfax  
RM 346  
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Senator Winter,

The Board of El Paso County Commissioners is writing you today to express its joint support for Senate Bill 19-101.

Our county and our board has a unique vantage on why our state needs this bill.

The expansion of I-25 through a section of the highway between Monument and Castle Rock ("The Gap") is a critical need. Colorado Springs and Denver are both among the largest population centers in the country, and yet the road hasn't been updated since its original construction in 1962. The Gap also is a significant safety hazard for the thousands of drivers that travel the road each day. The lagging infrastructure through The Gap has resulted in thousands of accidents and far too many deaths—including two Colorado State Troopers.

El Paso County residents have long understood the need to address this problem and have worked hard to do their part to fix it.

As a board, we sought and obtained a coveted \$65 million INFRA Grant to help cover construction costs for The Gap project. We passed a county-wide TABOR retention question with more than 67 percent of the vote to help provide local funding. All of this is in addition to the efforts made by the City of Colorado Springs and Douglas County.

We were incredibly disappointed with the decision by the Colorado Department of Transportation to toll the additional lanes through The Gap. El Paso County area elected officials and citizens alike voiced loud opposition to the prospect of tolls. Concerns about the tolls were raised in townhall meetings hosted by both CDOT and El Paso County government. Citizens called, e-mailed, wrote editorials, and posted on social media their opposition to CDOT's plan. Area reporters thoroughly documented the resistance to tolling. Regrettably, CDOT exercised its right under the law and has imposed the tolls.


This experience left many El Paso County citizens with negative feelings toward the state, CDOT, and the process used to arrive at the decision to use toll lanes in The Gap.

Today, we speak as a board on behalf of those citizens to voice our strong support for Senate Bill 19-101. This bill better addresses the concerns of citizens and other stakeholders than current CDOT practices. In addition, this bill will provide CDOT with greater guidance and appreciation for local concerns when they make the decision to toll lanes in the future. Finally, this bill will increase transparency regarding how the public is engaged during the process.

On behalf of The Board of County Commissioners of El Paso County, Colorado.

  
Mark Waller, Chair

  
Holly Williams, Member

  
Longinos Gonzalez, Vice-Chair

  
Cami Bremer, Member

  
Stan VanderWerf, Member

