

RESOLUTION 80-2019

WHEREAS, Congress has already designated the Ports-to-Plains and Heartland Expressway Corridors to Colorado as High Priority Corridors on the National Highway System; and

WHEREAS, the Interstate 27 Ports-to-Plains corridor in Colorado has been designated as a Super-2 profile and is already in need of expansion as indicated by the identified need of passing lanes for safety; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. 287 portion of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor between the Colorado/Oklahoma border and Limon has seen a 49% increase in daily traffic counts, including almost 62% increase in daily truck counts, between 1999 and 2018; and

WHEREAS, the Eastern Colorado Mobility study by CDOT recommended Interstate 76 from Denver to Brush and Highway 71 from Limon to Nebraska be identified as the Heartland Expressway route which has already been designated as a high priority corridor with passage of ISTEPA; and

WHEREAS, the Heartland Expressway corridor #14 in Colorado has seen little in the way of improvements since designation by Congress with the exception of one small realignment and drainage project north of Brush on Highway 71 in 2005; and

WHEREAS, the Highway 71 Freight Truck Diversion Study, being completed by the Colorado Department of Transportation, is indicating that the Heartland Expressway, Colorado Highway 71, can potentially divert between 8% and 10% of freight traffic from Interstate 25 using only increased speed on Highway 71 and a Front Range congestion factor; and

WHEREAS, House Bill 1079 was passed by the Texas Legislature and signed by Texas Governor Greg Abbott directing the Texas Department of Transportation to conduct a comprehensive study of the Ports-to-Plain Corridor study evaluating the feasibility of, and the costs and logistical matters associated with, improvements that create a four-lane highway which meets interstate highway standards to the extent possible and detailed improvements to extend Interstate 27; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico Governor and Transportation Cabinet Secretary are evaluating future Interstate designation for its portion of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor across northern New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, a future interstate across northern New Mexico would connect to Interstate 25; and

WHEREAS, a future Interstate designation would be a significant new economic development tool for communities along these corridors. Site selectors for manufacturers, warehousing and distribution recommend sites along an interstate

highway and travel service businesses such as hotels, truck stops, convenience stores, and restaurants, which can have a dramatic impact on small communities will also expand; and

WHEREAS, a future interstate would connect Colorado to major Texas population and economic centers including Amarillo, Lubbock, San Angelo, Laredo, Dallas-Fort Worth, Austin and Houston in addition to numerous smaller communities; and

WHEREAS, the 2015 Colorado Freight Plan, updated in 2017, indicated that Dallas, TX was one of the leading Colorado trading partners in value of trade and are expected to remain a significant trading partner in the future; and

WHEREAS, access to the largest inland port in the United States in Laredo, Texas is improved through future development of an interstate; and

WHEREAS, in 2017 72% of Colorado trade with Mexico passed through border crossings along the Ports-to-Plains corridor including Laredo, Eagle Pass, and Del Rio; and

WHEREAS, travel on the nation's Interstate Highways is about twice as safe as travel on all other roadways. Given the large energy-related and agricultural-related trucks using this corridor, and the mix of personal, tourist, and truck traffic, safety will be greatly improved by the extension of the interstate. Fatalities and injuries will be reduced; and

WHEREAS, while designation as a future interstate is the first step in a very long process before the completion of an interstate highway, that does not lessen the importance designating an interstate.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, OF THE STATE OF COLORADO as follows:

1. That the Board of County Commissioners of Washington County supports the designation of the existing Ports-to-Plains corridor and the portion of the Heartland Expressway between Interstate 70 at Limon, Colorado and Interstate 76 at Brush Colorado and supports Interstate 76 as a Future Interstate by Congress and urges the Colorado Congressional delegation, the governor, the Colorado Legislature and the Colorado Department of Transportation to support such designation.
2. This resolution to be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval.
3. If any portion or provision of this resolution shall for any reason be held to be invalid or unenforceable, the invalidity or unenforceability of such portion or provision shall not affect any of the remaining provisions of this resolution, the intention being that the same are severable.

The foregoing Resolution was presented at a regular meeting of the Washington County Commissioners held on the 10th day of December 2019 by Commissioner Wells who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Willeke and on roll call vote, all votes being yes, the resolution was adopted.



Attest: Annie Kent

Dea Ann Daybrown
Chairman

Richard T. Willeke
Commissioner

Tony N. Wells
Commissioner