



Town Council
Mayor – Earle Bidez
Mayor Pro Tem – Eric Gotthelf
Council Members:
Tom Priest
Lynn Feiger
Gusty Kanakis
Brian Rodine
Kate Schifani

To: Town Council
Interim Town Manager Katie Sickles
May 21, 2025 Letters

See Ashley Badesch's email and I drafted two letters for the Mayor to execute.




Outlook

CO & WY Client Alert: Action items to protect critical funding

From Ashley Badesch <ashley.badesch@strategiesdc.com>

Date Thu 5/8/2025 1:11 PM

To Debra Figueroa <debra.figueroa@strategiesdc.com>; Sarah Marin <sarah.marin@strategiesdc.com>; Spiro Maleki <spiro.maleki@strategiesdc.com>; Floyd McCluhan <Floyd.McCluhan@strategiesdc.com>

 3 attachments (69 KB)

CO Water & Wastewater Federal Funding_Letter.docx; WY Water & Wastewater Federal Funding_Letter.docx; T&I Programmatic Language Requests [Samples].docx;

Hello S2 Western Office Clients,

Please read this email update about key legislative issues that could impact your community, and join us at **2 PM on Wednesday, May 14th**, for an **S2 Western Communities Advocacy Roundtable discussion** on [Zoom](#), Meeting ID: 876 6600 7425, Passcode: 301728.

Water & Wastewater Funding at Risk: On May 2, 2025, President Trump released his [FY 2026 “skinny budget”](#) – a preliminary funding proposal that outlines the Administration’s top-line priorities ahead of the formal appropriations process. The proposal **calls for drastic cuts to essential water infrastructure programs** that many western communities depend upon to upgrade aging treatment plants, replace failing pipes, and meet federal water standards. If enacted, these reductions—including the near-elimination of the [US EPA Clean Water & Drinking Water State Revolving Funds](#), [USDA Rural Development Water & Waste Disposal Loan program](#), and the [Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART grants](#)—would dismantle the most cost-effective financing options available to western communities for water and wastewater infrastructure upgrades.

- **Actions Needed:** Please **read the attached advocacy letter template** and **join us on the May 14th zoom to discuss advocacy strategies.**

Opportunity to Weigh in on Transportation Priorities: The House Transportation & Infrastructure (T&I) Committee is working on the Surface Transportation Authorization, which is the federal law that sets funding levels and policy direction for highways, public transit, rail, and related infrastructure across the United States. Reauthorized every five years, it will determine how billions of federal dollars are distributed to states and local governments for road repairs, transit operations, safety programs, and more. **Now is the time for local governments to weigh in on what funding for transportation infrastructure is important to them**, especially as the House T&I Committee moves to deprioritize funding for the types of projects that are important to so many western communities: transit, bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and bridge replacements.

- **Action Needed:** Please **read the attached packet of T&I programmatic requests** that reflect the transportation funding needs we hear about regularly from our client communities, including maintaining previous levels of funding for transit, directing the US DOT to continue providing funding to bike and pedestrian projects, and maintaining funding for bridge replacement projects. Please consider working with us to **submit any one or more of these proposals (or others tailored to your communities’ needs) to your US Member of Congress**, whether they are on the T&I committee (Congressman Hurd) or not (Congressman Neguse, Congresswoman Boebert, Congresswoman Hageman). Members must submit their proposals by **May 30th**. We will provide the contact information for the relevant staffer to whom you

should submit a proposal. We can also help draft additional proposals tailored to your communities' needs. Folks should think about submitting these **as soon as possible**.

Please consider passing this message along to other communities that will be impacted by cuts to water and wastewater funding or potential future cuts to federal funding for transit, bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and bridge replacements. We will discuss the above issues, as well as what to do if your community is impacted by "frozen" and "canceled" grants, on the May 14th Western Communities Advocacy Roundtable. We also welcome discussion of any other legislative issues important to your community.

Thank you!

Ashley

Ashley Badesch

Partner

Western Practice

Sustainable Strategies DC

1801 California St, Suite 2400

Denver, CO 80218

303-981-4477

Town of Minturn
P.O. Box 309 | 302 Pine Street
Minturn, CO 81645
970-827-5645
www.minturn.org



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Agency: U.S. Department of Transportation

Account: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Programs:

- Bridge Formula Program (BFP)
- Bridge Investment Program (BIP – discretionary)

Request: Sustain funding for the Bridge Formula Program and the Bridge Investment Program at no less than FY25 enacted levels.

The Town of Minturn Bellm Bridge, a major commercial and residential bridge connection over the Eagle River, is structurally deficient and scheduled for replacement in the next five years. The Bellm Bridge, along with several bridges that span the Eagle River and major mountain waterways, are fundamental to Minturn. Our rural transportation networks are aging past their intended design life and are rapidly deteriorating. According to the American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA), as of 2024, more than 43,000 bridges nationwide are rated in poor or “structurally deficient” condition, including a significant share in our area.

Minturn’s bridges connect our entire community to schools, hospitals and commerce. When these crossings are closed, are weight-restricted, or fail, our local economy will suffer. In addition, Fire and EMS response times will increase. Minturn lacks the financial capacity or technical staffing needed to pursue large-scale bridge replacements without federal support. Even basic rehabilitation projects can quickly exceed our budget, especially where construction costs are higher due to mountainous terrain, supply chain constraints, or environmental review requirements. The Bridge Formula Program (BFP) has become a critical source of baseline funding for states, but its effectiveness depends on continued congressional support. At the same time, the Bridge Investment Program (BIP) offers a vital discretionary avenue for addressing high-priority bridge needs that exceed formula-based allocations, especially in Minturn where bridge failures would be economically and logistically devastating. Sustained federal investment in these two programs is essential to avoid compounding the nation’s deferred maintenance crisis.

Minturn Town Council, on behalf of our residents and business community, strongly support the Committee to direct the U.S. Department of Transportation to fund the Bridge Formula Program and the Bridge Investment Program at no less than FY25 enacted levels.

Sincerely,

Earle Bidez
Mayor
Town of Minturn
970-445-7579 – ebidez@minturn.org

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The Honorable Michael Bennet
US Senator
261 Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Hickenlooper
US Senator
316 Hart Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Hurd
US Representative
1641 Longworth House Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Sustaining critical federal funding for water and wastewater infrastructure for rural communities

Dear Senator Bennet, Senator Hickenlooper, and Representative Hurd,

The Town of Minturn has a population hovering just below 1000 population. The Town is preparing to develop a new Water Treatment Plant with an estimated cost of fifteen million dollars. In addition to the cost to replace water tanks, maintaining distribution systems and operations means increasing costs to everyone.

On behalf of Minturn, I write to express my serious concern about the proposed cuts to federal water infrastructure programs in the President's FY 2026 "skinny budget." These reductions—including the near-elimination of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Clean Water & Drinking Water State Revolving Funds, US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Water & Waste Disposal Loan program, and the Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART grants—would severely undermine the ability of Minturn to protect public health, provide safe drinking water to our residents, and maintain the critical infrastructure we rely on every day for fire protection and water security.

Minturn's water infrastructure built with federal support in past decades is now at or beyond its expected lifespan. Without reinvestment, our legacy systems will become a liability, placing public health, environmental protection, and local economies at risk. Minturn has a limited ratepayer base and many of our residents already struggle to afford their existing water rates. We cannot simply raise utility rates enough to fund these projects, many of which cost tens of millions of dollars, without further jeopardizing affordability for residents. Federal and state financing tools are essential to bridge the gap between urgent infrastructure needs and the economic realities of rural life.

Sincerely,

Earle Bidez
Mayor
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