



Town of Minturn
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March 20, 2024

The Honorable Jared Polis
Governor, State of Colorado
State Capitol Building
200 E. Colfax Ave., Rm. 136
Denver, CO 80203

Ms. Shoshana Lew
Executive Director, Colorado Department of Transportation
2829 W. Howard Pl.
Denver, CO 80204

Dear Governor Polis and Director Lew,

The Minturn Town Council would like to express our concern with CDOT's decision to eliminate key improvements planned for the eastbound auxiliary lane portion of the West Vail Pass Project. This portion of the project, commonly known as the "Narrows" is a critical improvement toward ensuring the project goals of improved safety and operations are achieved. Without improvements in this two-mile section, factors which create the myriad of issues along this corridor will continue to result in vehicular accidents and pass closures which create a ripple effect throughout the region.

Vail Pass closures are a particularly dangerous time for the residents of Minturn. U.S. Highway 24 runs through the heart of the Town where much of our community lives within several hundred feet of this roadway. The negative impacts of highway traffic in a town which seeks to promote alternative transportation methods such as cycling and pedestrian options, are numerous and these safety issues are magnified every time Vail Pass closes.

With each Vail Pass closure Minturn must address the safety concerns that stem from comingling large semi-trucks with small-town life. This includes examples such as children walking home from the bus stop, locals crossing the street and cyclists trying to share the narrow road, which includes parking lanes, driveways, and collector roads. These concerns were exemplified with the most recent hit and run accident on March 2nd caused by a semi tanker truck trying to turn around with insufficient room, hitting a building and causing damage.

The improvements to the narrows remain a key component for considering the West Vail Pass Project a success. This project has region-wide support because of the impact the events on Vail

Pass have throughout the greater community. Without the improvements to the narrows section of Vail Pass, Minturn fears we will continue to see the high accident and closure rates which not only negatively impact life and safety on I-70 but also negatively impact the alternate routes like U.S. HWY 24 which are not suited for large scale semi-truck traffic.

Completing this section of the project is critical. Construction teams are already mobilized, and costs continue to increase, making the project less attainable in the future. Now is the time to get this important safety improvement completed. Although expensive, the Minturn Town Council hopes you will consider the safety benefits this portion of the project provides to Colorado residents and visitors as a worthwhile expenditure and reconsider keeping the narrows improvements included in the project.

Sincerely,

Earle Bidez, Mayor
Town of Minturn

cc: CDOT Transportation Commission c/o Barbara Bowman
Senator Dylan Roberts
Rep. Megan Lukins, House District
Congressman Joe Neguse c/o Julie Sutor
Senator Michael Bennet
Senator John Hickenlooper
Eagle County Board of County Commissioners