



From: Kathleen Osher, Executive Director, Transit Alliance

Date: March 22, 2017

Subject: Support for HB-1242

Madam Chair Diane Mitsch Bush, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to present to you today. My name is Kathleen Osher and I have led the Transit Alliance since 2005 and I support HB 1242.

Transit Alliance has operated in our state for almost 20 years and we empower citizens to lead the transformation of Colorado's mobility future. We've spent the last 10 years training a new generation of transportation leaders in the Denver Metro Region through our nationally unique Citizens' Academy and now we are on the ground with some of our most underserved Coloradoans in the San Luis Valley and the Northwest Transportation Planning Regions.

While on the road there have been countless stories of need – while in Alamosa we heard about veterans wanting to see a local production at Adams State but they didn't have an option because their transportation is only for medical appointments. Their isolation is unfortunately not unique – while in Saguache we learned about the expanding work of Saguache Works a local nonprofit thrift store, food store and sewing co-op who is now the go-to provider of transportation, literally answering the call whenever someone needs a ride. There is no van, there is only a phone tree – calling their volunteers one by one until someone can provide that needed ride. If those volunteers can't respond then that person misses their appointment, their prescription isn't filled and they can't get groceries.

Creating a transportation SYSTEM that works for all Coloradoans regardless of age, ability, or income is the primary concern of HB 1242 and I support this balanced approach.

Multimodal options are vital to independence and freedom across Colorado, especially in households that have zero vehicles. While you may think that is only here in the metro region because Denver County has the highest proportion of zero vehicle households, ACTUALLY the Counties with between 6-12% of households without cars include San Miguel, San Juan, Rio Grande, Conejos, Alamosa, Costilla, Huerfano, Las Animas, Pueblo, Otero, Prowers, Lincoln, Cheyenne, and Logan Counties.

Providing choices for Coloradoans is not a new idea, but in rural parts of our state this idea has almost been abandoned. We must expand our menu of choices or options beyond car ownership allowing for multimodal options and the flexible resources for our local communities to invest in solutions that meet the needs of ALL citizens.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.