



**Office of the County Manager**

970-328-8604

970-328-8629(f)

[eagleadmin@eaglecounty.us](mailto:eagleadmin@eaglecounty.us)

[www.eaglecounty.us](http://www.eaglecounty.us)

July 6, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
US Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Support for I-70 East Vail Pass Wildlife Crossings discretionary grant application

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Eagle County Government strongly supports the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and Summit County's I-70 East Vail Pass Wildlife Crossings Project. The Project will install three wildlife crossings on the westbound lanes of I-70 and wildlife-exclusion fencing between Vail Pass and Copper Mountain. This new wildlife crossing mitigation will leverage existing infrastructure on eastbound I-70 to provide landscape permeability across one of Colorado's largest interstates.

The Project is a collaborative effort between CDOT, Summit County, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and Summit County Safe Passages nonprofit. The main goals of this Project include:

1. Reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions and improve safety for all travelers along a significant freight and transit corridor in the Southern Rocky Mountains and central Colorado.
2. Improve and restore landscape and breeding ground movement for deer, elk, moose, bighorn sheep, and the federally threatened Canada lynx across 12 miles of the White River National Forest.
3. Restore connectivity through over 17,000 acres in the West Ten-Mile Creek Watershed.

The Colorado Transportation Commission recently awarded the Project \$750,000 from the state general fund via the bipartisan Senate Bill 151 'Safe Crossings for Colorado Wildlife and Drivers.' Project partner Summit County Safe Passages is receiving donations for the Project and is leveraging private sector interest to secure project support, such as building partnerships with Vail and Copper Mountain and Arapahoe Basin ski resorts. This Project is an enormous priority for CDOT, CPW, USFS, Summit County, and all of Colorado as we work to make our transportation network safer for all residents, people, and wildlife alike.

Eagle County residents highly value wildlife and contribute to the County's tourism economy. Installing wildlife crossings along westbound I-70 will provide connectivity in areas with fragmented wildlife migration corridors, enhance genetic diversity, and raise wildlife conservation awareness. The visible passages will span the interstate to reduce risk associated with wildlife-vehicle collisions, providing safe passage for wildlife between Summit County and Eagle County. Eagle County whole-heartedly supports this project and requests USDOT to prioritize Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program grant funding for this worthy proposal.

Sincerely,

Jeff Shroll  
County Manager