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President and CEO

Testimony: HB17 – 1242 New Transportation Infrastructure Funding Revenue
House Transportation & Energy

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Good afternoon, Madam Chair and members of the committee. And thank you Speaker Duran and Representative Mitsch Bush for bringing this very important bill. I'm Kelly Brough, president and CEO of the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, an organization representing over 3,000 businesses and their 300,000 employees.

In addition to the Chamber I am also representing the Colorado Competitive Council and the Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation. We are here in strong support of funding for transportation improvements and the work you are doing on HB 1242.

One of the Chamber's top priorities is funding transportation. Our state's economic growth makes such funding an imperative. We are falling behind our competitors quickly and that lack of investment will impact our economic future.

This is a state-wide concern too—not just a metro Denver issue. As a matter of fact, Coloradans are already losing between 10 and 49 hours every year in traffic delays and spending between \$1,200 and \$2,100 per year in higher vehicle operating costs, traffic accidents and congestion-related delays. Those costs total to \$6.8 billion statewide. Coloradans are literally paying a steep price for our State's failure to invest in their roads. Now consider, that our state's population is poised to grow almost 50 percent by 2040. And the fact that we're relying

today on a declining revenue source for transportation -- our gas tax. And, the cost to every Coloradan will be unmanageable.

As you work on HB 1242, we would propose a few changes including:

1. The money allocated in the bill should be established as a percentage of the total dollars instead of a flat dollar amount. A percentage ensures that once we reach agreement about the amount of money needed for CDOT to bond and provide maintenance, those dollars would then be maintained at that level—not diminished as other pots grew disproportionately.
2. Funds generated from aviation activity should be excluded from this revenue. Those funds cannot appropriately be used for roads and highways.
3. It is critically important that we maintain only one commission to oversee the State's transportation investments. Two entities only exacerbate the challenge of ensuring we develop and maintain a comprehensive strategy state-wide for investments in transportation. While we could support changes to how the current commission could be improved, we would never support more than one commission.

Currently, CDOT has a \$9 billion statewide project list. HB 1242 would finally provide a revenue stream allowing bonding so the projects with the highest priority could be accomplished along with some additional maintenance of the current system. HB 1242 also ensures local government throughout Colorado would be able to begin addressing their infrastructure needs as well.

In order to maintain the quality of life that so many Coloradans have come to expect, we must invest in our roads and bridges. We strongly support House Bill 1242. Thank you.