April 17, 2016

Colorado Transportation Commission Chair Kathy Connell
And Members of the Commission
Colorado Department of Transportation
4201 East Arkansas,
Denver, CO  80202

Dear Commissioners:

Please support the grant request for the construction of a rail passenger platform at Winter Park Resort and the installation of related track safety devices at Fraser, Colorado. Completion of these projects this summer will allow Amtrak to begin Winter Park Express ski train service in January, 2017. Colorado will then have a world class winter excursion train and Coloradans will have an extraordinary travel opportunity.

The platform will allow hundreds of passengers to alight safely just yards from the Winter Park lodges and ski lifts. The service will provide safe, comfortable transportation to the resort, avoiding the challenges of winter driving over Berthoud Pass and on I-70. This will create commensurate reductions in congestion on I-70, as well. The track safety devices will protect both the passenger train and freight trains from the chance of collision while the train is parked in Fraser.

The Colorado Rail Passenger Association (ColoRail) has been deeply involved in the development of the Winter Park Express service since its inception. Many ColoRail members assisted passengers on the two demonstration runs in March of 2015. Those trips were a resounding success. The trips sold out in hours and we saw nothing but happy, thankful passengers of all ages on both days. To a one they encouraged us to help make the train a regular service. Of equal importance, disabled Americans, including veterans, will have a superior way to travel to the National Sports Center for the Disabled at Winter Park.

Once again, please support the Winter Park grant request. Colorado state funds will be matched by local contributions and the resulting success will be of tremendous value to the state and its citizens.

Sincerely,

James M. Souby, President

Enclosure: Photo of the Winter Park Express at Winter Park, March 14, 2015 (ColoRail, Gary Sprung)