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REGIONAL WHIP

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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
March 6, 2012

Phil Washington, General Manager  
Regional Transportation District (RTD)  
1600 Blake St.  
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Phil:

I have been following, with increasing concern, the current debate among stakeholders on the US36 corridor over what form of transit should be proposed on a 2012 ballot initiative before FasTracks voters. The voters of the metro area firmly supported commuter rail on the US36 corridor in their 2004 affirmative vote -- indeed, the corridor supplied a critical majority for the initiative -- and that support has to be honored in going back to the voters for additional revenue.

Forming a plan is never easy, and many deals and compromises were made, but the directors of RTD did adopt a plan on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2004 that reflected the negotiations between communities and stakeholders across the RTD district. Following that, voters relied on the April 22<sup>nd</sup> plan in casting their votes and passing Referendum 4a, allowing Fastracks to move forward. This April 22<sup>nd</sup> document was critical to the debate around Amendment 4a in 2004, and voters reasonably based their decisions on its contents. Indeed, the adopted plan was referenced in the ballot language itself:

“SHALL REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT TAXES BE INCREASED... TO BE USED AND SPENT... AS SPECIFIED IN THE TRANSIT EXPANSION PLAN ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE DISTRICT ON OR BEFORE APRIL 22, 2004.”

I have inspected the plan referenced in the ballot language and concluded that it undeniably includes rail transit for the Northern and Northwestern corridors. Specifically, the plan adopted April 22, 2004 includes for the US 36 Corridor and Longmont extension: 38.1 miles of rail, 18 miles of bus rapid transit (BRT), seven rail and six BRT stations with an estimated ridership of 8,600-10,100 (rail) and 16,900 (BRT). To date, almost no progress on improvements for the rail portion of this corridor have been made beyond south Westminster, and on the equally critical North Metro line along Interstate I-25, rights of way have been purchased but rail service remains non-operational. These rail lines simply have to be built to honor the commitment Colorado's famously tax-averse voters made in 2004, or we risk further severing the public's trust in our governmental institutions. This is no small matter, as you know.

If an initiative is put forward this Fall that does not encompass the full system as described in the 2004 FasTracks campaign for both the northern and northwestern corridors, I will not, in good conscience, be able to encourage my constituents to support it. In truth, I do not believe my constituents need my discouragement to oppose a ballot initiative that does not facilitate RTD

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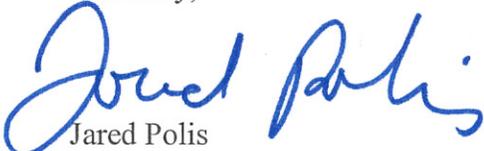
delivering on the promises it made to the voters of the RTD district to provide rail transit in the Northern and Northwestern corridors.

Furthermore, if circumstances have dictated that RTD's original cost projections were erroneous, as has been reported, and the agency needs more money to complete the project in a reasonable time frame, then a failure to go to the ballot as soon as these cost mistakes are known would also constitute a breach of what was promised to the residents of the Northern and Northwestern corridors. In other words, if more money is needed to complete the requirements of RTD in Referendum 4a, then the Board should forward a measure to the ballot this November to ensure that the time frame is not further delayed.

All communities need to work together to make our regional transit system complete. RTD negotiated these differences in 2004 and cannot re-open this negotiation without tearing our regional neighbors apart, threatening the future of regional transit planning itself. I do believe the stakes are that high.

I look forward to your decision on March 8, and stand ready to discuss these matters should you so desire.

Sincerely,



Jared Polis  
Member of Congress

Cc: RTD Board  
US 36 Mayors and Commissioners