



**Mark Gordon**  
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April 27, 2020

**Via Email**

Honorable Senator John Barrasso  
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Barrasso:

I am writing to follow up on the request made by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) on April 6, 2020, to provide nearly \$50 billion as an immediate revenue backstop for state departments of transportation (DOTs) in Phase 4 of COVID-19 response.

All sectors of the Wyoming economy are suffering during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Staggering economic losses reverberate throughout Wyoming's businesses and industries. As you know, this pandemic comes on the heels of ongoing declines in demand for coal and sharp reductions in oil prices.

The state has recently estimated the revenue impact of this crisis on the entire Wyoming government to lie in the range of \$550 million to \$2.8 billion over the next three years or so.

Congress and the Trump Administration have responded to the pandemic with legislation to address this unprecedented situation, but supplemental funding for vital highway transportation work has not been included so far.

The crucial legislation that AASHTO has proposed will prevent major disruptions in the Wyoming Department of Transportation's (WYDOT's) ability to operate and maintain our state's transportation system during this overwhelming emergency. It will also limit project cancellations and delays as well as prevent potential job losses both in Wyoming and throughout the country.

AASHTO bases the \$50 billion funding request in its proposed bill on an estimated 30 percent decline in state revenues over the next 18 months. This drop is due largely to a current 47 percent drop in personal travel that may continue or even worsen in coming weeks.

While WYDOT is still assessing its state revenue and traffic impacts, we believe that AASHTO's projections are reasonable and point to catastrophic project cuts that will inflict further damage throughout Wyoming's economy—to contractors, miners, truckers, retailers, ranchers, and others.

Given the urgent nature of our needs in the coming weeks and months, we request that these backstop funds be essentially treated as state revenues that would otherwise have been collected for a wide range of state DOT activities without the COVID-19 pandemic. This broad funding eligibility recognizes the fact that declining state revenues are used for all transportation activities undertaken by state DOTs. If this broad eligibility is untenable, then any legislation to shore up highway transportation should provide 100 percent federal funding for core highway program activities in FYs 2020 and 2021. This match relief will allow WYDOT to use all its federal funding even if state dollars are unavailable for match in the short-term.

In Wyoming, federal “backstop” assistance is urgently needed for us to continue performing these critical functions:

- Capital expenditures—including highway projects and other construction;
- Operational expenditures—including system operations, planning, safety, law enforcement, technology and innovation, information systems, traffic and congestion management, design and engineering;
- Maintenance expenditures—including highway system maintenance, equipment management, repairs, garages, and fleet services; and
- Administrative expenses to run the agency.

Thank you for your bold leadership during this unprecedented crisis and for your consideration of our request for the next COVID-19-related legislation. If you would like additional information, please let us know.

Sincerely,



K. Luke Reiner  
Director

Ricki O. Newton  
Ricki O. Newton (Apr 27, 2020)

Ricki O. Newton  
Chairman, Transportation Commission of Wyoming

cc: Governor Mark Gordon