



Sen. Marc Catlin  
Sen. Lisa Cutter  
Sen. Nick Hinrichsen  
Sen. Byron Pelton  
Sen. Tom Sullivan  
Colorado General Assembly  
200 E. Colfax  
Denver, CO 80203

Sen. Faith Winter  
Sen. Tony Exum  
Sen. Kyle Mullica  
Sen. Cleave Simpson

April 14, 2025

RE: Senate Bill 25-272

Dear Honorable Members of the Transportation and Energy Committee:

We ask for your support of Senate Bill 25-272, which is vital for the Roaring Fork Valley and the continued operation of the transit system that keeps the region moving. The Roaring Fork Transportation Authority has recently renovated a hotel in Glenwood Springs, converting it into workforce housing for employees. The Department of Revenue denied RFTA's sales tax exempt status for that project, and this bill would codify a sales tax exemption for materials used to build housing for employees or contractors of regional transportation authorities (RTA) in the future.

Expansion of workforce housing is essential for RFTA to continue to provide a reliable bus service for our community and is a crucial element of the entity's work. The cost of housing for the whole region that RFTA serves has skyrocketed, and RFTA would not be able to hire bus drivers, mechanics and other critical positions without providing subsidized housing for its workers. That's both due to a lack of housing availability and increasing housing price in the free market.

The average home sale price has increased between 161% and 207% over the past 10 years for communities in our travelshed. From 2012-2022, there has been a 33% increase of New Castle to Parachute residents and a 26% increase of Glenwood Springs area residents who commute to the Aspen/Snowmass area for their primary job. The fourth quarter report from CHFA shows rental vacancy rates in the Glenwood Springs metro area at 2.2%. More than 70% of RFTA's new employees live in below-market employee housing.

RFTA is the largest rural transportation system in the United States, providing regional commuter transit services over a 70-mile corridor from Rifle to Glenwood Springs on Interstate 70, and from Glenwood Springs to Aspen on State Highway 82, with over 120 buses and up to 380 employees in peak seasons. RFTA served over 5 million rides in 2024 and plays a critical role in the regional economy, connecting the workforce to jobs.

We appreciate your attention in this matter and urge your support for Senate Bill 25-272, which will allow RFTA to continue to provide excellent transit service in our region.

Sincerely,

Mayor Rachael E. Richards, City of Aspen Mayor