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March 8, 2007

Russell George
Executive Director
Colorado Department of Transportation
4201 E. Arkansas Ave
Denver, CO 80222

Dear Russ:

I am writing to offer my continued support and assistance in completing the improvements to the interchange of I-25 and Colorado State Highway 16 near Gate 20 at Fort Carson. I am also asking for your assistance in the development of an additional southern access known as Gate 19. Gate 19 is located about 3 miles south of Gate 20 and will provide much needed access to Fort Carson from the Pueblo and Fountain communities. As you are certainly aware, these projects are critical to the installation and to the men and women who work on the post.

As a result of the realignment of the 4th Infantry Division to Fort Carson, in the next two years the Mountain Post will continue to grow by 12,000 to 15,000 soldiers. According to the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments, this influx of new personnel is projected to translate into approximately 31,500 additional people in the Pikes Peak region that will have further impacts on employment and population in the region.

As southern Colorado communities grow around the post, we are already seeing heightened demands on road infrastructure. Gate 20, located near the intersection of SH-16 and I-25 is already unable to handle the increased traffic volume entering the base, and traffic backups cause significant delays and safety concerns.

As I understand it, the Colorado Department of Transportation has already committed \$45 million to the project in fiscal year 2007, and you are expected to begin construction this summer. I am delighted by these plans and look forward to following the project's progress.

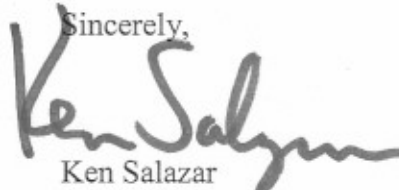
Although full funding for this \$65 million project has not yet been provided, you can be certain that I will continue to fight hard for federal transportation dollars to complete it. In 2005, I succeeded in including \$5 million in the Transportation Authorization bill for the interchange expansion. Last year, I worked to include \$3 million in federal transportation dollars to the project in the Senate version of the 2007 Transportation-Treasury-HUD Appropriations bill. Because Congress did not finish its work on this bill

and we are operating under a continuing resolution, I recently asked Secretary of Transportation Mary Peters to direct \$3 million to the interchange out of the Department of Transportation's Fiscal Year 2007 allocation. You can be certain that I will continue to fight to secure the federal share of funding for this mission-essential project in the 2008 Congressional budget cycle.

The construction of Gate 19 fits hand in glove with the expansion of the interchange at Gate 20. Gate 19's construction will ease delays and traffic jams for personnel who are accessing Fort Carson from Pueblo and Fountain. Because Gate 19 will strengthen the Mountain Post's ties to southern Colorado communities, will improve safety for personnel entering the base, and is a quality of life issue for our military families, I have asked General Mixon to ensure that construction of Gate 19 remain a high priority for the Army. I have also pledged to help him secure whatever resources he needs to complete this construction. I would ask that you work closely with the Army to determine their needs as the planning process moves forward, because the construction at Gate 19 will require transportation infrastructure improvements off-base.

It is extremely important that federal and state funding mechanisms work together on Gates 19 and 20. I look forward to our continued work together and with the Colorado state legislature to secure the remaining funding needed to complete Gate 20 in a timely manner and to get the construction of Gate 19 off the ground. I am hopeful that our joint efforts will result in the prompt completion of these critical projects.

Thank you for your service to Colorado and to the military families of our state.

Sincerely,

Ken Salazar
United States Senator

Cc: The Honorable Bill Ritter, Governor of Colorado
Major General Robert W. Mixon
The Honorable Abel Tapia, Chairman, Joint Budget Committee
The Honorable Bernie Buescher, Vice-Chairman, Joint Budget Committee