



**Testimony on Senate Bill 09-108  
January 27, 2009**

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Senator Gibbs and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to provide testimony on Senate Bill 108. I am Joe Blake, president and CEO of the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce.

As we shared with all of you in our *2009 Policy Briefing*, Colorado - and this country - are in unprecedented times. Daily, we learn of additional job losses and businesses and individuals experiencing more financial challenges. Colorado's unemployment rate is expected to be 6.8 percent at best in 2009. That means nearly 180,000 individuals will be unemployed in our state. The only thing that seems certain in these times is uncertainty. So, I come to you today to suggest that at this moment we have a choice and a responsibility. We need to get Colorado back to work and Coloradans back to working together.

Senate Bill 108 provides stable, reasonable sources of funding that allow the public and private sector to work together to begin to address the growing safety and maintenance problems in our state's transportation system. This proposal will create needed jobs while, at the same time, beginning to address some of the greatest safety needs in our roadway system.

Transportation should be an issue that unites us - not divides us. It is a safety issue in all corners of the state. It is a jobs issue from Fort Collins to Trinidad, and from Steamboat Springs to La Junta. This issue matters in every community that has a bridge that isn't safe to drive an emergency vehicle across; in every community that has no shoulders for travelers, farmers and bicycle riders. This is an issue for every community whose roads aren't safe for school buses.

The citizens of Colorado understand the need for this legislation. They understand why our bridges and roads must be safe. The business community recognizes the need for this legislation, too. As a representative for Colorado's business community, the Denver Metro Chamber is a strong supporter of Senate Bill 108. Our history is deeply connected to transportation - from the first railroad to Denver to Denver International Airport and FasTracks, the Denver Metro Chamber has expended time, energy and resources to move Colorado's transportation system to the next phase. Not only are we willing and able to come before you to testify in support of this particular legislation, but our members support this concept as well. A recent poll shows that 64 percent of our members would be willing to pay \$60 a year for safer bridges and roads.

In December the Chamber commissioned a statewide voter attitude survey to gauge Coloradan's interests in policy related issues. As noted in the *2009 Policy Briefing* we have shared with you, the current state of the economy, how we grow and strengthen it and addressing transportation and mobility issues were of interest to our state's citizens. Senate Bill 108 allows for all those items to come together within one piece of legislation.

You will hear today from those who can speak directly to what the passage of this legislation means to their industry and the number of jobs that will be directly created. Today is the first step to addressing this massive and growing need, and to take this important move that *will* spur the creation of jobs.

The Chamber's overarching message for this legislative session is that we must support efforts that will lead to economic recovery in Colorado. Senate Bill 108 is a first step in that direction and we urge you to vote yes on this bill.

We encourage you to approve Senate Bill 108. Again, thank you for your time.

**Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce**

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