

To: Wyoming Transportation Commission; WYDOT Director Darin Westby
From: Wyoming Public Transit Association (WYTRANS) Board
CC: Governor Mark Gordon, Wyoming County Commissioners Association, Wyoming
Association of Municipalities, Joint Appropriations Committee
Re: Request for One-Time Bridge Funding for FY2027 Public Transportation Services

June 24, 2026

Dear Wyoming Transportation Commissioners:

Request

On behalf of the members of WYTRANS and all local transit agencies (LTA) in Wyoming, we respectfully request consideration of a one-time appropriation of \$3,200,906 from an appropriate source, and, if needed, a request to the Legislative Stabilization Reserve Account (LSRA), to support Wyoming's 37 public transportation providers during Federal Fiscal Year 2027, beginning October 1, 2026. The \$3,200,902 is the amount that LTA in Wyoming are having to come up with to avoid any service cuts this next fiscal year.

Roughly 20 years ago, this same board worked with the state to secure additional funding for transit, this funding is still available to us today. That additional funding has been a great help to the success of transit across the state. On Behalf of the members of WYTRANS and all LTAs in Wyoming, we request a committee be formed prior to the next legislative session to explore state and local funding solutions to bridge this gap until federal funds are increased.

Justification

Recently, many transit agencies in the state of Wyoming were notified of major cuts to their anticipated funding. For the last 4 to 5 years many transit agency in Wyoming has received increased funding from the FTA passed through and administered by WYDOT's Office of Local Government Coordination. On June 4th every agency received their funding allotment from WYDOT, and the amounts were drastically less than expected and what was requested. The awards this year were 20% to 50% less than in previous years. This reduction in funding will drastically reduce transit service levels across the state. These cuts came as a surprise and were not anticipated back when grant applications were submitted to WYDOT in April. Each agency prepared their FY-2027 budgets and funding requests based on their funding allotments last year. Now, agencies are having to scramble to re-create their budgets and cut service by the end of June.

Therefore, this request is intended to serve as a bridge funding strategy given the uncertainty surrounding future federal transportation funding and funds administered by the Office of Local Government Coordination. The two requests would allow Wyoming's transit providers to maintain essential services at existing levels at least through FY2027 while providing time to

explore new funding options and or prepare for potential changes associated with the next federal transportation reauthorization cycle.

Impacts

Public transportation in Wyoming provides far more than mobility. These services connect seniors to medical appointments, individuals with disabilities to employment and community activities, veterans to healthcare services, tourists to destinations, and rural residents to essential services. For many communities, public transportation is a lifeline that supports independence, health, quality of life, community connections, local economies, and making living in rural Wyoming possible. Public transit keeps people connected to their roots, their land, their heritage, and their ability to live independently.

Without the additional funding being requested, Wyoming's many transit providers face significant reductions compared to FY2026 funding levels. These reductions are expected to result in decreased service levels across the state, largely impacting seniors, individuals with disabilities, and rural people. These transit agencies will be forced to eliminate routes, layoff employees, reduce operating hours, defer capital investments, or curtail services that communities have come to depend upon. Smaller providers, with only a handful of employees and vehicles, may be forced to close their doors altogether. This funding reduction will set agencies back significantly. As an appendix to this letter, the WYTRANS Board has provided statements from providers around the state to show some of the impacts that these unexpected cuts will have.

We believe a one-time 'bridge strategy' is a prudent use of reserve funds, it provides a **deliberate transition period** that allows providers, local governments, healthcare organizations, and community partners to evaluate future funding needs and develop sustainable solutions should federal funding levels decline again in FY2028 and beyond. Right now, there is no time or space to respond adequately to these sudden reductions. By preserving service levels in FY2027 (October 1, 2026 - September 30, 2027) while communicating the likelihood of reduced funding beginning October 1, 2027, communities will have an additional year to adjust budgets, pursue local partnerships, identify supplemental funding sources, and prioritize services in a thoughtful and orderly manner – in other words, they can maintain institutional capacity and existing services while preparing for an uncertain future.

Wyoming has consistently sought to maximize the value of federal investments for the benefit of its residents and use its fair share of federal resources to strengthen communities and support critical infrastructure. Wyoming's network of 37 public transportation providers delivers millions of annual passenger trips connecting seniors, individuals with disabilities, veterans, workers, tourists, and rural residents to medical care, employment, nutrition programs, education, other essential services, and recreation. These providers leverage federal, state, local, and nonprofit funding sources to deliver mobility services in communities throughout Wyoming, many of which have few or no transportation alternatives available.

Purpose

We respectfully request your consideration of this one-time appropriation from an appropriate source, and, if needed, a request to the LSRA, to provide stability during FY2027. This will position Wyoming communities for a successful transition as future federal funding levels become clearer in the next transportation reauthorization. We request you also consider the formation of a committee to explore ongoing funding options from the state.

An indication of your support for this request is needed prior to September 1, 2026 so agencies can allocate or reallocate resources as needed.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued support of Wyoming's transportation system and the residents who depend upon it.

Sincerely,

Wyoming Public Transit Board

Paul Kunkel

Randy Firnekas

David French

Mike Toronto

Erin Johnson

Trenda Moore

Dwane Pacheco

Linda Cockett

Agency Statements

Pine Bluffs Senior Center – Pine Bluffs, WY

As a small rural transit agency, our service provides vital 40-mile trips to Cheyenne for a dozen elderly clients and other local citizens, helping our community stay independent and connected to essential services. These funding cuts directly threaten the livelihoods of our two dedicated transit employees and leave us unable to address our critical equipment risk – we operate with only one reliable vehicle and an aging second vehicle that could fail any day. Ultimately, any reduction in our 5311 allotments will sever a vital lifeline for our vulnerable residents who have no other options for traveling to and from Cheyenne.

-Alisha Michaud, Director

High County Senior Citizens Center – Dubois, WY

The cuts may force us to discontinue service entirely, and we are the only public transit within 80 miles for veterans, people with disabilities, senior citizens, low-income families, and the public. The funding cuts halt our attempt to expand services and increase revenue with our new bus, as recently allocated funding won't cover current services.

-Melissa Claar, Program Director

Cody Council on Aging/Cody Senior Center – Cody, WY

The Cody Senior Center provides the **only** public transportation for the City of Cody. In addition to Seniors and disabled people, we transport children (preschools, summer activity programs) and non-seniors at a low or no cost. We have been tightly operating using the WYDOT funding we receive. We transport our clients to life saving medical service and social programs that provide a necessary benefit and quality of life. Instead of the expansion we were budgeting for, due to a large increase in ridership, it looks like we will have to reduce our program by at least half with no replacement resources for our community that relies on us.

-Stephanie Week, Executive Director

Southern Teton Area Rapid Transit (START) – Jackson, WY

As a result of the lost funding, Southern Teton Area Rapid Transit (START) will be looking to reduce or scrap On Demand services (serving over 160,000 riders), seasonal service to the resorts (over 500,000 riders), and parts of its commuter service (serving 50,000 riders living outside Jackson). As a result, people will lose access to jobs, affordable housing, medical care, grocery services, and schools; this may result in increased traffic, increased unemployment, increased stress on the school transit system, compounded by greater wear and tear on already aged infrastructure. In FY 26 we received \$4.9M in FY 27 are receiving \$3.3M - this short fall sets us back 4 years and reduces what we've work hard to grow.

-Michael Toronto, Director

South Big Horn Senior Citizens – Greybull, WY

With the budget cuts, we will have to find another source to pay for part of our fuel and all of the administrative costs; which includes vehicle insurance and drug and alcohol testing and a

portion of our vehicle maintenance costs. The funding amount just barely leaves us with enough for drivers' salaries and a portion of our fuel costs. Here's hoping that we don't have any major vehicle repairs.

-Cynthia Johnson

Wind River Transportation Authority – Riverton, WY

Wind River Transportation Authority received a 24.56% reduction in FY27 5311 funding, reducing our allocation by approximately \$240,000 at the same time our system is absorbing expanded demand response service, the Riverton Senior Center transit integration, and growing countywide ridership demand. Without restored or increased support, WRTA will be forced to evaluate reductions to fixed-route, on-demand, SafeRide, and regional connectivity services across Fremont County, directly affecting seniors, workers, students, people with disabilities, and residents relying on public transportation for medical care, employment, groceries, education, and essential services. These cuts would undermine recent local efficiency efforts that have reduced duplication and expanded service access, while pushing rural residents back toward isolation, missed care, and transportation insecurity.

-Tim Nichols, Director

STAR Transit – Rock Springs, WY

Despite a remarkable **35% increase in ridership** for 2025–2026, the Sweetwater County Transit Authority is facing drastic funding reductions. Cutting resources during record growth creates a destructive cycle: we are forced to scale back our vital **door-to-door transit services**, leaving homebound residents without direct access to life-sustaining medical care, groceries, and employment. This forced reduction will artificially lower future ridership, triggering further state funding penalties. We urgently request a re-evaluation of this allocation to protect our community's most vulnerable citizens.

-Dwane Pacheco, Director

Goose Creek Transit – Sheridan, WY

With the proposed state funding cuts, Goose Creek Transit may be forced to reduce Demand Response and Fixed Route services, including possible reductions to hours of operation. These changes would have a serious impact on the 5,000+ rides we provide each month, especially for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and residents who rely on ADA-accessible transportation. In a community with a significant and growing senior population, along with many residents who rely on ADA-accessible transportation, reductions to service could affect access to medical appointments, employment, groceries, social connection, and other essential needs. For many riders, Goose Creek Transit is not simply a convenience, it is a vital connection to health, independence, safety, and quality of life. As a nonprofit organization, these reductions would also place additional strain on local partners, including the city, county, and donors, as we work together to meet the transportation needs of Sheridan County residents.

-David French, Transportation Manager

University of Wyoming – Laramie, WY

At the University of Wyoming, a funding reduction of this magnitude would likely result in the elimination of the Link route, a critical partnership service between UW and the City of Laramie that provides approximately 60,000 passenger trips each year. Riders depend on this service to access jobs, educational opportunities, grocery stores, medical appointments, and other essential destinations. Eliminating the Link route would disproportionately impact those with limited transportation alternatives and weaken the connection between the University and the community it serves. Additionally, these funding reductions would effectively return UW's transit funding levels to those experienced prior to FY2019, erasing years of progress and investment in maintaining and expanding mobility services for the Laramie community.

-Paul Kunkel, Director Transportation Services

Goshen County Senior Friendship Center – Torrington, WY

We are the only transit entity that provides public transportation in Goshen County. With these cuts, we may have to decrease our service hours and limit the number of out-of-town rides to medical appointments. This will bring great harm to our senior clients who need dialysis or specialists that are not available in our communities. This will also impact those seniors and other citizens from getting to in-town medical appointments, pharmacies, grocery stores, employment, and education. Transit operations are a vital necessity for our community members to access basic needs.

-Linda Cockett, Executive Director

Rendezvous Pointe – Pinedale, WY

A 15% budget cut to the Rendezvous Pointe transportation program (dropping from \$59,000 to \$50,000) creates a direct loss of \$9,000 to our operational budget. Because Rendezvous Pointe functions as a public transit service backed by WYDOT, this structural shortfall impacts our operational capability, service deliveries, and financial matching dynamics. The Rendezvous Pointe Transportation Services program is built around keeping Pinedale seniors and disabled community members independent. This \$9,000 deficit may force constraints on our already paired-down offerings (medical care, grocery services, and trips to/from social events).

-Katie Lane, Executive Director