

Look local for I-70 solution

THE EDITORIAL BOARD

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While delaying a final plan for Interstate 70 in order to build more buy-in makes sense, it should alert the community about the risk of relying state or federal sources to solve the congestion problem.

If one listens closely to what those with I-70 have been saying of late, anyone expecting large-scale improvements to happen in this decade - or for that matter the next - will be disappointed

Most of the state - including those in the Governor's office - do not view I-70 congestion Interstate as a major issue, and are not willing to commit the political capital or the billions of dollars needed to make significant changes.

Even I-70 Coalition chair Michael Penny acknowledged that, "I-70 is just a drop in the bucket in the state's (transportation) needs."

So where does that leave us? One hope's, not just sitting in traffic.

Tuesday's visit along the corridor by Governor Ritter to sign the Chain Law can be interpreted as evidence of the entire issue, and how we need to act. The Law - which raises fines for truckers who ignore chain restrictions on the pass - might be the most action we see out of the capital on this topic. And, Ritter's choice to drive the I-70 corridor on a Tuesday morning should be noted, and followed, by other Front Range residents - no matter if their goal is a pleasurable, relaxing jaunt into the mountains, or an efficient business trip.

In other words, the I-70 fix really means shifting traffic away from weekends, not cramming more folks through the tunnel. This is daunting, yes, but no more daunting than widening the interstate or boring another hole through the Continental Divide.

While projections show congestion as only getting worse, the fact is, there is room for those vehicles at most times during the week - just not on Fridays and Sundays.

No matter what solution, big or small, is discovered by continued search for agreeable solutions, we should understand Penny's "Drop in a bucket" statement to be accurate. The reality is, the Front Range is not going to provide the answer to our transportation problems.

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