



January 26, 2020

Senator Kerry Donovan
200 E Colfax -RM 346
Denver, CO 80203

Representative Julie McCluskie
200 E Colfax -RM 307
Denver, CO 80203

RE: SB 20-130 Support

Dear Senator Donovan and Representative McCluskie;

Please accept this correspondence as the vigorous support of the about Organizations for SB20-130 concerning search and rescue funding and processes in the State of Colorado. This legislation is of critical importance to our members as an overwhelming portion of the motorized recreational opportunities in Colorado are situated in areas that are not served by a traditional emergency squad service. These opportunities are provided in remote and rugged areas that are only served by search and rescue services, and as a result an effective search and rescue program is critically important to our members even if this is rarely thought of.

While our members have directly supported the search and rescue fund through the .25 surcharge on their state registrations for extended periods of time, our members are also aware that the limitations on this model of funding has reached its limitations. There are more people in need of search and rescue services in the State than ever before and many of these persons are not paying any surcharges for this service, which provides significant strain on existing funding resources and funding models. Effective search and rescue teams and models benefit everyone but are only funded by a small portion of the users of the backcountry. As a result basic equity of any model moving forward would be of interest to our members.

The limitations of the current funding model are exemplified that many search and rescue teams are now exploring non-traditional funding sources in order to obtain basic equipment necessary for search and rescue operations. This is exemplified by the several grants (seeking funding for cordless defibrillators, back country stretchers and ATVS and Side by sides) have been made to the CPW Trails program. While this equipment has been badly needed, these types of applications also are outside the mission and scope of these programs, and have not been able to be funded due to the highly competitive nature of these grant programs. It also cannot be overlooked that even if all funding from the CPW trails program was directed towards search and rescue, the funding needs would still not be met.

Our members are more intimately familiar with the limitations on search and rescue resources as many of them also volunteer for local search and rescue teams or support local search and rescue teams with resources obtained with grants from the CPW motorized programs. An example of this would be the use

of the more than 50 snow cats that are owned by the snowmobile association throughout the state. Often a snow cat is an integral part of winter search and rescue operations but is only available to many small communities through the snowmobile club. While the clubs are thrilled to provide this resource to local search and rescue teams, this is an indication there are limitations on the existing model.

Many of our members also volunteer for local search and rescue teams and use their own equipment, such as ATVs or Side by Side vehicles in searches throughout the year. Many local search and rescue crews may not have access to this type of equipment or if the team has access to this type of equipment it is so old or in such poor shape that it simply is not a viable option. Many times, the use of personal equipment speeds the search and rescue efforts and ensures a timely response to the injured party and also avoids situations where the searcher may become in need of rescue themselves if equipment fails in poor weather conditions or in remote areas.

The Organizations would welcome a discussion of these opportunities and any other challenges that might be facing the GMUG moving forward at your convenience. Please feel free to contact Gerald Abboud via email at g.abboud@comcast.net or via cell phone at (303)378-3925.

Respectfully Submitted,



D.E. Riggle
Director of Operations
Trails Preservation Alliance

Gerald Abboud,
Executive Director and President
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Scott Jones, Esq.
CSA Executive Director