

135 N. Animas Street  
P O Box 880  
Trinidad, CO 81082



(719) 846-9843  
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[www.trinidad.co.gov](http://www.trinidad.co.gov)

January 17, 2020

Honorable Senator Kerry Donovan  
Chair, Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee  
Colorado State Capitol  
200 East Colfax  
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Senator Donovan and Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee Members,

The City of Trinidad supports Colorado Parks and Wildlife's fee title acquisition of Colorado's 42<sup>nd</sup> State Park, the 19,200-acre Fisher's Peak Ranch and requests your support of SB 20-003, Concerning Improvements to State Parks, and in Connection Therewith, Making an Appropriation, sponsored by Senators Garcia and Hisey and Representative Esgar.

The bill transfers \$10 million dollars from the General Fund to the Capital Construction Fund of which \$4 million dollars will be used for the master planning process and provide for the development of park infrastructure projects associated with the public opening of a new state park that includes Fisher's Peak, located in Las Animas County. The state requests \$6 million dollars in funding for infrastructure improvements needed to maintain existing state parks to address the impact that increased visitation has had on eleven state parks located throughout Colorado.

Fisher's Peak is located immediately south of Trinidad. It is an iconic mesa on Trinidad's skyline and is a landmark for the City of Trinidad. Its 9,633-foot elevation makes it the highest peak in the United States east of Interstate 25.

The City of Trinidad collaborated with the Trust for Public Lands, The Nature Conservancy, Colorado Parks and Wildlife and Great Outdoors Colorado to purchase this pristine property, which serves as an important ecological connection between Colorado's mountains and eastern grasslands. The property which has never been open for public use provides habitat for numerous mammals, plants and reptiles and is on a critical wildlife migration corridor. Acquisition of this property will offer the public numerous recreational activities such as hunting, camping, hiking, biking, picnicking and benefit the economy of Trinidad, Las Animas County and the State Parks system.

Honorable Senator Kerry Donovan  
Chair, Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee  
January 17, 2020  
Page 2

Since its purchase, Governor Polis named Fisher's Peak as the newest, and second largest, state park in Colorado. Given the size of the land, 55 square miles, the habitat and the landscape that need to be protected and managed, the requested funding will be used by Colorado Parks and Wildlife to facilitate the opening of the newest state park. Colorado Parks and Wildlife have the expertise to manage and protect Colorado's public parks and wildlife to benefit citizens and visitors to Colorado so that the public and future generations can enjoy Colorado's treasured parks. The City of Trinidad urges this Committee to support SB 20-003.

Respectfully,



Phillip T. Rico  
Mayor

cc: Mike Valentine, Acting City Manager  
City Council Members  
Dan Gibbs, DNR Executive Director  
Doug Vilsack, DNR Assistant Director  
Crystal Dreiling, Trinidad State Lakes Park Manager  
Matt Becker, Legislative Council  
Debbie Wagner, City of Trinidad Lobbyist



# COLORADO

## Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Trinidad Lake State Park  
32610 Hwy. 12  
Trinidad, CO 81082  
P 719.846.6951 | F 719.846.0676

November 25, 2019

Las Animas County Commissioners  
200 East First Street  
Trinidad, CO 81082

Dear Commissioners,

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) respectfully requests your concurrence on a land acquisition in Las Animas County, south of Trinidad, Colorado. The Nature Conservancy and The Trust for Public Land currently own what has been historically referred to as "Crazy French Ranch" and what is currently referred to as Fishers Peak Ranch. The owners now wish to sell this property to CPW for the purposes of habitat conservation and for allowing meaningful outdoor recreation on this unique, iconic landscape.

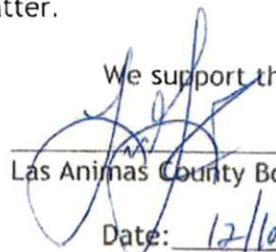
This action would transfer fee title interest on approximately 19,200 acres of oak, pinion/juniper scrublands and subalpine forestland along with existing amenities to CPW, thereby creating our next state park. This land provides an intact landscape of variable habitat types that support a multitude of wildlife species, to include some species of concern, such as the endangered New Mexico meadow jumping mouse. The Ranch adjoins James M. John and Lake Dorothy State Wildlife Areas, as well as New Mexico's Sugarite Canyon State Park. All told, this acquisition will help connect and protect approximately 35,500 total acres of invaluable habitat. The property has existing access off Interstate 25 and boasts the potential for the first-ever public access to Fishers Peak from Colorado, an extensive network of non-motorized trails, picnicking, wildlife watching and hunting opportunities. Public access will provide a unique experience for residents and tourists alike, while helping to boost and diversify the local economy.

Colorado Parks & Wildlife respectfully requests your support for the acquisition of this property. This project is scheduled for review by the Capital Development Committee in early 2020. In preparation of that meeting, CPW requests your concurrence prior to December 20th. If you support this transaction, please sign on the approval line below and return to my address or scan a signed copy and email back to my address ([crystal.dreiling@state.co.us](mailto:crystal.dreiling@state.co.us)). Please feel free to call me at (719) 846-6951 if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your time in considering this matter.

Sincerely,

Crystal Dreiling  
Park Manager

We support this proposal.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Las Animas County Board of Commissioners, Chair

Date: 12/10/19, 2019





Corazón de Trinidad Creative District  
135 North Animas Street  
Trinidad, Colorado 81082

December 30, 2019

In re: CPW acquisition of Fishers Peak/Crazy French Ranch

Honorable Senator Rhonda Fields  
Chair, Capital Development Committee  
Colorado State Capitol  
200 East Colfax  
Denver, Colorado 80203

Dear Senator Fields and Capital Development Committee Members,

As Executive Director of the Corazón de Trinidad Creative District, I am writing to strongly support the Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) fee title acquisition of Fisher's Peak Ranch.

Over many decades, Trinidad has had a history of reinventing itself by necessity. From the Santa Fe Trail days, to mining and rail economies, to natural gas exploration, there have been numerous iterations of the community. It is experiencing yet another rebirth, based largely on outdoor recreation and the creative sector of the economy. Over the past five years, Trinidad was certified as a Colorado Creative District, was designated as a Colorado Main Street community, and was selected by Governor Hickenlooper in 2015 as the demonstration project for the Space to Create Colorado initiative. Space to Create Trinidad is a \$19 million project that will add 41 affordable live/work units in our downtown core. In addition, new hiking trails and dirt biking on our many gravel rural roads have opened new opportunities in our area.

The Creative District's mission and long-term planning includes not only support for increased business activity and economic development in the community, but also a continued and positive sense of place and appreciation for its beautiful and vital natural surroundings. At the confluence of the Sangre de Cristo range of the Rocky Mountains and the Eastern Plains short-grass prairies, and nearby lakes and rivers, Trinidad is in a perfect position to develop tourism and growth dependent on outdoor activities, conservation, agriculture, the ecology of the

region, and protection of our water shed and native flora and fauna. Fishers Peak has long been a symbol of the region and the idea of investors and speculators moving toward housing and sub-division development of the property, changing the entire area, is offensive to the sensibility of those who live, work, and visit here. With ownership in the hands of CPW, the nature-based values of residents and visitors alike will be maintained and marketed in such a way as to celebrate and support the open space and natural draw of Colorado. Maintaining conservation values on this land will preserve its character and qualities far into the future. Trinidad is extremely grateful to the partners who have worked diligently and cautiously to bring this major project to fruition.

Trinidad offers one of the largest inventories of turn-of-the-century Victorian buildings west of the Mississippi, brick streets, a vigorous creative workforce, short-grass prairies, mountains, pristine lakes and rivers, and magnificent Dakota Wall formations. Fisher's Peak makes up the core of the surrounding natural landscape and the peak is an important symbol of Trinidad, easily recognized on the I-25 corridor between Denver and Santa Fe.

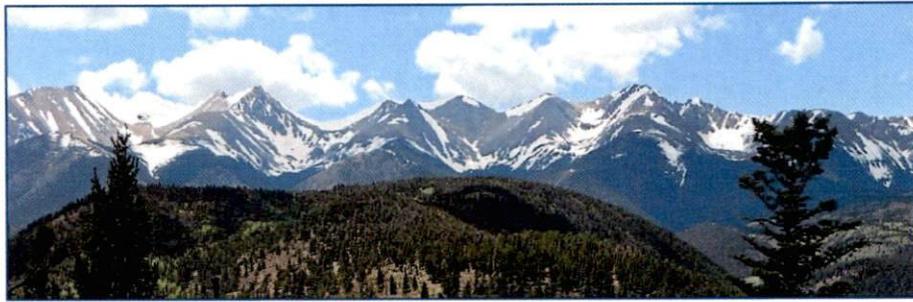
The historic character and ecological health of the area are a vital part of our efforts to share and promote this remarkable region in numerous ways. Acquisition by CPW will help to continue Trinidad's efforts to grow in a carefully considered way and will protect one of our most visible and vital assets. This project preserves our history, natural resources, and has the potential to greatly influence the economic viability of the region and our community.

The Corazón de Trinidad Creative District fully supports fee title acquisition by CPW.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Marilyn Leuszler". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Marilyn Leuszler  
Executive Director, Corazón de Trinidad Creative District  
Trinidad, Colorado



## CULEBRA RANGE COMMUNITY COALITION

Tom Perry, President; Linda Perry Executive Assistant 612 S Chestnut St, Trinidad, CO 81082 [tomandlindaperry@gmail.com](mailto:tomandlindaperry@gmail.com)

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January 20, 2020

Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee  
Colorado State Capitol  
200 East Colfax  
Denver, Colorado 80203

Dear Committee Members,

The Culebra Range Community Coalition, a Trinidad based nonprofit focused on youth, education and the environment, strongly supports the acquisition of Colorado's 42<sup>nd</sup> State Park, the 19,200-acre Fisher's Peak Ranch. This is an outstanding opportunity to not only conserve and protect an iconic landmark of stunning natural beauty but also to provide outdoor recreation and environmental education opportunities for a growing Colorado population and a growing Colorado tourism industry.

Through our work with the Culebra Range Community Coalition, the Bar NI Ranch Community Fund, and the Trinidad Network Council, we interact on a regular basis with Trinidad community organizations, land & wildlife agencies, and conservation organizations in the area and feel fortunate to be in a unique position to feel the community pulse and report that to you.

This property is in the center of a landscape of spectacular natural beauty, rich in hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation opportunities galore, but much of the surrounding landscape is privately owned with limited if any public access. The opportunity to enjoy healthy outdoor recreation activities in the shadow of their treasured icon would be a tremendous benefit to the local and regional residents as well as for tourists entering our state on I-25. Fisher's Peak will be their first tourist mountain experience entering Colorado.

To live in Trinidad is to fall under the spell of "the peak." Its iconic skyline image is the identifying face of Trinidad. Quite often, when opening Facebook someone has posted a new picture of "the peak" reflecting the different moods she can cast as time of day and weather conditions change. Invariably comments on the picture start coming in from all parts of the country with comments like....."*seeing the peak brings me back home to Trinidad,*" and "*home sweet home!!*" It is the iconic symbol of Trinidad.

The Peak; it is special. It always was and it always will be. The people of Trinidad have long gazed wistfully towards their city's identifying landmark while not being allowed access. They have felt it was "theirs"; in their hearts, in their blood, in their DNA. If given the opportunity, the locals will cherish, appreciate, enjoy, and steward this special property with love as we all enjoy it with our families and tourists entering Colorado's second busiest portal will be treated to their first Colorado mountain experience.

This will be a responsible protection of a special and important natural resource and will be a strong contributor to local and regional economy. We appreciate and are thankful for your favorable recommendation regarding the acquisition of Fisher's Peak Ranch.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Perry". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tom" and the last name "Perry" clearly distinguishable.

Tom Perry, President  
Culebra Range Community Coalition

p.s. As a member of the Bosque del Oso SWA Management Advisory Committee since its inception in 1998 I can attest to and support the proven track record that CPW has in managing properties like this and providing the necessary balance of protecting the natural resources as well as providing responsible public access and enjoyment.



January 8, 2020

Honorable Senator Rhonda Fields  
Chair, Capital Development Committee  
Colorado State Capitol  
200 East Colfax  
Denver, CO 80203

Senator Fields and Capital Development Committee Members,

Trinidad State Junior College strongly supports Colorado Parks and Wildlife's fee title acquisition of Colorado's 42<sup>nd</sup> State Park, the 19,200-acre Fisher's Peak Ranch. Located immediately south of Trinidad, Fisher's Peak, is an iconic mesa on the Trinidad skyline and is our regional landmark.

Trinidad State Junior College was the first community college established in Colorado in 1925. For 95 years, Trinidad State has strived to meet the educational needs of our eight county region. The acquisition of Fisher's Peak Ranch, and now the opportunity for Colorado Parks and Wildlife to protect, manage and steward this property, with its public access and proximity to the college, will further our mission through hands-on outdoor learning opportunities connecting students to the natural environment.

As a collaborative community partner, Trinidad State supports the aspiration of Trinidad and Las Animas County to become an outdoor recreational destination to enhance economic sustainability. Since its early years as a stop along the Santa Fe Trail, Trinidad has had a boom and bust economy dependent primarily upon natural resource extraction. Fisher's Peak State Park, as not only an outdoor recreation and tourist destination, but also its availability for hands-on outdoor educational opportunities will spark economic stability in our region.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife has a proven track record managing Colorado's public parks and wildlife and Trinidad State strongly supports their acquisition and management of Fisher's Peak State Park. Thank you for your favorable recommendation in this regard.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Rhonda M. Epper'.

Rhonda M. Epper, Ph.D.  
President

Office of the President

600 Prospect Street • Trinidad, CO 81082  
[www.trinidadstate.edu](http://www.trinidadstate.edu)



1011 Main Street • Alamosa, CO 81101  
(719) 846-5541 • 1-800-621-TSJC



City of Trinidad Tourism Board

309 Nevada Ave. Trinidad, CO 81082

[www.visittrinidadcolorado.com](http://www.visittrinidadcolorado.com)

January 21, 2020

Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee  
State of Colorado  
Re: Senate Bill 20-003

Dear Committee Members,

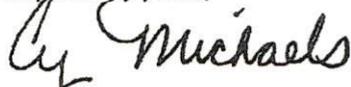
It is with great excitement that the City of Trinidad Tourism Board extends its support for the "I Love Colorado State Parks Act"! Our beautiful state is being discovered by outdoor enthusiasts across the nation and around the world, thus increasing our state's population and participation in outdoor recreation activities and ultimately contributing billions of dollars to Colorado's economy.

Trinidad and Las Animas County residents await with anticipation the opening of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Colorado State Park in 2021 so that we too can share in that boost to our local economy. While Trinidad has always found ways to recover from the economic busts that inevitably follow the booms, this partnership between the City of Trinidad, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land and Great Outdoors Colorado presents an opportunity for the Trinidad economy to finally become sustainable. We also embrace the opportunity to utilize the new state park to host educational, outdoor recreation and skills programs for youth and adults, not to mention, that long awaited access to the top of our iconic mountain!

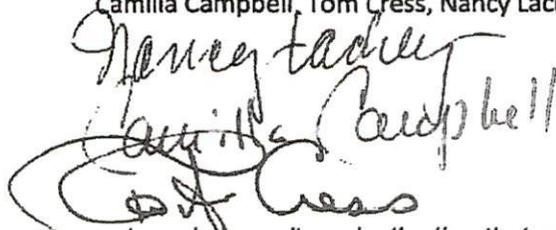
Combining the Fisher's Peak State Park with CPW's adjacent State Wildlife areas –Lake Dorothey and James M. John, will result in a massive increase in the amount of conveniently accessed public land around Trinidad and create opportunities for a broad spectrum of year-round recreational opportunities at one of the main gateways to Colorado.

We thank you for your consideration of the appropriation of funds to achieve the development of the infrastructure to open Fisher's Peak as the second largest and newest Colorado State Park. It will absolutely be another reason to "Love Colorado State Parks!"

Respectfully yours,

  
City of Trinidad Tourism Board-

Camilla Campbell, Tom Cress, Nancy Lackey, Joey Salazar and Cy Michaels



*...to make our city a destination that can be enjoyed by our visitors while contributing to an improved quality of life for our residents."*



January 21, 2020

Senate Agricultural and Natural Resources Committee  
Denver, Colorado

To Whom It May Concern:

The Purgatoire River Anglers Chapter of Trout Unlimited would like to offer our support to Colorado Parks and Wildlife in their efforts to preserve this incredible property and rare opportunity to achieve landscape level conservation, while providing a level of public access that would add to Colorado's conservation programs and public access.

The acquisition of the 19,200-acre property is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the citizens and residents of Trinidad, Las Animas County and Colorado. The property includes Fishers Peak, which is visible for miles and at 9,633-feet, is the highest peak east of the I-25 corridor in the United States. Fishers Peak is an asset for the City of Trinidad, and many life-long residents are surprised to learn that the peak and most of the land along I-25 around it are privately owned.

Located just south of Trinidad and directly adjacent to I-25, and along Colorado's border with New Mexico, the property gives us the opportunity to establish a significant level of new public access. At over 19,200-acres in size and adjacent to two State Wildlife Areas (SWA), the James M. John SWA (8,200-acres) and the Lake Dorothy SWA (4,500-acres), and Sugarite Canyon State Park in New Mexico (3,600-acres), this acquisition will result in over 55.5 square miles of preserved land. Sadly, the two Colorado SWAs and Fishers Peak are only publically accessible through Sugarite Canyon State Park in New Mexico. The property also has three tributaries to Raton Creek that feeds the Purgatoire River. Protection of the watershed will further enhance the Purgatoire River through Trinidad and its recreational opportunities as well as protection of water quality.

With three of its own exits off I-25, the acquisition of the property would resolve all of the access issues at one of the main gateways to Colorado, while elevating Trinidad as an outdoor recreation tourism destination. Furthermore, the property boasts habitat to numerous globally and state ranked rare and imperiled mammals, vascular plants, reptiles and is a critical migration corridor at a nexus of a variety of ecological communities. As a result, the project will not only provide outstanding outdoor recreation opportunities, it will also help create a large "core protected area" that will compliment adjacent and nearby protected land and preserve the integrity of the overall ecological community around Trinidad.

Once the initial purchase is complete, TPL and TNC shall work with Trinidad, Las Animas County, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) to ensure that the property is placed under the appropriate long-term ownership and management in order to achieve our conservation and public access goals. As a result, the Crazy French Ranch acquisition is a rare opportunity to achieve landscape level ecological conservation and public access in one transaction. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Howard Lackey, President



January 20, 2020

136 W. Main Street  
Room 204  
Trinidad, CO. 81082

719 846-5940  
info@trinidadcf.org  
www.trinidadcf.org

Mayor Phil Rico  
City of Trinidad  
135 North Animas Street  
Trinidad, CO. 81082

Re: Support for Fisher's Peak Acquisition

**Board of Directors**

**President**  
John Tucker

**Vice President**  
Lou Simpleman

**Treasurer**  
Keith Maberry

**Secretary**  
Cindy Thelen

**Executive Director**  
Anita Flores

Lou Mellini

Phil Rico

Chris Simpleman

Kelli VanMatre

Andrew Hoffman

Lisa Camarillo

Tammy Trujillo

Marggie Ferrendelli

**Emeritus Status**

Jay Cimino

Dear Mayor Rico,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Trinidad Community Foundation, I would like to express our excitement and support of the Fisher's Peak property acquisition. As is our mission here at TCF to "enhance and develop the quality of life" in Las Animas county, we believe this project will, in fact, do just that.

This acquisition aligns with our five basic pillars and will exponentially increase activity in each via new health and wellness programs, educational opportunities, historical preservation projects, endless recreation and strengthening our community's communication.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you or your team be in need of any assistance through this process.

Sincerely,

John R. Tucker  
Board President

January 20, 2020

Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee  
Colorado State Capitol  
200 East Colfax  
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee Members,

The Trinidad School District #1 strongly supports Colorado Parks and Wildlife's acquisition of Colorado's 42<sup>nd</sup> State Park, the 19,200-acre Fisher's Peak Ranch.

Fisher's Peak is located immediately south of Trinidad. It is an iconic mesa on Trinidad's skyline and is a landmark for the City of Trinidad. Its 9,633-foot elevation makes it the highest peak in the United States east of Interstate 25.

The Trinidad School District #1 supports the purchase of this pristine property, which serves as an important ecological connection between Colorado's mountains and eastern grasslands. The property which has never been open for public use provides habitat for numerous mammals, plants and reptiles and is on a critical wildlife migration corridor. This property will offer the public (including public education) numerous recreational and educational benefits such as hunting, camping, hiking, biking and picnicking and will benefit the economy of Trinidad, Las Animas County and the State Parks system.

Since its purchase, Governor Polis named Fisher's Peak as the newest, and second largest, state park in Colorado. Given the size of the land, 55 square miles, the habitat and the landscape that deserve to be protected and managed, it is appropriate and responsible to transfer it to the Colorado Parks and Wildlife to be its steward. The Trinidad School District #1 strongly supports Colorado Parks and Wildlife managing Fisher's Peak State Park.

We appreciate your favorable recommendation regarding the acquisition of Fisher's Peak Ranch by Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

Respectfully,

Bonnie Aaron  
TSD1 Superintendent  
612 Park St.  
Trinidad, CO 81082



January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Mayor Phil Rico  
City of Trinidad  
135 North Animas Street  
Trinidad, CO 81082

Re: Support for Fisher's Peak Acquisition

Dear Mayor Rico:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Mt. San Rafael Hospital and the 250 employed professionals here serving our community, I want to express our wholehearted support of the Fisher's Peak property acquisition and the benefit that this project will be to our community for decades to come.

We are all eager for the development of this property and the increased visibility and activity this will bring to Trinidad and Southern Colorado.

Please contact me if I can be of any assistance to you or your team through this process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John R. Tucker".

John R. Tucker, FACHE  
Chief Executive Officer

*Caring for You Today...for a Healthier Tomorrow*

410 Benedicta Avenue • Trinidad, Colorado 81082 • 719/846-9213 • Fax 719/846-2752

January 21, 2020

To: State of Colorado  
Agriculture, Livestock, & Natural Resources Committee  
Re: Funding for Fisher Peak State Park

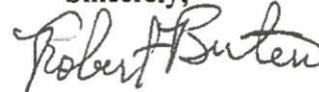
To Who it May Concern,

My name is Robert Butero and I reside in Las Animas County and the City of Trinidad, CO. I have lived most of my life in the Trinidad Area and have owned and operated a business for over 30 years in Trinidad.

I am writing this letter to ask each of you to support the effort to fund the State Park here that covers the Fisher Peak area of Las Animas County. The addition of this park to the State, I believe will only enhance Colorado's outdoor appeal. Las Animas County is the biggest county in the State but has limited public lands. This Park will correct this situation. It will provide for numerous recreational activities including hiking, hunting, biking, and other activities.

This will be a plus for the State, County, City and all of the United States. Should you have any questions or need any additional information you can contact by cell phone at 303-807-6545. Thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert Butero".

Robert Butero

21<sup>st</sup> January 2020  
Nicia Crosson  
Executive Director  
Trinidad & Las Animas Co.  
Chamber of Commerce  
136 W. Main St.  
Trinidad, Co. 81082

**Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee**  
Colorado General Assembly  
200 E Colfax Avenue  
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Committee:

I am the executive director of the Trinidad & Las Animas Co. Chamber of Commerce. We represent the Chamber members in our community. We strive to encourage growth and development of our local businesses and economy. I am writing on behalf of our community and local businesses to ask for your support.

The Fisher's Peak development and state park will greatly impact our local business community and economy in a positive manner. Local business owners are preparing for the influx of visitors that the park will attract to Trinidad and Las Animas County. Our restaurants, hotels, grocery stores, retail business, and specialty shops will see an increase in tourism in this region. There will be a greater need and desire for outdoor recreational activities which will create new recreational business opportunities. The Chamber recognizes that this development will create many new job opportunities that will strengthen our local economy and community as a whole.

We are looking forward to what is to come for our city and region as the state park opens. Trinidad & Las Animas Co. Chamber of Commerce is preparing for this exciting new chapter in our area. Thank you for your interest and support of our community.

Sincerely,  
Nicia Crosson  
Executive Director  
Trinidad & Las Animas Co.  
Chamber of Commerce