

CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION

RESOLUTION No. 2026-08

A RESOLUTION APPROVING A PUBLIC COMMENT REGARDING THE BIG COTTONWOOD CANYON ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

WHEREAS, the Central Wasatch Commission interlocal entity (the “CWC”) was created on 29 June 2017 pursuant to the “Central Wasatch Commission Interlocal Agreement” (the “ILA”) dated 30 May 2017 among Salt Lake County, Salt Lake City, Sandy City and the city of Cottonwood Heights; and

WHEREAS, the CWC’s goals and objectives under the ILA are designed to better assure the wise stewardship of the Wasatch mountain range in Salt Lake, Summit and Wasatch counties—including its watershed, recreational areas and natural beauty—so that future generations can continue to benefit from that wonderful and integral part of Utah’s natural environment; and

WHEREAS, at its 12 January 2026 meeting, the Board considered approving a proposed public comment by the CWC in connection with the Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Assessment recently published by the Utah Department of Transportation (“UDOT”); and

WHEREAS, the Board has reviewed such proposed public comment (the “Comment”) and, after careful consideration, has determined that it is in the best interest of the CWC and its constituents to approve submitting it to UDOT before expiration of the public comment period;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the Central Wasatch Commission that the Comment is hereby approved for immediate submission to UDOT and other appropriate publication on behalf of the CWC.

This Resolution, assigned no. 2026-08, shall take effect immediately upon passage.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 12th day of January 2026.

ATTEST:

CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION

By: _____
Christopher F. Robinson, Secretary

By: _____
Erin Mendenhall, Chair of the Board

VOTING OF THE BOARD:

Gay Lynn Bennion	Yea _____ Nay _____
Roger Bourke	Yea _____ Nay _____
Bill Ciraco	Yea _____ Nay _____
Emily Gray	Yea _____ Nay _____
Scotty John	Yea _____ Nay _____
Erin Mendenhall	Yea _____ Nay _____
Christopher Robinson	Yea _____ Nay _____
Bev Uipi	Yea _____ Nay _____
Monica Zoltanski	Yea _____ Nay _____

DEPOSITED in the office of the Secretary this 12th day of January 2026.

FILED AND RECORDED this 12th day of January 2026.



12 January 2026

Via Email

Devin Weder, Project Manager for the BCC EA
Utah Department of Transportation
4501 South 2700 West
PO Box 14141245
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-141245

Subject: Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Assessment
Salt Lake County, Utah
UDOT Project Number S-R299(489) / UDOT PIN 21400
Published Environmental Assessment

Dear Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Study team,

Please accept the following document as comments from the Central Wasatch Commission (CWC) regarding the published Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Assessment. The CWC appreciates the opportunity to provide this comment.

The CWC released the Big Cottonwood Canyon Mobility Action Plan (BCC MAP) in 2023, which was designed to identify and develop strategies to guide multi-modal transportation investments for Big Cottonwood Canyon—expanding sustainable transportation choices that support positive environmental, social, and economic outcomes. The Central Wasatch Commission was invited to submit an agency comment on the scope of UDOT's environmental study in Big Cottonwood Canyon and did so in December 2024. In that scoping comment, we asked that UDOT include exploration into all of the BCC MAP recommendations for transit and roadway improvements for Big Cottonwood Canyon.

The proposed actions in UDOT's EA are largely consistent with the recommendations from the CWC's BCC MAP, however, there are notable impacts to the land and natural resources that the proposed actions would have. Over 34 acres of land would be converted to transportation use -- for the gravel-pit mobility hub, the grade-separated interchange on Wasatch Boulevard, the bus transitway at the base of Big Cottonwood Canyon, the resort bus stops, the mid-canyon bus stops, and the bus priority lane around Brighton Loop Road. The proposed actions would require land acquisitions and amendments to the US Forest Service Plan.

The impacts of these needed transit and transportation improvements could be offset by future drafts of the Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area Act, which would place protections on the land, water, flora, fauna, and wildlife found within these canyons while further stewarding recreational access and providing pathways for development around clustered nodes in the Canyons.



Every function of these canyons relies on the health of the natural resources found within them. In a message to the world made in 2019, David Attenborough is quoted saying, “our economies and political systems are unconsciously predicated on the belief that nature will continue to be a benign and regular provider of the conditions we need to thrive; regular seasons, dependable freshwater, endless fish, pollinators, minerals, soil.” This sentiment is evidenced in the irregularly warm and dry ski season Utah is currently experiencing. Any impact to the natural resources found in Big Cottonwood Canyon and in neighboring mountain landscapes, even if determined to be *de minimus* should be offset by protective action, to ensure that we *do* continue to enjoy all that the Central Wasatch offers to us for years to come.

The varied nature of the issues in the Central Wasatch Mountains, and specifically in Big Cottonwood Canyon, should be reflected in a holistic approach to addressing the transportation needs in Big Cottonwood Canyon, if the intent is for these approaches to be effective. If tolling is implemented in Big Cottonwood Canyon, tolling should also be implemented in Little Cottonwood Canyon, to neutralize any toll avoidant behavior and impact on neighboring canyons. Transportation improvements should be coupled with improved land and natural resource protection. **Transportation solutions for Big and Little Cottonwood Canyon should be conditioned upon the passage of federal legislation -- the Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area Act.** This coupling of federal legislation to transportation is necessary given the delicate balance that was foundational to the Mountain Accord agreement, based on four interdependent systems of the Central Wasatch: transportation, economy, recreation, and environment.

We thank the State for directing resources to address the transportation issues that are reaching a fever pitch in Big Cottonwood Canyon and we urge the State to act similarly to support the land and water protections the Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area Act would ensure.

Thank you for your consideration of the Central Wasatch Commission’s comments on the BCC Environmental Assessment. Accounting for the populations of the jurisdictions that comprise the Central Wasatch Commission Board, the CWC collectively represents over 1.5 million people. We hope our comments serve to support UDOT. Individual member entities of CWC may provide additional feedback to UDOT on behalf of their organizations. CWC comments may not be inclusive of concerns or comments of individual CWC member entities and reflect the mission of CWC in implementing the intent of Mountain Accord.



Respectfully submitted,

Erin Mendenhall, Salt Lake City Mayor, Central Wasatch Commission Chair

Roger Bourke, Town of Alta Mayor, Central Wasatch Commission Co-Chair

Christopher F. Robinson, Summit County Council Member

Monica Zoltanski, Sandy City Mayor

Bill Ciraco, Park City Council Member

Dan Knopp, Town of Brighton Mayor

Ellen Birrell, Cottonwood Heights Council Member

Emily Gray, Holladay City Council Member



The Central Wasatch Commission (CWC) was created in 2017 by interlocal agreement and has since served as a convener for the jurisdictions, stakeholders, and public with interest and authority in the Central Wasatch Mountains. The CWC's mission is to preserve the Central Wasatch through providing canyon transportation solutions, pathways for concentrated development, environmental protections, and recreational stewardship.

The Board of Commissioners is currently composed of elected leaders from Summit County, Park City, Salt Lake City, Millcreek, Cottonwood Heights, Sandy City, the City of Holladay, the Town of Brighton and the Town of Alta with the Utah Transit Authority, High Valley Transit, and Metropolitan Water District of Salt Lake and Sandy serving as ex-officio members, and with Solitude Mountain Resort and Save Our Canyons serving as Special Advisors to the Board, representing the economy system and the environment system of the Central Wasatch, respectively. The CWC's 35-member Stakeholders Council is composed of representatives from the Cottonwood Canyon ski resorts, the environmental and recreational communities, private property owners, transportation advocates, and representatives from the educational and cultural communities of the Wasatch Front and Back. The varied composition of the Central Wasatch Commission reflects the varied nature of the issues in the Central Wasatch Mountains, and no other entity like the CWC that provides a forum of ideas exists elsewhere.

More information at cwc.utah.gov