

Communities Celebrate Reintroduction of the CDT Completion Act

The reintroduction of the Continental Divide Trail Completion Act aims to complete the CDT within ten years, boosting local economies and access to nature.

GOLDEN, CO, UNITED STATES, May 14, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Small businesses, community organizations, and outdoor enthusiasts along the Continental Divide and across the country are celebrating the reintroduction of the [Continental](#)

[Divide Trail Completion Act](#). The

Continental Divide Trail Completion Act was reintroduced bicamerally by Senators Martin Heinrich (D-NM) and Steve Daines (R-MT) and Representatives Joe Neguse (D-CO) and Teresa Leger Fernandez (D-NM) in early April and directs the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior to prioritize completion of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT) within ten years of enactment.

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Even in divided times, the Continental Divide Trail remains a place for connection and a valuable resource for local communities and economies.”

*Teresa Martinez, CDTC
Executive Director*

“Completion of the Continental Divide Trail will strengthen local economies, improve access for community members to public lands, create a continuous north-south footpath across the nation, and allow people to come together to celebrate the spectacular Continental Divide landscape,” said Teresa Martinez, Executive Director of the Continental Divide Trail Coalition (CDTC).

More than seventy-five businesses, community

organizations, and individuals have [signed their support of the Continental Divide Trail Completion Act](#), representing twenty-two states across the country and including all five states through which the CDT passes. Supporters claim a myriad of benefits that completion of the CDT would bring to communities along the Continental Divide and individuals across the country.



CDT thru-hikers are forced onto busy roadways in gap areas.

“For local businesses, the CDT offers economic benefits by attracting visitors, encouraging community events, and increasing the demand for local goods and services,” said Julie Birkle, of Los Alamos, New Mexico.

In addition to potential benefits to tourism and local economies, proponents believe that completing the CDT will support healthy communities. The trail is seen as a bridge to natural spaces and safe, accessible environments to explore, bond, and instill a love of nature into the next generation.



The beauty of the Rocky Mountains is on full display along the CDT.

“Completing a continuous trail is vital to me, my community, my family, and my business. As someone who thrives on connection with nature and values active living, having a fully connected trail system would mean daily access to fresh air, exercise, and opportunities to build social bonds,” said Birkle.

One of the key attractions of the CDT is the potential to walk a continuous footpath from Mexico to Canada across some of the most rugged and remote landscapes in the United States. Each year, ‘thru-hikers’ take to the trail to attempt all or part of the nearly 3,100-mile-long route. Nearly fifty years after its designation as a National Scenic Trail, [over 160 miles of the CDT are still incomplete](#), routing travelers onto busy roadways and highways.

CDT thru-hiker Aubrey Renfroe described the completion of a continuous trail as necessary for public safety:

“A border-to-border thru-hike is life-changing. Completing such a journey deepens one’s ties to nature and humanity as one part of our larger ecosystem. There are inherent dangers,” Renfroe said. “But I’m never more concerned about my safety than when I have to walk on the road.”

Annual traffic from thru-hikers has become an integral part of the economies of towns located along the CDT. Many popular stops offer special services geared toward long-haul travelers, and stakeholders emphasized the importance of the CDT to their local economies and cultures.

“Not only do CDT hikers contribute a significant part of our individual lodging income, but they are also a treasured community of guests that we look forward to hosting. The town of Grand Lake also cares about CDT hikers,” said Kelly Yarbrough, board president of Shadowcliff Mountain Lodge and Retreat Center.

Community members from along the Continental Divide also believe that the completion of the CDT represents more than just the development of a trail; it paves the way for healthier lifestyles, stronger communities, and sustainable local development. For some local business owners, completing the CDT represents a deep commitment to the strength and vitality of the communities it traverses.

"The land isn't just scenery, it's home, heritage, and healing. A fully completed CDT would be a powerful symbol of reconnection: to the wild places that shaped us, to the communities that steward them, and to the deeper rhythms of the natural world we too often lose sight of," said Kevin Webber, owner of the Colorado-based Carboy Winery.

Webber also serves on the CDTC board of directors and is passionate about the critical access that the CDT provides.

"[Completing the trail] is about creating sustainable access to the outdoors that fuels personal well-being, local economies, and threads between people, place, and prosperity."

Though this year isn't the first time the CDT Completion Act has been introduced into Congress, Martinez remains optimistic about the possibility of the completion of the trail within the decade:

"Reintroduction of the CDT Completion Act, and the widespread support it has received, demonstrates that even in divided times, the Continental Divide Trail remains a place for connection and a valuable resource for local communities and economies."

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