



September 8, 2023

Andy Berke
Rural Utilities Service Administrator
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20250-3201

Dear Administrator Berke,

On behalf of the State of Colorado, I'm writing to express strong support for Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, Inc. (Tri-State) Letter of Interest (LOI) to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's New Empowering Rural America (New ERA) program (DOCKET#: RUS-23-ELECTRIC-0005), stemming from the landmark Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). The State of Colorado has aggressive carbon reduction goals to help address the very real threat that climate change poses to our state and communities, and Tri-State's LOI is the exact type of transformational proposal needed to address this concern, while ensuring affordability and reliability to electric cooperative members throughout the state.

The State of Colorado recognizes the unique role Tri-State and its member systems play in serving some of the most rural areas of our state, including many of our disadvantaged and low-income communities. Cooperatives don't have the same financial tools to address some of the costs of the clean energy transition, which is what makes the New ERA program so beneficial. As Tri-State pursues its energy transition, I'm pleased to see Tri-State pursuing the addition of new clean energy sources and assistance for stranded assets that are an important part of decarbonization and can weigh on ratepayers.

Tri-State and its 42 electric distribution utility members have been deliberate in outlining a clean energy transition path to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with wholesale electricity sales, including an 80% reduction in GHG emission in Colorado by 2030. With funding through New ERA, Tri-State can reinforce its transition to a more environmentally responsible system through emissions reductions without sacrificing electric reliability and affordability that are critical to Tri-State's membership. Tri-State's LOI outlines this series of transformational, near-term steps that the association can only realize with the USDA's support.

Tri-State actively participates in regulated electric resource planning proceedings before the Colorado Public Utilities Commission (PUC). I recognize the efforts Tri-State has made in its planning process with the PUC and with its transparency and continuous stakeholder engagement. The State of Colorado is pleased that Tri-State's proposal will not only continue to align with state and federal policies, but will also deliver significant emission reductions and prudent investment in new renewable resources while maintaining and prioritizing reliability and affordability for Tri-State members.

The State of Colorado is excited to see Tri-State's commitment to decarbonization and the benefits the New ERA program can deliver for electric cooperative members and rural communities across our state, and I strongly encourage the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Rural Utilities Service to invite Tri-State to submit a full application for the New ERA program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jared Polis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jared Polis
Governor of Colorado