

204 Poplar Avenue
Paonia, Colorado 81428
March 8, 2016

The Honorable Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, NE
Washington, D.C. 20426

**RE: *Petition for Declaratory Order of Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, Inc.,
Docket No. EL16-39-000***

Secretary Bose:

This letter is written in response to the Tri-State Generation & Transmission's (hereafter Tri-State) filing of the above-identified petition filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). This letter is in opposition to that petition and in support of Delta Montrose Electrical Association (DMEA), the local rural electrical cooperative power supplier in Delta and Montrose Counties in western Colorado. The Western Slope Conservation Center is an environmental and conservation organization in Delta County, Colorado that for 39 years has worked to preserve our region's natural resources and promote their wise use. As we understand the filing, Tri-State is requesting FERC approve what is in essence a rate penalty on utilities like DMEA when they buy energy from local renewable projects.

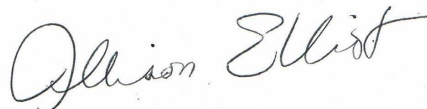
As you are aware, FERC ruled in 2015 that DMEA must buy from renewable generation projects under the federal Public Utilities Regulatory Policy Act or "PURPA". We believe that Tri-State's new petition to FERC would essentially undo this 2015 ruling. The 2015 ruling requires DMEA to buy from local renewable power generation projects regardless of whether those purchases are permitted under the utility's power supply contract, such as the one DMEA has with Tri-State. DMEA and its members have been able to benefit by purchasing power from several local qualifying facilities as envisioned by PURPA. DMEA's service area is blessed with over 300 days of sun a year and several additional potential locations for additional hydro-electric qualifying facilities.

As we view this Tri-State petition, we believe Tri-State wants to charge DMEA a penalty for revenue that Tri-State "loses" when DMEA buys energy from these local renewable energy generation projects instead of buying from Tri-State. If FERC approves Tri-State's lost revenue penalty petition, it will stop any new renewable generation for DMEA and its members, as well as depriving our local economy of jobs and millions of dollars in economic development. It will also inhibit the use of our area's abundant source of renewable energy from the development of future qualifying facilities. Therefore, representing our 450 members in DMEA's area, the Western Slope Conservation Center urges FERC not to approve Tri-State's petition for this lost revenue fee penalty.

Respectfully submitted,



Alex Johnson
Executive Director



Allison Elliot
Board of Directors, Chair