



CREATING GOOD JOBS, A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT, AND A FAIR AND THRIVING ECONOMY

Chair Winter, Vice Chair Cutter, and Members of the Senate Transportation and Energy Committee—

My name is Elena Santarella, and I am submitting this written testimony as the Colorado Policy Manager for the BlueGreen Alliance. We are a coalition of Colorado's largest labor unions and environmental organizations united together to create an economy that fights climate change and supports good-paying, union jobs. Our coalition partners include building trades unions like IBEW Local 111 and Local 68, the United Steelworkers, rail workers at SMART-TD as well as environmental organizations like Natural Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club, Conservation Colorado, Western Resource Advocates, and Southwest Energy Efficiency Project.

I would like to start by thanking the bill's sponsor in the House, Representative Boesenecker, for his willingness to work with stakeholders, like those in our coalition that sought amendments to this bill to improve labor standards. Due to the incorporation of these amendments, our coalition is in support of HB25-1292 Transmission Lines in State Highway Rights-of-Way, a bill that will allow Colorado to increase transmission line capacity without disturbing new land.

This bill lays out a clearly defined, collaborative process transmission builders and the Colorado Department of Transportation can use to maximize transmission buildout in existing rights of way. This process will play a key role in addressing Colorado's transmission line crisis. As described in the Colorado Electric Transmission Authority's (CETA) recent "Transmission Expansion Study," Colorado will need at least 550 miles of new transmission lines and 3,000 miles of reconductoring or rebuilding projects. Unfortunately, transmission expansion faces many barriers, especially when it comes to siting: it can often take years to find new routes for major transmission lines and then obtain approval for using the routes. By creating clear guidance for how transmission can be sited and permitted in existing highway rights of way, other states have been able to get important transmission lines built faster. For example, Wisconsin has allowed co-location of highway transmission lines for over 20 years, resulting in 200 miles of overhead transmission lines across 26 projects. By directing utilities to an easy opportunity to increase buildout of lines without disturbing greenfield land, upsetting landowners, and breaking up wildlife corridors, this bill alleviates some of the common siting issues that new transmission line buildout can face.

To conclude, this bill expands Colorado's siting options for transmission lines. In order to support the increased stress on the grid that data centers and beneficial electrification projects will bring, Colorado must continue to create pathways for more transmission planning and buildout. Our environmental partners are glad this bill will help accelerate transmission deployment using land that has already been developed, and our labor partners, like the utility workers at IBEW Local 111, are glad the buildout will be executed by skilled and trained workers. I urge a yes vote on this bill.

Sincerely,
Elena Santarella
Colorado Policy Manager
BlueGreen Alliance



TO: **House Bill Sponsor:** Andrew Boesenecker
Members of the Senate Committee on Transportation & Energy:
Senator Faith Winter (Chair), Senator Lisa Cutter (Vice Chair), Senator Marc Catlin, Senator Tony Exum, Senator Nick Hinrichsen, Senator Kyle Mullica, Senator Byron Pelton, Senator Cleave Simpson, Senator Tom Sullivan

FROM: The Colorado Renewable Energy Society (CRES)

DATE: May 4, 2025

RE: **HB25-1292 - Transmission Lines in State Highway Rights-of-Way**
Concerning the process to allow a transmission developer to locate high voltage transmission lines within a state highway right-of-way.

After reviewing the bill, CRES urges the Committee to vote **YES** on **HB25-1292**.

CRES is a strong advocate for energy efficiency and renewable energy. This includes responsible transmission planning as the decentralized energy generation requires high-quality transmission. This bill recognizes the right-of-way challenges for such infrastructure and provides the guidance and tools for intelligent and efficient transmission locating. As such, we are in strong support of this bill.

Thank you for your consideration of this recommendation.

Sincerely,

Vincent P. Calvano
CRES Policy Committee
Colorado Renewable Energy Society

About CRES:

CRES is a Colorado nonprofit corporation established in 1996. CRES creates environmental, social, and economic benefits for Colorado by promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy of all types. CRES advocates for a carbon-neutral Colorado powered by 100% renewable energy, and is engaged in promoting energy efficiency, demand side management, beneficial electrification, and the full breadth of renewable energy development in Colorado's communities. CRES also advocates for ways to achieve Colorado's emissions reduction targets.

CRES educates and assists the state's consumers, businesses and communities to advance renewable energy and energy efficiency in a manner that supports the economy and the environment.

CRES membership includes approximately 350 individual and business members interested in renewable energy and energy efficiency. The organization reaches more than 6,000 email subscribers and sponsors educational programs attended by hundreds.

CRES works on behalf of consumers, small businesses, and communities throughout the state to promote the expeditious transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy.