



Dear Members of the Colorado Senate Finance Committee,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, members and partners engaged in the Colorado Outdoor Partnership (CO-OP), we write to express our support for HB26-1230, legislation to extend Colorado's Conservation Easement Tax Credit Program by five years, from 2031 to 2036.

For more than two decades, Colorado's Conservation Easement Tax Credit Program has been one of the state's most effective and fiscally responsible tools for conserving working lands and protecting the landscapes that sustain Colorado's communities. Since 1965, conservation partnerships across the state have helped conserve more than 3.5 million acres of private land, safeguarding wildlife habitat, water resources, and rural economies.

These outcomes reflect the [Colorado Outdoor Principles](#), core values of the CO-OP which emphasize collaborative stewardship of Colorado's lands and waters, support for working lands, and balanced conservation that benefits both people and nature.

Demand for the program continues to grow as landowners, counties, and conservation partners recognize the lasting benefits conservation easements provide. However, current forecasts indicate that all authorized tax credits may be fully allocated by the end of 2026—five years before the program's scheduled sunset in 2031. This looming gap creates significant uncertainty for landowners who are already investing substantial time and resources into conservation projects that often take years to complete.

Without legislative action, the state could face a pause in new private land conservation projects until additional credits are authorized. Such a pause would jeopardize projects already underway and could result in lost opportunities to conserve lands that provide vital public benefits for Colorado's water, wildlife, agriculture, recreation, and rural communities.

Extending the program's sunset to 2036 would provide critical certainty for landowners and conservation partners while maintaining the program's existing fiscal guardrails. It would allow projects already in development to proceed as planned and ensure that Colorado continues to meet its long-term conservation objectives.

The benefits of conservation easements are well documented. A 2023 report from Colorado State University found that for every \$1 Colorado invests in conservation, the public receives between \$37 and \$64 in economic benefits, reflecting gains in ecosystem services, recreation, agriculture, and community resilience.

Colorado's conservation success has long depended on collaborative partnerships among landowners, local governments, nonprofit organizations, and state leaders. Extending the Conservation Easement Tax Credit Program ensures that this successful model can continue to deliver lasting benefits for Colorado's landscapes and people.

We respectfully urge your support for HB26-1230.

Sincerely,

Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), the Southern Plains Land Trust, Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Tony Hass of CCI, Rocky Mountain Innovation Lab, and Bird Conservancy of the Rockies

*The Colorado Outdoor Partnership is a statewide cooperative of conservation, outdoor recreation, and agricultural leaders supporting initiatives for conservation and responsible outdoor recreation in Colorado. These members of the CO-OP support this bill, while recognizing that other members might abstain or are unable from taking positions on specific legislation, and while others may have already supported the initiative through other channels.*

*Learn more about the Colorado Outdoor Partnership at [COPartnership.org](https://COPartnership.org)*