



February 22, 2022

Douglas County Board of Commissioners
100 Third Street
Castle Rock, CO 80104

RE: RENEWABLE WATER RESOURCES PROPOSAL

Dear Commissioners Laydon, Teal, and Thomas,

The Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust's (CCALT) mission is to conserve Colorado's western heritage and working landscapes for the benefit of future generations. Since 1995, CCALT has partnered with 375 farm and ranch families across Colorado to conserve more than 700,000 acres of working agricultural land. We are proud of the work we have accomplished with landowners across the San Luis Valley's (the "Valley") six-county region, where CCALT holds conservation easements on more than 47,000 acres of farm and ranch land. In Saguache County alone, CCALT has conserved 31,766 acres. When these agricultural operations are conserved, the water rights associated with the properties are perpetually tied to the land. CCALT's land conservation efforts in the Valley have been facilitated through federal, state, and private funding sources. These investments in conservation amount to over \$8,000,000 in federal funding alone.

Of particular importance for your consideration of Renewable Water Resource's (RWR) proposal are three of CCALT's conservation easements that lie between RWR's property and Poncha Pass. Each of these easements includes a federally held interest as they were funded by the US Department of Agriculture through the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Placing a pipeline across these properties would not be permitted under the terms of the conservation easements and would require a condemnation action, including condemning the associated federal interest. CCALT, the land trust community, and the federal government would vigorously defend these property interests and the individual conservation easements from encroachment and condemnation. It would appear from a basic review of the land ownership patterns in this part of the Valley that any contemplated path for the RWR's pipeline over Poncha Pass would need to cross federal lands and/or private lands conserved with a federal interest. This will create challenges that the proponents likely do not fully appreciate and add significant cost to completing a private pipeline over Poncha Pass.

CCALT would welcome additional discussion with the Commissioners on our conservation easements and the investments we have made in conserving the San Luis Valley's agricultural landscapes and natural heritage.

Sincerely,

Erik Glenn
Executive Director