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COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND WATER

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

November 6th, 2009

Chairman Ron Binz
Commissioner James Tarpey
Commissioner Matt Baker
Colorado Public Utilities Commission
1560 Broadway, Suite 250
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Chairman Binz and Commissioners Tarpey and Baker,

As the Member of Congress who represents the San Luis Valley, I'm writing to encourage the Colorado Public Utilities Commission to issue a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) for the Southern Colorado Transmission Improvements Project.

Growth in residential and agricultural areas throughout the Valley and the associated increase in electrical demand have caused the existing transmission infrastructure to reach its limit, requiring investments to increase capacity into and out of the Valley. As a result, the proposed Project is needed to accomplish two important goals.

First, it will improve reliability. Presently, there are only three transmission lines that provide a radial feed of electricity from Poncha Springs into the Valley. As a result, this system does not provide the reliability benefits of redundant service. This places the residents of the Valley and its extensive agricultural resources at risk in the event of an electric system outage. The Southern Colorado Transmission Improvements project will address this concern by providing a redundant "loop" for power in and out of the Valley. It also addresses load concerns and possible voltage collapse should any of the existing lines experience an outage.

Second, the improvements will help facilitate renewable energy development in southern Colorado by facilitating the interconnection of new solar and wind generation resources to the state's power delivery infrastructure. These improvements will support state renewable energy standards, meet the goals of Colorado Senate Bill 07-100, and help to advance Colorado's greenhouse reduction objectives. Furthermore, current analyses show solar and wind generation facilities contribute to significant economic growth in private investment and create permanent, high-paying jobs.

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I want to stress that the CPCN process does not contemplate which specific route or corridor the transmission project should occupy. Rather, its focus is on the purpose of, and need for, the project.

It's important to applaud the state's largest two electric utilities, Public Service Company of Colorado and Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, for jointly developing this project. The partnership provides cost savings and environmental benefits through joint planning, construction and operation of the project.

For these reasons, I support the Southern Colorado Transmission Improvements Project and request the Public Utilities Commission issue a CPCN.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Salazar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

John Salazar
Member of Congress