

**Recommended Talking Points for PUC Comment Period on Tri-State Regulation  
Feb. 23, 2009**

For decades, Tri-State has operated behind a closed curtain. More PUC oversight will bring transparency to Tri-State operations and finally give rural Coloradoans assurance that their long-term interests are being considered.

Tri-State continues to be heavily invested in coal-fired power generation, despite the financial, regulatory and environmental risks involved in this dirty energy source. With more PUC oversight of Tri-State's resource planning, Tri-State customers will be better protected from these risks, and not saddled with misguided resource planning that involves new coal-fired power plants.

With its current resource planning, Tri-State is exposing its customers to potentially significant rate increases to pay for the construction and operation of new coal-fired power plants, plus the cost of carbon emissions regulations for the life of these plants. Helping Tri-State incorporate more clean energy sources and energy efficiency into its resource planning will help stabilize rates for customers.

Tri-State ranks dead last among most western utilities in providing its customers ways to reduce their energy use through increasing the energy efficiency of their homes, farms and businesses. More PUC oversight at the early stages of Tri-State's resource planning process will ensure its customers are not paying for energy they do not need.

Rural Colorado is being left behind as the rest of the state moves forward toward a new energy economy. Bringing Tri-State inline with state energy policy will open up more opportunities for rural Coloradoans to get involved and profit from clean energy development.

The PUC has done a commendable job helping to bring Xcel Energy and other investor-owned utilities inline with their customers' demand for more clean and renewable energy choices. The Commission should be given the latitude to do the same for Tri-State and its customers in rural Colorado where clean energy resources like wind and solar have the greatest potential for development.

We are asking the Commission to take a hard look at Tri-State's resource planning from the day one to ensure Tri-State's energy choices are in the best interest of its customers, and help the state move toward a clean energy future.