



For Immediate Release

January 2, 2020

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Colorado Electric Cooperatives Ask State for Greater Local Control
United Power and La Plata Electric push for lower rates and cleaner energy for customers

DENVER – Colorado electric cooperatives United Power and La Plata Electric Association are weighing all options to change their existing energy procurement contract with Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association (“Tri-State”). In dual November filings with the Colorado Public Utilities Commission (“CPUC”), both cooperatives asked the state’s regulating body to exercise its authority to provide a just exit charge from its existing contract with Tri-State. Currently, both entities are required to purchase a minimum of 95% of their power from Tri-State under existing contracts that run through 2050. In addition, a recent S&P report downgraded Tri-State’s credit rating, with one of the reasons being that its Members’ retail energy rates were at least 20% higher than the statewide average.

“As the largest member in the Tri-State cooperative, we have a responsibility to our 92,000 residential and commercial customers to provide them with the cleanest and most affordable energy possible,” said John Parker, Chief Executive Officer of United Power. “Our current contract with Tri-State forces us to purchase some of the dirtiest energy in Colorado, while our customers pay 20% more than what is the state average. We’ve spent 18 months trying to change this contract, and all that we have gotten from Tri-State is delays, evasions and excuses. On behalf of our customers, we will no longer accept this.”

Tri-State relies heavily upon fossil fuels to provide power to its 43 cooperative members across four states, with 56% of its energy generation coming from coal, which is a significantly higher reliance on coal than other energy providers in Colorado. With the passage of HB19-1261, energy companies in Colorado must start work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and Tri-State is not well-positioned to meet these new standards. As renewable energy production continues to drive down the price of energy, Tri-State’s continued reliance on fossil fuels is also

hitting its members in the pocketbooks as well as putting the cooperatives at risk of not meeting the new clean energy standards.

“Our community should have a choice,” said Jessica Matlock, Chief Executive Officer of La Plata Electric Association. “We want to be a part of the clean energy future and can achieve this through working in our backyard, with our community. We can bring jobs and economic growth to Colorado, while also supplying carbon-free energy to the region. We are disappointed that Tri-State is not partnering with us to achieve this clean energy future together. We want input into the process and choice when it comes to a cost-effective and clean energy future, not a one size fits all approach developed without input of the affected member cooperatives.”

In response to United Power’s and La Plata Energy’s filings with the CPUC, Tri-State recently filed a motion to dismiss their complaints because they do not believe that the CPUC has jurisdiction over these matters. Instead, Tri-State claims that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has jurisdiction over their rates, even though their initial application was rejected in October for being deficient and incomplete.

“Tri-State is going up against a much larger tide that they spent years refusing to confront,” said Parker. “Tri-State’s lack of urgency in addressing these matters is aimed solely at self-preservation rather than what is best for our customers.”

The CPUC has set a date of January 10th to receive testimony on the matter and is expected to make a decision by early April.

About United Power

United Power is a member-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperative delivering electricity to more than 92,000 meters at homes, businesses and farms in Colorado's north-central front range. For more information about the cooperative, visit www.unitedpower.com or follow them on social media at facebook.com/unitedpower or twitter.com/unitedpowercoop.

About La Plata Electric Association

La Plata Electric Association, Inc. (LPEA) is a member-owned, not-for-profit, electric distribution cooperative serving La Plata and Archuleta, with segments of Hinsdale, Mineral and San Juan counties. There are 22 cooperatives in Colorado, LPEA is the fifth largest cooperative in the state, providing safe, reliable electricity at the lowest reasonable cost to approximately 34,000 members.