



Prior to Gov. Bill Ritter signing HB1160 into law Wednesday, March 26, Sen. Jim Isgar thanks interested organizations and fellow legislators for working together to make HB1160 something that works for all of the interested parties. Standing behind him are (left to right) Gov. Ritter; Tom Plant, director of the Governor's Energy Office; and Sen. Brandon Shaffer.

Co-op Net Metering Bill Signed by Gov. Ritter

The Colorado Rural Electric Association joined Gov. Bill Ritter, Sens. Jim Isgar and Brandon Shaffer, Rep. Judy Solano and coalition partners for the signing of House Bill 1160, legislation providing for net metering between Colorado's 22 rural electric cooperatives and member-owners who generate their own electricity.

"While all of Colorado's electric co-ops already have policies providing net metering at varying levels, this new legislation will set a uniform minimum standard for giving co-op members credit for home-grown energy. We believe that HB1160 provides that standard in a way that is fair to all of our co-op members," said Ray Clifton, executive director of CREA, a member association representing the state's electric cooperatives.

"We want to thank Senator Isgar for working with the electric co-ops to make this legislation possible," Clifton said. "Sen. Isgar, who sponsored our first co-op net metering bill back in 2002, understood how co-ops differ from other utilities. He knew what would be needed to make this legislation work for those wanting to net meter while still being fair to other members of the co-ops."

HB1160 — sponsored by Rep. Solano in the House and Sens. Isgar and Shaffer in the Senate — sets guidelines for providing a net meter for residential customers who generate up to 10 kilowatts and commercial or industrial customers that generate up to 25 kilowatts from eligible energy resources. The bill requires that electric cooperatives and municipally-owned utilities credit a customer's excess generation one-to-one against the customer's energy consumption.

CREA joined with several coalition members — including the Governor's Energy Office, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, Independent Bankers of Colorado, Sun Edison, CoSEIA, Bergery Windpower, Colorado Corn, Colorado Environmental Coalition, Colorado Association of Municipal Utilities, Colorado Springs Utility and Environment Colorado — to craft this balanced approach to net metering.

CREA is the statewide service organization representing Colorado's 22 electric cooperatives and one generation and transmission cooperative. Headquartered in Denver, CREA represents the collective efforts of the electric co-ops in a variety of fields, including legislative representation at the state and national levels, risk management, education seminars, youth programs and communications.

Co-op Supplier Joins National Renewable Co-op

Renewable energy resources are the focus of a new group formed by the country's electric cooperatives, including Tri-State Generation and Transmission, Colorado's co-op electricity supplier.

Tri-State has been instrumental in establishing the National Renewables Cooperative Organization and officially joined the organization during its March meeting.

"NRCO offers cooperatives a way to pool our resources and efforts into a single national program that shows support for renewables and will allow co-ops to take a proactive position if a national standard for renewable energy becomes law," said J.M. Shafer, Tri-State executive vice president.

"NRCO also serves as a means for co-ops that don't have a lot of opportunity for development of wind, solar or other green power to potentially participate in a national renewable program," he added.

MORE ENERGY CLASSES ADDED FOR FALL SEMESTER

Students will have more opportunities to take classes in the industrial electrician and power plant technology programs at Colorado Northwestern Community College in Craig this fall.

The additional class times were added with the financial assistance of Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, which employs about 300 people at its power plant in Craig. Tri-State is facing the need for more workers as its workforce averages 48 years of age. Skilled technicians will be needed to replace these workers as they retire.