

State of Colorado
Colorado General Assembly
House Finance Committee
Denver, CO

Re: Written testimony on HB26-1230, Extending Conservation Easement Tax Credit

To whom it may concern:

3/23/2026

We are regenerative farmers and owners of Indian Ridge Farm in Norwood, Colorado. Our 120-acre farm has produced nutrient-rich vegetables, poultry and other livestock for the past 25 years to a mostly local clientele. As we near retirement age (we're both in our late 60s), we are working diligently with Montezuma Land Trust and other organizations on an innovative initiative to reduce the barriers to land access and tenure for beginning farmers. Preserving our farm as an affordable, viable commercial operation for future farmers gives us hope for the future and for the health of our rural economy.

Since we began this conservation effort, we have relied on the Conservation Easement Tax Credit as a key funding source. Because of the uncertainty of the Conservation Easement Tax Credit, our efforts at preserving this valuable farm have become more challenging. **We implore the State Legislature to extend the Conservation Easement Tax Credit, HB26-1230 by voting in favor of this key piece of legislation.**

Our country is facing a situation where valuable farmlands are disappearing at an alarmingly rapid rate. Because the nation's farmers are aging and approaching retirement, millions of acres of farmland across this land will go to the highest bidder, thereby jeopardizing our food supply. Conservation efforts such as ours will make available farmlands to aspiring young farmers by keeping land affordable in perpetuity. Please preserve Colorado's strong agricultural heritage by extending the Conservation Easement Tax Credit.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Tony and Barclay Daranyi
Indian Ridge Farm
PO Box 963
1401 CR 43ZN
Norwood, CO 81423

House Finance

03/23/2026

HB26-1230 Extend Conservation Easement Tax Credit

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Doug Clark For themselves	A leader in conservation easements, Colorado protects vital landscapes to ensure future generations enjoy clean water, local food, and the state's diverse natural heritage. The extension of the tax credit will help ensure this effort will continue into the future. People love Colorado, precisely because of the beautiful, wild, and open spaces.
Guy Keene For themselves	I am in support of House Bill 26-1230, Extend Tax Conservation Easement Tax. As a former board member on a local land trust I have seen the positive effect that tax credits for conservation easements have towards land and water conservation in the San Luis Valley where I have lived for the last twenty years. The tax credit allows landowners to conserve their lands which in turn benefits water conservation, creates habitat for wildlife, and ensures that the land remains in an agricultural use that helps everyone in the state. Please extend the conservation easement tax credit.
Kyler Brown For Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust	I write in support of this bill to continue the tax credits for conservation easements. This is a key financial component to doing conservation work in Colorado and especially poor communities like ours in the San Luis Valley. Without these credits our work would come to a standstill and we would lose a vital way to keep families farming and wildlife in habitat. Please support this bill so we can protect our water, land and rural communities!!

House Finance

03/30/2026

HB26-1230 Extend Conservation Easement Tax Credit

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Amber Pacheco For Rio Grande Water Conservation District	<p>Chair, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Amber Pacheco, representing the Rio Grande Water Conservation District, and I am here to express strong support for HB26’s 1230.</p> <p>I speak on behalf of the San Luis Valley, one of the most rural and economically challenged regions in Colorado. Our counties consistently rank among the lowest income in the state, and as a result, we do not have the tax base or large, well-funded open space programs that exist elsewhere. Yet the lands we steward are some of the most ecologically, culturally, and agriculturally important in Colorado.</p> <p>The conservation tax credit has been one of the few tools that allows communities like ours to protect land for the public benefit. Previous tax credits have made it possible for neighbors, landowners, and local organizations to come together and create solutions that would otherwise be out of reach.</p> <p>HB26’s 1230 strengthens and modernizes this tool at a moment when we urgently need it. Our region faces significant water challenges that threaten both our agricultural economy and our way of life. This bill provides a practical, community-driven way to leverage investment through tax credits to support water sustainability, protect viable agriculture, and maintain the open lands that support our rural economy.</p> <p>For communities like ours, this policy provides a pathway for us to protect land, support local producers, and keep water on the landscape. Without these credits, many conservation opportunities simply would not be possible.</p>

	<p>HB26’s 1230 ensures that rural regions with limited financial resources can continue to participate in statewide conservation efforts. It helps level the playing field and ensures that the San Luis Valley can protect the lands and water that sustain us.</p> <p>I respectfully urge your support for this bill. Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>
<p>Courtney Hurst For themselves</p>	<p>I am FOR bill HB26-1230 - Extend Conservation Easement Tax Credit</p> <p>As a landowner who's completed a conservation easement on agricultural land, I can't overstate the importance of the financial benefits of a conservation easement, specifically with respect to making the agricultural operation financially secure for the generations to come. Colorado has recognized the importance of conservation for many years and has put this important recognition into action by offering state tax credits as an additional incentive for landowners to place a conservation easement on their land. The tax credit program has been very successful and very important to conservation efforts throughout the state. This program is now even more important as other funding sources, especially Federal funding, is limited or non-existent for continued conservation work and the completion of conservation easements.</p>
<p>Matthew Peterson For Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust</p>	<p>I serve as the Conservation Director for the Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust. I have the opportunity to interact with the more than 60 families/ranching operations currently under conservation easement in the San Luis Valley (SLV). I have seen firsthand the vital support the funds provided from this tax credit on the ground. Whether it be paying down land or operating loans, upgrading equipment and water delivery structures, or finally expanding farm operations, these funds have been pivotal to the success of valley farmers and ranchers - a community that experiences high levels of poverty. The vast majority of these operations are small family operations in our region. These funds support these local farmers, who then spend these funds supporting local businesses, tradesman, and employees. These tax credits are a great supplement to the local economy that so wholly depends on agriculture to function. As a rancher in the area as well I can see the great benefit these tax credits provide and how pivotal they would be for the success of my own small farm operation as well. I greatly hope that all would vote in favor of this bill, one that supports the ag economy in our state at a time when agriculture operations are struggling to make the bottom line. Thanks.</p>

	Matthew Peterson
--	------------------