

Chairman and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the Clifton Opportunities Now for Vibrant Economic Yields, known as “the CONVEY Act.”

Today, I ask for your consideration of the importance of this legislation and its potential to bring about significant economic growth and opportunity to our community and our country as a whole. Mesa County, Colorado, is located on the Western Slope of Colorado, bordering Utah, and approximately four hours from Denver. While it is a large county in population, it is located in a rural part of the state and has both urban and rural challenges.

Rural areas of our country face difficult challenges related to obtaining economic development opportunities, but that challenge is elevated in areas of the country, especially in the Western United States, where counties have limited private land. As you are aware in your own communities, counties with significant amounts of federal land are largely dependent on the federal government for economic development opportunities. Mesa County, Colorado, for instance, is over 72% federal land. As you know, it is difficult for counties to rely on Payment in Lieu of Taxes (“PILT”) from the federal government as it has been consistently threatened. During my years as a Mesa County Commissioner, I, along with County Commissioners from across Colorado and the United States, advocated for the sustainability of PILT funding.

For over five years, Mesa County has been diligently pursuing the acquisition of a parcel of land that the Bureau of Land Management has designated for disposal and no longer serves a purpose for the federal government. This land holds immense value for Mesa County as it presents a critical opportunity for economic development in Clifton, an area of the county that has struggled economically and is in desperate need of new opportunities.

By introducing the CONVEY Act, which directs the Secretary of the Interior to convey 31.1 acres of land, that the federal government no longer wishes to manage to Mesa County for economic development purposes in Clifton, Congresswoman Lauren Boebert, Congressman Doug Lamborn and Congressman Ken Buck are working toward a common-sense solution to aid an underserved community in Colorado that deserves a prosperous future. The bill ensures that Mesa County, Colorado, will pay fair market value for the land, guaranteeing a fair transaction for all parties involved.

The economic potential of this land cannot be understated. By facilitating industry and business growth in Clifton, Mesa County can attract job creators and foster an environment that encourages economic prosperity and will directly and positively impact our community, providing employment opportunities and enhancing our residents' overall quality of life. It will also aid in putting this property back on the property tax rolls.

The CONVEY Act also ensures that funds from the sale of this land will be deposited into the Federal Land Disposal Account, established by the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act, and retained by the Bureau of Land Management Colorado office to be used within the state, which means that the economic benefits of this transaction will extend beyond Mesa County, Colorado and contribute to the overall welfare of not just Colorado, but the whole country. It will also

decrease costs of management of this parcel of land by the Bureau of Land Management, which will contribute to increased efficiency of our federal government.

The Board of County Commissioners would like to express our deep gratitude to Congresswoman Boebert for her tireless efforts to cut through the bureaucratic red tape that has hindered Mesa County Colorado's progress and the unwavering support of Congressman Lamborn and Congressman Buck. If passed, it will have literally taken an act of Congress to get this land that the federal government no longer wanted off the disposal list and back into productive use.

The CONVEY Act presents a unique and invaluable opportunity for Mesa County, Colorado, to promote economic development and create new avenues of growth in Clifton in partnership and collaboration with the federal government. I urge this committee to support this legislation and allow the economic potential that lies within this land to be realized.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R Pugliese', written in a cursive style.

Rose Pugliese
Colorado House Assistant Minority Leader