

Colorado Coalition of Land Trusts

June 19, 2008

The State of Colorado continues to crack down on abuse of the conservation easement tax credit program as announced today in the *Rocky Mountain News*.

9/18/2008: [Grand jury to eye easements](#), *Rocky Mountain News*.

CCLT and the mainstream conservation community are committed to working with state and federal officials to eliminate abuses and strengthen the conservation easement program in Colorado and across the nation.

Openings for the new Conservation Easement Oversight Commission

As we move along the path toward implementing HB1353, CCLT is pleased to spread the word that Governor Bill Ritter is now accepting applications for people willing to serve on the nine-member Conservation Easement Oversight Commission, which was created by HB1353 and could begin work as early as July 1, 2008. The first year of the Commission will likely be the most time-intensive since it will be advising and consulting with the Colorado Division of Real Estate (DRE) and the Colorado Department of Revenue (DOR) on the following:

- The accuracy and integrity of conservation easement transactions as related to the tax credits, including issues of conservation value and the capacity of conservation easement holders;
- DOR's separate review process for conservation easement tax credits, including those about which the DOR has been notified are under audit by the IRS; and
- Applications for conservation easement holder certification.

This Commission will likely be appointed very soon. Anyone interested must submit an [application form](#) to the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions (address and fax are at the bottom on the application). **Please feel free to let me know of your interest as well.** The entire conservation community (and taxpayers) will be counting on strong leaders to step forward and serve with skill and integrity.

The applicable section of HB1353 is 12-61-721 and the full text of the new law

is available at [CCLT's state policy webpage](#). The six members appointed by the Governor must have the following qualifications or represent the following interests:

- (I) A LOCAL LAND TRUST;
- (II) A STATEWIDE OR NATIONAL LAND TRUST;
- (III) A LOCAL GOVERNMENT OPEN SPACE OR LAND CONSERVATION AGENCY;
- (IV) AN HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORGANIZATION WITH EXPERIENCE IN EASEMENTS ON PROPERTIES OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE;
- (V) A CERTIFIED GENERAL APPRAISER WITH EXPERIENCE IN CONSERVATION EASEMENTS WHO MEETS ANY CLASSROOM EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS ESTABLISHED BY THE BOARD IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 12-61-719; AND
- (VI) A LANDOWNER THAT HAS DONATED A CONSERVATION EASEMENT IN COLORADO.

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