



2009 Legislative Agenda

Green recovery for Colorado

Building the new energy economy and repowering Colorado and America with clean energy infrastructure should be at the center of our national and state economic recovery efforts. It is clear that Colorado's homegrown wind and solar industry has been the bright spot in an otherwise faltering economy. Continued investment in clean energy technologies is going to put Coloradans back to work. Building Colorado's new energy economy not only means good, green-collar jobs and more dollars invested right here in local economies, but it will promote long-term energy security, better protections for wildlife habitat, and a reduction in global warming emissions and water pollution.

Save the Rockies

Oil and natural gas drilling is wreaking havoc on Colorado's wild lands, air, water, wildlife and \$10 billion-a-year outdoor recreation industry. Drilling in Colorado has increased 500 percent since 1990, with over 37,000 active wells in the state in 2008. Fortunately, Colorado's outdated regulations have been upgraded in order to ensure that we minimize the damage of oil and gas drilling when it occurs. Environment Colorado supports ratifying these new rules in the legislature.

- **Protect public health and environment from drilling:** This past summer, the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission spent more than 6,000 hours on deliberations, hearings and negotiations to draft sensible, new protections for Colorado's public health and environment from oil and gas drilling. Included are protection zones around drinking water and cutthroat trout habitat, required disclosure of chemicals used in gas "fracking," erosion management to reduce water pollution, and comprehensive planning with consultation from the Colorado Division of Wildlife and Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to minimize the impact of drilling.

Building the New Energy Economy

Colorado should grow the state's clean energy market by expanding access and opportunities for participation in the new energy economy. Environment Colorado supports:

- **Colorado solar homes:** House Bill 1149 would help more homeowners "Go Solar!" by requiring all commercial builders to offer to pre-wire new homes for solar electric and solar thermal energy systems during construction.
- **Solar thermal jobs:** House Bill 1126 exempts the equipment used in solar thermal systems from state sales tax and allows local governments to offer tax incentives in order to increase the use of solar thermal heating and cooling systems. In five years, such incentives could create more than 1,000 new jobs in the local manufacturing and installation sectors.
- **Clean energy financing options:** Senate Bill 51 gives consumers the option to create third party financing agreements, where a third party buys the equipment, installs it, and maintain it. Homeowners can eliminate the upfront costs of renewable upgrades, and more Coloradans will be able to participate in building the New Energy Economy.
- **Clean energy research, development, and training:** In order to ensure that the industry continues to innovate, and that Coloradans are trained and ready to jump into the green-collar workforce so we can keep these new, green jobs right here at home, Environment Colorado supports legislation that would:
 - Provide funding for schools and green job training programs that would address industry needs;
 - Create a grant program to spur research and development targeting renewable-energy technology; and
 - Provide tax refunds to small renewable-energy companies for research and development that will encourage companies to hire new staff and help encourage companies to start-up and stay in Colorado.



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Energy efficient Colorado

Now more than ever, it is important for Colorado to use energy more efficiently. Energy consumption has increased, despite having the technology and the know-how to reduce energy use. Environment Colorado supports investing in statewide efficiency programs and the creation of market-based price signals to help guide better consumer choices. More efficient use of the energy we already have is the cheapest, easiest, and cleanest source of energy. With less money spent on electric bills, consumers will have more dollars in their pockets to reinvest in the local economy.

Clean energy transmission plan

To maximize the potential of the new energy economy export market, the power generated from Colorado's windy Eastern Plains and sunny southwest should be integrated into a regional energy plan. Environment Colorado supports directing the Colorado Public Utilities Commission to complete a focused study on a statewide transmission plan, so Colorado will have the information necessary to more effectively participate in the development of a regional market.

Global warming solutions

Colorado has made a strong commitment to fight global warming by cutting our state's pollution by 20 percent by 2020 and 80 percent by 2050. Transportation is responsible for about a third of Colorado's global warming pollution. We have the tools to get started today and cut emissions from the transportation sector. Environment Colorado supports:

- Clean electric cars:** A car powered from the current electric grid is cleaner and more efficient than any of the cars on the market powered by conventional gasoline. Electric cars reduce our dependence on foreign oil, decrease global warming emissions, and put money back in the pockets of Coloradans, as it only costs pennies per mile to drive an electric vehicle. Senate Bill 75 would rollback key barriers for low-speed electric vehicles, and would set up a fund for the installation of recharging stations. By preparing now, Colorado can be ahead of the curve in developing a robust electric car market.

- Funding a 21st century transportation infrastructure:** When funding dollars are approved for transportation improvements in Congress or at the state Legislature, it is critical that a dedicated percentage of the new funds go toward multimodal safety improvements or new revenue streams are created or explored in order to fund transit infrastructure. By giving people options other than getting into their cars, we can cut global warming pollution and minimize congestion. Compared with new road or bridge projects, improving existing highway infrastructure creates 9 percent more jobs per dollar and new investment in transit infrastructure could generate close to 19 percent more jobs.

Environment Colorado's mission

We all want clean air, clean water and open spaces. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress. That's the idea behind Environment Colorado. We focus exclusively on protecting Colorado's air, water and open spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.