

March 24, 2020

The Honorable Governor Jared Polis
State Capitol Building
200 E. Colfax Ave., Rm. 136
Denver, CO 80203

Re: Climate Action and the Pandemic

Dear Governor Polis:

As elected representatives of communities across Colorado, we want to thank you for your leadership in helping our state respond to the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

A key component of this response will be helping our state and local economies rebound from this crisis in a way that ensures our long term financial, public and environmental health, including a sustainable climate. While the COVID-19 virus poses an immediate threat to human health and quality of life, climate change presents an existential global threat, and we cannot afford to address the coronavirus pandemic in a way that exacerbates our climate crisis, trading one disaster for another.

To that end, we are writing to urge you to prioritize a continued focus on meeting the state's climate emission reduction targets, as statutorily mandated in House Bill 19-1261, Senate Bill 19-96 and Senate Bill 19-236, and ensure that any state and federal economic recovery and policy measures related to COVID-19 are in alignment with, and help further our achievement of, these climate goals.

Specifically, we urge you to keep the State on course to achieve bold and timely progress on climate emission reductions via pending and future rulemakings before the Air Quality Control Commission, the Public Utilities Commission and the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, as statutorily directed, through a robust public process that includes meaningful virtual meeting participation at minimum. It's critical that these rulemakings, as well as other state agency efforts, help Colorado rapidly transition away from fossil fuels to a clean energy future; accelerate electrification of our transportation, building and industrial sectors; promote materials reuse, recycling, and composting instead of raw resource extraction and single-use disposable products; and bolster a robust multimodal transportation system that reduces vehicle emissions and miles travelled.

We also request you advocate with federal policymakers and Colorado's congressional delegation to ensure that any economic recovery and stimulus programs adopted to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic require industries receiving federal aid to first commit to meeting the Paris climate accord targets, based on a concrete plan that includes support for impacted workers and communities. It's particularly important that this requirement apply to those industries most directly responsible for carbon pollution, including transportation (airlines, automakers, etc.), power generation, oil and gas, and banking.

Additionally, clean energy and transportation electrification must be direct beneficiaries of federal financial and policy aid. These two industries have vastly more potential for stable long-term wealth creation when compared to legacy industries and are just as vulnerable in this crisis. By protecting and emphasizing these industries, we can emerge from this crisis with a dramatically improved carbon pollution trajectory, an improved quality of life for all Coloradans, and an energy system that enables the U.S. economy to remain competitive for decades to come.

Without this action, we will miss perhaps the single most important opportunity we have had yet to dramatically alter the carbon pollution trajectory, leave the U.S. economy at a competitive disadvantage as we emerge from the current economic crisis, and severely and permanently harm the quality of life for all Coloradans.

Thank you again for your leadership in facing these global challenges here in Colorado. We stand by ready to assist you.

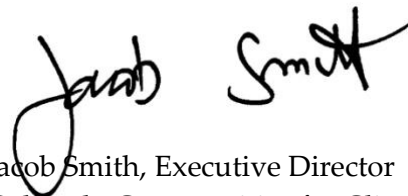
Sincerely,

Thank you for your hard work at this critical and demanding moment.

Sincerely,



Gwen Lachelt, Executive Director
Western Leaders Network



Jacob Smith, Executive Director
Colorado Communities for Climate Action