

Climate Change in Colorado

2026 Communications Guide for Candidates and Campaigns

Coloradans are Facing High Costs and Environmental Threats

Coloradans are experiencing the impacts of climate change — from more frequent and severe wildfires to prolonged drought, worsening air quality and extreme heat. This has resulted in rising energy bills, higher insurance premiums and increased healthcare costs. Across the state, Coloradans are feeling the pain and looking for solutions.

While Colorado has made progress addressing climate change, the rapid growth of energy- and water-intensive data centers could delay coal plant retirements, require costly new gas-fired power plants and further strain Colorado's limited water supplies. Data centers use as much as 980,000 gallons of water per year and Xcel Energy estimates new data centers could increase its peak power demand by more than 40% by 2035. Without proper guardrails, new data center development will cause more air pollution, compound existing water challenges and add to skyrocketing electric rates. The data center companies are pushing those costs on all of us.

The good news is that clean energy is now the most affordable option for powering our communities, and it will help meet Colorado's climate goals. Clean energy is the cheapest and quickest way to meet increased demand and is expected to save Americans \$5.1 billion per year compared to continued use of fossil fuels. Colorado has a legacy of being a leader in state climate action. Due to our clean energy policies, we have kept energy costs below the national average. That said, we can't ignore that customers are still feeling the pain as rates are up 23% over the past decade. The primary driver of increased rates is utility profits, accounting for 22% of a customer's monthly bill — an increase from 15% in 2015

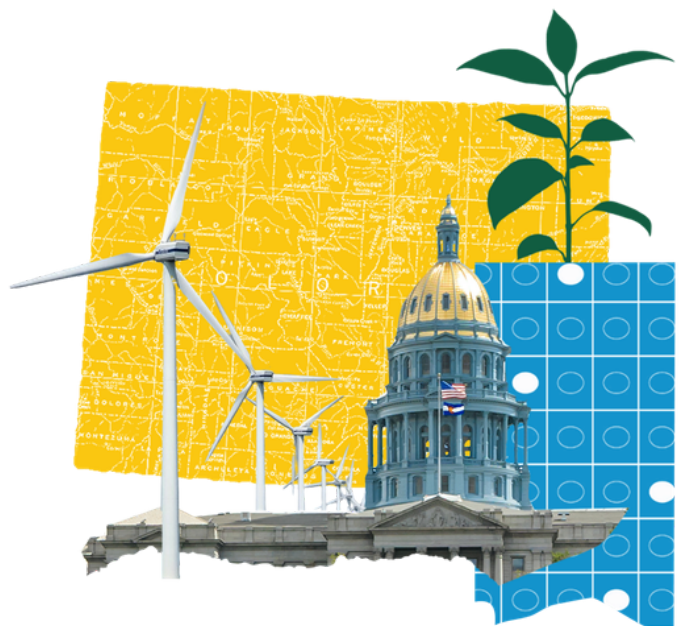
Data centers, corporate greed and federal rollbacks of clean energy policies threaten Colorado's ability to stabilize energy costs, reduce air pollution and meet our climate goals.

Coloradans Demand Climate Action

Overwhelming majorities of Colorado voters support climate action, including policies that hold corporate polluters accountable.

Ninety-one percent support commonsense rules for data center development that require companies to pay for their own energy and conserve our water.

Seventy-nine percent agree that Coloradans' electricity bills are increasing mainly because monopoly utility companies are raising prices to increase their profits.





Seventy-two percent agree that candidates talk about addressing air pollution and climate change during their campaigns but fail to turn their words into action once elected.

Seventy-two percent support candidates who pledge to hold corporate polluters accountable for polluting our air, water and land.

Seventy percent want Colorado's leaders to do a better job enforcing current laws that regulate industrial air pollution.

Talking with Voters

The following messaging can inform conversations about energy costs and environmental threats — whether talking to voters at their doors, speaking with the media or posting online.

Energy and Climate Costs

- The fossil fuel industry and monopoly utility companies are making record profits while overcharging consumers and blocking cheaper, cleaner options. That has to change.
- Families and small businesses should not pay higher electricity bills so that utilities and wealthy tech billionaires can profit from unchecked data center development.
- Colorado communities deserve fair rules, accountability and transparency to protect us from rising energy costs and environmental impacts caused by data centers.
- With energy costs already high and demand rising, we need to bring more affordable, clean power online as fast as possible and make it easier for Coloradans to take control of their energy future.

Threats to the Environment

- Coloradans are feeling the impacts of climate change in their lives today, including extreme heat, drought and wildfire smoke.
- Big Tech must do its part to ensure Colorado achieves its climate goals. Data centers powered by fossil fuels will contribute to our current climate crisis.
- State leaders should hold corporate polluters accountable for cleaning up Colorado's most polluted communities.
- Colorado leaders need to fight Trump's attempts to kill solar and wind development.

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