

2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION POLICY PLATFORM

Regenerative Recovery Coalition | January 2023



**THE ALLIANCE
CENTER**



**COLORADO'S
REGENERATIVE
RECOVERY**

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INTRODUCTION

This report represents the voices of the Regenerative Recovery Coalition (RRC), a coalition that is 400 members strong, represents more than 28,000 members of the Colorado workforce, and accounts for more than \$7.2 billion in managed revenue by member organizations. A complete list of coalition members can be found beginning on page 68.

The coalition began in April 2020 as a convening of Colorado nonprofit organizations, businesses, academic institutions, government agencies, and individual policy experts with the goal of envisioning a response to the COVID-19 pandemic that delivered change for the better. We believe in a regenerative future for Colorado — a future with a robust local economy that meets human needs abundantly and equitably and provides clean air, water, food, and energy to all.

Our 2022 policy platform contained bold, transformational policy ideas that were recommended, ranked, and prioritized by our Coalition members. These policies share the goals of strengthening our state's economy, helping to create the workforce of the future, building resilient communities, and preparing Colorado for a changing climate.

"The Alliance Center's response to the pandemic has been impressive. From zero to 60 in a flash they have mobilized a powerful coalition and partnered with the legislature in a new and refreshing way to help drive systems change."

*Alec Garnett
Speaker of the Colorado House of Representatives, 2021 – 2022*

We are proud that Colorado lawmakers enacted many policies aligned with our 2022 platform, such as SB22-193 (Air Quality Improvement Investments), SB22-213 (Child Care Support Programs), and HB22-1304 (State Grants Investments Local Affordable Housing). In total, the Colorado General Assembly passed 24 bills aligned with our 2022 Policy Platform during the 2022 Legislative Session – 23 of which were signed into law by Governor Polis. A complete list of these bills can be found beginning on page 5.

This 2023 policy platform builds on this progress by identifying key policy areas where there is still work to be done and incorporating a new round of policy suggestions provided by our Coalition members. As in 2022, many policy ideas have been weaved together to create “policy packages” with multiple elements. All policies included in this platform align with the eight building blocks of a regenerative recovery that guide our coalition's work.

Our 2022 platform also focused on calling attention to policy areas where funding from The American Rescue Plan (ARPA) of 2021, which earmarked over \$3.8 billion for the State of Colorado's efforts to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, could potentially be applied. This 2023 platform turns its attention to the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022 and how its

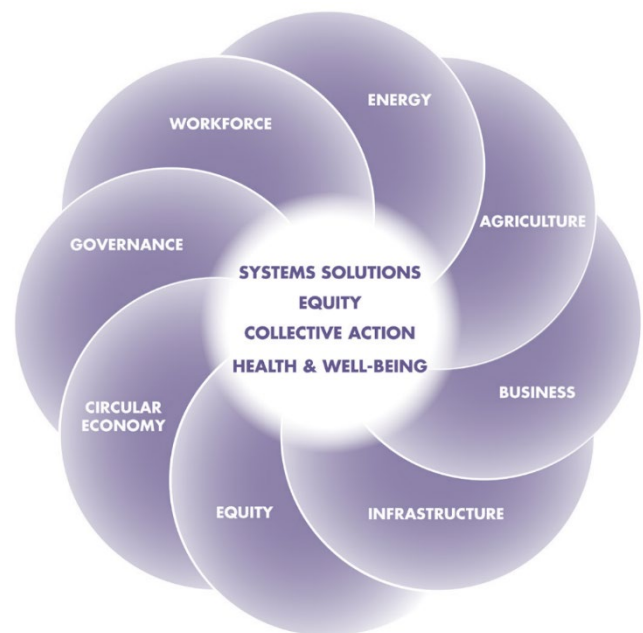
historic investments in climate policy could potentially be applied to help Colorado prepare for a changing climate and transition rapidly to renewable, distributive, reliable energy.

Our coalition remains committed to our goal of building a regenerative economy to deliver shared prosperity in a state leading the charge for a healthy planet. We appreciate the opportunity to present Colorado lawmakers with our 2023 Policy Platform to help our state accomplish this vital goal.

RRC POLICY BUILDING BLOCKS

Our regenerative policy framework rests on **eight building blocks** informed by deep community listening. Over 200+ citizens and leaders in Colorado contributed to the creation of this framework. The building blocks listed below are designed and advanced in an intersectional manner where one project, initiative or program will have an impact across many – if not all – of these areas.

1. **Energy & Environment** – Transition rapidly to renewable, distributed, and reliable energy.
2. **Agriculture** – Improve soil health, strengthen, and support regenerative food systems and communities.
3. **Workforce** – Prioritize human dignified workforce development.
4. **Business** – Build, engage and support regenerative organizations and industries.
5. **Circular Economy** – Adopt regenerative and circular economic models.
6. **Equity** – Empower and inform the people to crowdsource solutions that work for them.
7. **Governance** – Increase civic participation to strengthen democratic systems and pass regenerative policies.
8. **Infrastructure** – Design infrastructure through biomimicry and honor the connection to the natural environment as we build forward.



These eight building blocks are grounded in the foundation of: driving systems level solutions through collective action, and weaving equity through all our work advance well-being for all.

POLICY CATEGORIES

This report presents policy recommendations divided into three categories:











1. **Top Priority Proposals** - These ideas represent the top priorities of RRC members to be addressed through legislation.
2. **Additional Policy Goals** - Additional policy ideas shared by RRC members for lawmaker consideration.
3. **Needs Further Development** - Policy ideas that show promise but require additional development alongside lawmakers, policy experts, and impacted communities.

2022 POLICY VICTORIES



































Our 2022 Policy Platform was distributed to every single state legislator in the winter of 2021 including both Democrats and Republicans as well as over 90 members of the state administration. Coalition leadership met with several legislators and their staff in addition to the Speaker of the House and President of the Senate numerous times through the summer of 2021 and into the 2022 session. In addition, the Coalition team was invited to testify for the Economic Recovery and Relief Task force as well as the Climate and Energy Committees.

This work contributed to the passage of 24 bills aligned with RRC's 2022 policy platform¹ by the Colorado General Assembly, 23 of which were signed into law by Governor Polis. These transformational bills represent over \$526 million in state spending over the next two years. These incredible wins are only possible through collaboration. Hundreds of coalition members contributed ideas and helped to develop them. Numerous advocacy groups worked in the trenches leading up to and through the 2022 session doing the arduous work to draft and pass these bills.

Alignment with the eight regenerative building blocks of our 2022 policy platform is indicated using iconography (see Appendix for key).

Bill #	Bill Subject	Relevant RRC Policy Priorities	RRC Policy Building Blocks	Signed into law?
SB22-180	Programs To Reduce Ozone Through Increased Transit	Platform ideas 20 & 30	  	Yes
HB22-1244	Public Protections From Toxic Air Contaminants	Platform idea 4	 	Yes
HB22-1362	Building Greenhouse Gas Emission	Platform idea 3	  	Yes
SB22-213	Child Care Support Programs	Platform idea 22	 	Yes

¹ Our 2022 policy platform can be viewed online at bit.ly/RRCPlatform2022

<u>SB22-232</u>	Creation Of Colorado Workforce Housing Trust Authority	Platform idea 7	 	Yes
<u>HB22-1380</u>	Critical Services For Low-income Households	Platform ideas 14 & 15	 	Yes
<u>SB22-206</u>	Disaster Preparedness And Recovery Resources	Platform ideas 3, 7, 16, & 17	 	Yes
<u>SB22-176</u>	Early Stage Front Range Passenger Rail Funding	Platform idea 20	 	Yes
<u>SB22-182</u>	Economic Mobility Program	Platform idea 5	 	Yes
<u>HB22-1326</u>	Fentanyl Accountability And Prevention	Platform idea 19		Yes
<u>HB22-1355</u>	Producer Responsibility Program For Recycling	Platform idea 6		Yes
<u>SB22-193</u>	Air Quality Improvement Investments	Platform ideas 4, 20, & 25	 	Yes
<u>SB22-140</u>	Expansion Of Experiential Learning Opportunities	Platform idea 10	 	Yes
<u>HB22-1414</u>	Healthy Meals For All Public School Students	Platform idea 15	 	Yes (ref. to 2022 ballot & passed)
<u>HB22-1013</u>	Microgrids For Community Resilience Grant Program	Platform idea 4	 	Yes
<u>HB22-1151</u>	Turf Replacement Program	Platform idea 9		Yes
<u>HB22-1159</u>	Waste Diversion And Circular Economy Development Center	Platform idea 6		Yes
<u>HB22-1249</u>	Electric Grid Resilience And Reliability Roadmap	Platform idea 4	 	Yes
<u>HB22-1359</u>	Colorado Household Financial Recovery Program	Platform idea 5		Yes
<u>SB22-198</u>	Orphaned Oil And Gas Wells Enterprise	Platform idea 2		Yes
<u>HB22-1362</u>	Building Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Platform idea 3	 	Yes
<u>SB22-051</u>	Policies To Reduce Emissions From Built Environment	Platform idea 3	 	Yes
<u>HB22-1304</u>	State Grants Investments Local Affordable Housing	Platform ideas 7 & 19	 	Yes
<u>HB22-1218</u>	Resource Efficiency Buildings Electric Vehicles	Platform idea 20	 	No (passed legislature, <u>vetoed</u> by Governor)

2023 POLICY PLATFORM

TOP PRIORITY PROPOSALS

Top priorities of RRC members to be addressed through legislation



JUST TRANSITION FOR FOSSIL FUEL DEPENDENT COMMUNITIES

As Colorado continues its transition to renewable energies to meet our Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reduction goals, we have a moral responsibility to assist workers and communities in regions heavily dependent on fossil fuel development through economic investments in workforce development programs, individual worker support, bolstering local economies that are overly reliant on tax revenues from the sector, and repairing the negative environmental harms relating to the production, transportation and refinement of oil and gas. The oil and gas extraction, pipeline construction and transportation, and support industries for oil and gas make up just [1.8% of total wages in the state, 3.4% of total personal income, 3.3% of GDP and less than 1% \(0.7%\) of total employment](#). Despite these numbers, taxes received from industry play a huge role in supporting the economic well-being of communities centered around oil & gas development.

While the climate crisis will have far reaching impacts for the state's economy as a whole and demands urgent action, we must also ensure that these oil and gas dependent communities are not left behind due to changes within the energy sector. The lack of focus on just transition programming for the oil and gas sector highlights a current gap in Colorado state policy, despite trends showing that the industry is already in decline and will continue to shrink in the coming decades – 12,000 jobs have been lost in the sector since 2019 alone (Bureau of Labor Statistics). [These trends](#) are expected to continue as the U.S. transitions to renewable energies and puts continued focus on decreasing GHG emissions.

In addition to addressing worker and community support, the environmental justice component of a Just Transition should not be overlooked. Oil and gas production is a top source of ozone pollution leading to severe air quality nonattainment along the [Front Range](#), with impacts felt most acutely by those living closest to oil and gas production and refining sites, which are most often low-income communities and communities of color. In addition, the oil and gas industry and related combustion of GHGs plays a major role in accelerating the climate crisis. These issues place a significant financial burden on Coloradoans. [Economic damages](#) from the oil and gas sector in the US are predicted to be between \$13 billion-\$29 billion, which is mostly due to health damages from premature deaths. Since their premature death estimates for Colorado is about 3.7% of the national estimates, total damages for Colorado will be between \$480 million and \$1 billion. The current economic model of the oil and gas industry externalizes

costs such as land, water and air pollution disproportionately on low-income and communities of color. Policy should support moving towards distributive and regenerative economic models that protect the environment and public health, center frontline communities, and build local resilience and prosperity.

Just Transition Roundtable Stakeholder Process

The RRC convened a Just Transition Roundtable Series with 30 participants including representatives from labor, environmental justice, economic policy, community groups, and individuals both currently and formerly working within the oil and gas industry to start a dialogue around the needs surrounding the transition away from fossil fuels as the state pushes towards a decarbonized future. The conversations were facilitated by Colorado State University's Institute for the Built Environment, and produced the following policy recommendations below with strong consensus from roundtable participants. Please note that the following recommendations have been edited for brevity – a more comprehensive summary of Just Transition Roundtable Series deliberations and recommendations can be found at our website.

1. Identify and assign duties to state and local government offices to implement Just Transition policies for oil and gas workers and communities

- A. Establish (or identify and fund accordingly) a state body to create and work with local coordinator offices to coordinate the following state and local resources to identify and manage economic transition efforts and assess local conditions and needs. Relevant departments and offices include:
 - Colorado Energy Office (CEO)
 - Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE)
 - Office of Just Transition
 - Office of Future of Work
 - Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA)
 - State Resiliency Office
 - Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA)
 - Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC)
 - Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT)
 - Council of Governments (COGs)²
- B. Use this coordinated approach to implement the following policy recommendations:
 - Work with economists and social scientists to research critical transition focus areas and demographic profiles for Fenceline¹ energy impacted communities to identify the most impacted by the energy transition and to allocate funding and resources accordingly.
 - Specify or create, guide, fund, and coordinate the institutions that would support a statewide Just Transition program to include retraining, community and individual

² A Council of Governments (COG) is a voluntary association of local governments formed under Colorado law. COGs represent county commissioners, mayors, city council members, and other local government officials and offices across the state of Colorado.

economic support, and opportunities and justice for disproportionately impacted communities.

- Develop retraining programs within the state education system, including childcare, stipends, free tuition, and other resources required to maximize participation in retraining.
- Establish a stakeholder process with set goals and benchmarks; assure local participation in partnership with community liaisons.
- Support "bid aggregation" to boost capacity of localities to bolster their power to apply for funds, benefit from and implement related programs.
- Identify available funding from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and future proposals and funding sources at state and federal levels; coordinate with state agencies and local governments to draw down federal funds.
- Apply for funds for both retraining and also to create a fund, potentially through the state green bank, to backfill the budgets for special districts in energy impacted communities.
- Allow for funding flexibility and matching options from private sector or NGOs to leverage state dollars.
- Establish grants programs and/or fixed allocations to localities based on need, potential, and community consensus.

2. Enhance and ensure workplace safety and protections for past, current, and future oil & gas workers.

- A. Identify and address gaps in current worker health and job site safety.
- B. Provide access to health care (including mental health services) for transitioning workers (potential for portable benefits) and their family members.
- C. Create or enhance whistleblower protections and enforcement for current and future oil and gas workers.
- D. Address the unique needs of undocumented workers including financial supports, access to legal resources, and healthcare options.

3. Individual Support and Workforce Development

- A. Create workforce development, training/retraining, skill transfer, education programs, and tuition support for current, past, and future transitioning workers. Include wraparound services for transitioning workers during education and training periods.
 - Leverage existing skills during transition into a new or related career (i.e. emerging green economy fields) while prioritizing comparable pay, benefits, and glide paths to retirement.
 - Eliminate barriers to training opportunities by including income subsidies and benefit maintenance, pension portability, childcare, relocation support, and tuition coverage for new training programs.

- Prioritize use of prevailing wage, provisions for hiring impacted workforce and include Project Labor Agreements and Community Benefit Agreements on new energy projects when possible.
 - Bolster union apprenticeship programs with a focus on new/emerging electrification and clean energy technologies.
 - Establish renewable energy education opportunities at high school and higher education levels.
 - Leverage federal and state funding sources like the IRA or IIJA for workers and communities.
 - Create a fund, perhaps through the state green bank, to backfill the budgets for special districts in the locations that will be most impacted as oil and gas production decreases.
 - Create an Impacted Worker Fund; assess possibility of requesting funds from the National Dislocated Worker Grant program.
- B. Communicate and engage with workers and communities early and often.
- Incorporate union leadership into decision making and delivering news and education about coming transition.
 - Engage impacted individuals and communities in identifying solutions and opportunities in multiple languages.
 - Provide support for school districts and community services that currently obtain funding from oil and gas economy.
 - Work with local governments, social service agencies, financing offices, community-based organizations (CBOs) and faith communities to identify needs.
4. Provide business and workforce development that supports electrification and clean energy industry jobs for disproportionately impacted community members.
- A. Prioritize benefiting historically marginalized and minority-owned businesses and communities with renewable energy investment and incentive programs. It is essential to ensure funds specifically benefit low income and underrepresented groups.
- B. Provide technical assistance to low-income communities, state-level investments in building up an individual community's capacity to access both federal and state funds, and to ensure that funds are equitably distributed.
5. Industry-replacement, Community Economic Support, and Taxes
- A. Provide incentives/subsidies for renewable energy development and new industries comparable to oil and gas in pay and benefits.
- When creating new environmental and labor mandates and regulations, provide funding and support so businesses and communities can meet requirements - require bonding for the workforce.
 - Ensure alternate jobs are "good jobs", consider strongest union requirements and include sectoral bargaining for the renewable energy sector.

- Increase state investments/funding for oil and gas transition projects and alternative employment opportunities.
- Support economic feasibility studies for communities who are at greatest economic risk.
- Work with Office of Just Transition to identify and implement lessons learned from the Coal transition to better meet needs for oil and gas industry.
- Provide financial and administrative support for Colorado based start-up companies engaged in renewable energy, efficiency, and electrification.
- Identify specific industries that oil and gas workers could transition to such as:
 - Construction industry
 - Regenerative agriculture
 - Firefighting, both government agencies and contractors
 - Consider healthcare, IT jobs etc. that don't require 4-year programs
 - Well pugging, abandoning and other remediation work
 - Electrification, efficiency, and clean energy technologies such as ground/air source heat pumps, transportation electrification, and renewable energy storage.

B. Address tax implications

- Consider passing new taxes, fees on oil and gas industry, or repealing parts of TABOR to ensure adequate funding into Just Transition programming.
- Identify alternative revenue sources to replace severance taxes from oil and gas development.
- Modify state tax and budget structure to provide support for transitioning communities to fill in gap for revenue that local governments are losing.
- Institute an export fee on oil and gas exports (Polis references a polluter tax but a new tax like this would need to go to voters for approval whereas a fee would not).
- Address the fact that schools are generally funded half-state, half-local. Some counties have passed mill levy overrides to give more to schools: reforming state-level funding formulas to ensure equity/backfill lost revenue for Just Transition communities through legislation.
- Implement a polluter tax to address injustice of historic emissions directly impacting communities.
- Implement a windfall tax to address the boom and bust nature of the oil and gas industry.

C. Create programs for oil and gas companies to fund and assist this transition.

- Require that every well possess an individual trust fund, a sinking trust fund, and the full cost bond, so the industry pays for plugging and abandonment.
- Establish state strategic fund for a just transition.
- Offer housing for retraining workers, support rent to own opportunities where possible.
- Require operators to submit a transition plan for their workers to retrain.

- Create tax incentives or mandates for the industry to submit plans to transition using their assets into clean energy, such as solar, wind, geothermal energy, and green hydrogen.
 - Explore the feasibility of instituting a carbon tax as an incentive to spur investments in cleaner technologies as well as fund the just transition for workers/communities.
 - Address tax subsidy imbalances afforded to oil and gas industry.
 - D. Provide economic incentives that accelerate beneficial electrification, energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies, as well as clean replacements for petroleum products, plastics, and certain chemicals.
 - Support economic and social feasibility studies and innovation grants for emerging technologies such as green hydrogen, geoexchange, ground source heat pumps.
 - Provide priority workforce development opportunities for dislocated workers and green industrial policy for DI workers and communities.
6. Environmental Responsibility
- A. Enact policy for a managed decrease and phase out of new oil and gas permits by 2030 to align with global climate targets, while developing and transitioning a workforce with the skills and expertise necessary for Colorado to be a leader in a just transition to a clean, renewable energy future.
 - When developing new energy projects and transitioning to renewable energy sources, employ the strongest possible regulations applying to environmental, community and worker safety.
 - Ensure that the timeline for a just transition complements the timeline for a new permitting phaseout.
 - Task the COGCC with developing a plan to decrease the number of new oil and gas permits annually toward a phase out by 2030 and transition the agencies' focus to oversight of monitoring emissions leaks, recapping and remediation as needed of Colorado's 100K+ existing wells.
 - All agencies to apply careful strategic planning regarding how society uses the remaining fossil fuels, with a focused effort to minimize emissions from existing fossil fuel energy infrastructure and set targets to end production of all fossil fuels to achieve climate goals.
 - B. Eliminate the most harmful and polluting wells, refineries, and projects first as a way to address air, water, and soil contamination, especially considering the cumulative impacts within disproportionately impacted communities.
 - Reduce and/or deny permits based on close proximity to homes, schools, water sources, in DI communities, and ozone nonattainment areas.
 - Build on the important progress made with the passage of SB 22-198 (Orphaned Oil and Gas Wells Enterprise) by ensuring the orphaned wells mitigation enterprise and orphaned wells mitigation enterprise cash fund created by SB 22-198 have the funding and resources necessary to fully mitigate the liability presented to Colorado Taxpayers by orphaned and abandoned wells, and by increasing mitigation fees on operators if needed to achieve this goal.

- Create a state program office with dedicated funding, utilizing existing federal and state funding sources, to employ and transition workers to inventory, monitor and plug orphaned/abandoned wells at prevailing wages.
 - Identify incentives to develop renewable energy projects on environmentally toxic land previously used for oil and gas extraction and production.
 - Invest in soil and land restoration affected by oil and gas production and refinement in conjunction with local tribes and communities, soil scientists and land restoration experts.
- C. Promote agrivoltaics/ wind farms, regenerative agriculture and other solutions to reduce emissions, sequester carbon and retain water, and support food localization to bolster local economies and reduce emissions.
- Invest in healthier alternatives to replace petrochemicals used to create everyday products.
7. Mitigate Community Health Impacts
- A. Address existing and future harms while reducing negative health impacts from oil and gas extraction, use, processing and production for fence line communities and residents in ozone nonattainment areas.
- Ensure compliance and enforcement of environmental and health laws, regulations, and policies at the Federal, State, and local levels.
 - Require industry to provide indoor air filtration systems to remove hazardous air pollutants released by production facilities.
 - Provide impacted communities with guidance in accessing IRA and other funding to convert to all-electric homes.
 - Phase out existing oil and gas production and consumption by eliminating the most harmful projects and processes first e.g. those in closest proximity to schools, homes and other occupied buildings, water sources, parks, open space and other high-use areas, and superfund sites.
 - Create regulations to require oil and gas corporations participate and pay for well cleanup projects.
- B. Directly engage, educate, and empower impacted communities to determine the desired solutions for individual communities including providing reliable data and information.
- Identify environmental justice priority areas and specify who is included in the definition of Disproportionately Impacted Communities³, historically marginalized, under-served, disadvantaged and impacted communities.
 - Create positions for government community liaisons so residents have a specific venue to voice concerns and can be directed to the appropriate agencies or departments to address concerns. Employ workers and community members in local transition centers.

³ A community that is in a census block group where the proportion of households that are low income, that identify as minority, or that are housing cost-burdened is greater than 40%; or any other community as identified or approved by a state agency, if the community: Has a history of environmental racism perpetuated through redlining, anti-Indigenous, anti-immigrant, anti-Hispanic, or anti-Black laws; or is one where multiple factors may act cumulatively to affect health and the environment and contribute to persistent disparities.

- Provide accountability tracking mechanisms to ensure community concerns are heard and addressed.
- Establish a legal fund or new legal structure to help impacted families address operators who violate pollution standards or who are responsible for related spills, fires, or explosions.
- Establish an industry-funded pool to cover health-related expenses for people suffering from health issues linked to pollution from fracking such as asthma attacks, premature birth, childhood leukemia and other conditions.

IRA Funding Potential

- A. Title V, Subtitle A, Sec. 50123 (State-based home energy efficiency contractor training grants) provides states with funds to implement a training program for contractors involved in energy efficiency and electrification.
- B. Title VI, Subtitle A, Sec. 60103 (Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund) provides \$7 billion to states, municipalities, and tribal governments to make grants and loans for zero-emissions technologies in disadvantaged communities.
- C. Title VI, Subtitle B, Sec. 60201 (Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grants) provides \$3 billion to a partnership between “(i) an Indian tribe, a local government, or an institution of higher education; 3 and 4 “(ii) a community-based nonprofit organization; “(B) a community-based nonprofit organization; or “(C) a partnership of community-based nonprofit organizations for community-led air and other pollution monitoring, prevention, and remediation, and investments in low- and zero-emission and resilient technologies and related infrastructure and workforce development that help reduce greenhouse gas.



PROMOTE & EXPAND REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

Transitioning to regenerative agricultural practices is one of the most effective solutions to addressing the climate crisis as it draws carbon out of the atmosphere and helps to restore the carbon cycle. The sequestration of carbon in soil is one of the promising potential solutions to the global climate crisis. Research shows that agricultural soils have the potential to sequester 250 million metric tons of greenhouse gasses annually

Some of the biggest barriers to implementing these practices for Colorado farmers and ranchers is a lack of awareness of available options, resources, capacity, and technical expertise. It is vital that state lawmakers continue to enact policies to ensure that Colorado’s agriculture and food system embraces a more climate resilient future, creates robust local systems and markets,

increases economic equity for farmers and ranchers, and reconnects people to their food sources and each other.

The RRC's Regenerative Agriculture and Food System working group consists of more than 105 local farmers, ranchers, food systems experts, soil health experts, regenerative agriculture practitioners, grocery store representatives, county commissioners, educational institutions, students, engaged citizens and more. In addition to acting as a catalyst for nearly one hundred connections between local food systems and agricultural professionals that enable them to do their jobs better and in more meaningful ways, this working group has also generated numerous policy recommendations, which have been combined with additional ideas gathered from RRC members below. Please note that the following recommendations have been edited for brevity – a more comprehensive summary of Regenerative Agriculture and Food System working group deliberations and recommendations can be found at our website.

A. Expand Healthy Soils Challenge / Restore Colorado Grant Program

- The Healthy Soils Challenge is a voluntary collaboration between restaurants and other food businesses to fund grants to support ranchers and farmers as they implement regenerative agriculture practices such as composting, cover cropping, and no-till farming.
- Private sector partners in the restaurant industry can generate funds to support these grants by implementing a 1% fee on food and beverage sales.
- This model is best exemplified by Boulder County's [Restore Colorado program](#), which uses funds generated from participating businesses to fund spreading compost on depleted soil, cover cropping, technical assistance, and more – whether a producer is already practicing regenerative agriculture, or just taking their first steps toward carbon farming⁴.
- Restore Colorado is currently limited to Boulder County, and is a voluntary public-private collaboration facilitated by a nonprofit organization called Zero Foodprint.
- These activities must be significantly scaled up to move Colorado to 100% regenerative agriculture.
- State lawmakers should explore options to significantly increase funding for these programs with a goal of generating \$200M per year in order to implement regenerative practices on roughly 2 million acres per year.
 - Options include expanding outreach and incentives to encourage more businesses to participate, or to implement a 1% statewide fee on food and beverage sales to expand programs modeled after Restore Colorado.

⁴ "Carbon farming" is synonymous with the term, "regenerative agriculture" when that term is explicitly rooted in an understanding of the underlying system dynamics and positive feedback processes that actually make a "regenerative" upward spiral of soil fertility and farm productivity possible.

- B. Expand the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) Saving Tomorrow's Agricultural Resources (STAR) program – The CDA's STAR and STAR Plus programs make up Colorado's current soil health program.
- [The STAR program](#) provides a simple framework that allows farmers and ranchers to evaluate their current production system, identify areas for improved management to increase soil health, document their progress, and share their successes. The evaluation system assigns points for management activities on an annual basis and scores are converted to a 1 to 5 STAR Rating, with 5 STARS indicating commitment to a suite of practices proven to improve soil health, water quality and water availability. Currently, Colorado farmers and ranchers can visit the STAR website to request and receive a STAR Rating, with the first 100 participants receiving a free soil health test.
 - The STAR Plus program provides financial and technical assistance to producers as they implement new practices on one field over three years and consider adopting them across their operations. Participants gain familiarity and expertise with new practices and an increased understanding of the environmental and economic outcomes associated with them. STAR Plus also provides significant capacity support, equipment grants, training and other support to conservation districts and eligible entities so that they can provide technical assistance to landowners where and when they need it in a new way. These partners provide the trusted local support and knowledge to ensure producer success. CDA launched the STAR Plus program with 131 farmers and ranchers participating.
 - State lawmakers should build on the important progress made with [HB21-1181](#) (Agricultural Soil Health Program) and [SB21-235](#) (Stimulus Funding Department Of Agriculture Efficiency Programs) by expanding funding for the STAR and STAR Plus programs, including funds to promote these programs to as many Colorado farmers and ranchers as possible. One potential option to promote these programs is to provide funding to regularly distribute free soil health test kits along with information on CDA's soil health programs to all Colorado Farmers and ranchers.
- C. Infrastructure – Invest in infrastructure and equipment at our agricultural experiment stations throughout the state so they can convert to all regenerative practices and serve as models for local communities to learn and emulate.
- Create 1:1 matching funds for purchases of regenerative agricultural infrastructure improvements such as precision irrigation equipment, equipment to repair and/or replace aging ditches and pipelines, and no-till planters or other equipment enabling regenerative agriculture practices.
 - Support subsidized soil health testing for farmers and homeowners.
 - Support expansion of the Colorado State University (CSU) soil testing laboratory to the CSU Spur Campus in Denver.
- D. Economic Development – Support economic development opportunities related to soil-based carbon sequestration through CSU's Soil Carbon Solutions Center.

- E. Define Agriculture as an Advanced Industry and create new funding programs through the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) with the goal of establishing Colorado as a global hub for innovation in Regenerative Agriculture.
- F. Biochar Remediation – Fund deployment of biochar for farmers, forestry management and fire mitigation, land reclamation, etc. Biochar amends soil, increases crop yield, conserves water and also mitigates heavy metals, toxins and industrial agriculture chemicals. Fund mobile biochar pilot projects for forestry management and fire mitigation.
- G. Workforce Development via Colorado State University (CSU) – Fund agricultural workforce development through CSU’s new RamSkiller non-credit online platform focused on agriculture and technology.
- H. Public education campaign for farmers – Increase farmers’ understanding of the benefits, return on investment and practices of regenerative agriculture; promote the sharing of best practices and expertise.
- I. Value added products – Explore vendor matching to find markets to produce value-added products, making use of “less than perfect” agricultural products and diverting food waste. E.g., peach growers connecting to a cider company.
- J. Continue to support the CDA Block Grant; This could allow neighborhoods to design projects that could be replicated and used as educational tools.
- K. SNAP Funds – Provide additional money for SNAP to support regenerative farming practices.

IRA Funding Potential

- A. Title II, Subtitle B, Sec. 21001 (Additional agricultural conservation investments) provides funds to farmers that utilize climate stewardship practices such as improving soil carbon and reducing methane emissions from ruminants. While these funds are to be provided directly to individual farms, state lawmakers should explore ways to ensure Colorado farmers are made aware of this opportunity and receive assistance in applying for these funds if needed.
- B. Title II, Subtitle B, Sec. 21002 (Conservation technical assistance) provides conservation technical assistance through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and funds a carbon sequestration and GHG emissions quantification program through the NRCS.
- C. Title II, Subtitle D, Sec. 23003 (State and private forestry conservation programs) provides \$1.5 billion in Grants to States through the Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program to acquire land, with priority given for land with high carbon sequestration potential.



ELECTRIFICATION OF BUILDINGS

- Building Efficiency: Incentivize the electrification of all current buildings and new construction. For existing infrastructure, provide rebates for homeowners, building owners to modernize their buildings through electrification. Colorado took an important step towards these goals with the passage of HB22-1362 (Building Greenhouse Gas Emissions) and SB22-051 (Policies To Reduce Emissions From Built Environment), and lawmakers should build on this success with similar policies including the following:
 - Require gas utilities to develop and implement a plan to phase out over the next two years all natural gas hookups for new and remodeled buildings greater than 10,000 sq ft.
 - End permits for natural gas hot water, natural gas building heat, and natural gas in new construction (including cooking) by 2024.
 - Require net zero carbon criteria for any housing or construction receiving state funding. At a minimum, any housing projects receiving funds must meet three criteria:
 - Highly energy efficient (modeled to exceed the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code by at least 10 percent, regardless of less-stringent local codes in place)
 - Powered at least partially by onsite renewable energy
 - All-electric space and water heating.
- Implement energy retrofits on public schools and other public buildings by improving and expanding the building electrification for public buildings grant program established by HB22-1362.
- Create additional incentives for onsite distributed renewable energy generation and storage.
- Build on the important progress made in SB22-206 (disaster preparedness and recovery) by continuing to create and expand programs such as the sustainable rebuilding program established in the Colorado Energy Office by SB22-206.
- Rebates/Credits – Boost existing utility and local municipal rebate offerings to replace older models of electric and gas equipment with high efficiency alternatives like tankless water heaters and cooling-only DX equipment with heat pump versions.
- Continue to improve and expand the building electrification for public buildings grant program, the high-efficiency electric heating and appliances grant program, and the clean air building investments fund established by HB22-1362 (Building Greenhouse Gas Emissions).
- Build on the important progress made with the passage of SB22-051 (Policies To Reduce Emissions From Built Environment) by increasing the state income tax incentives established by SB22-051 to help offset the costs of purchasing heat pump and energy storage systems for residential and commercial properties. SB22-051 established these incentives at 10% of purchase price further increasing this percentage will encourage wider adoption of these energy efficient technologies
 - Provide funding for LED lighting replacement.

- Provide user information in multiple languages and distribute in rural and mountain areas.
- Implement permanent solar and wind tax credits.
- Provide incentives for builders who focus on efficiency and/or include rooftop solar and/or community solar gardens.
- Equity
 - Pay for customer-sited solar so low-income families can own, or access, in multifamily buildings to cut utility bills. Subsidize one or more solar co-ops (bulk purchase of rooftop solar) for low income or non-profit building owners at \$5,000 per building.
 - Increase weatherization. Use a systematic, house-by-house approach that explicitly starts with the zip codes with the highest number of households living below the poverty line.
 - Work with local utility providers to identify high energy consumption outliers and incentivize them specifically to increase efficiency and weatherization.
- HVAC training – Statewide grants & investment in HVAC technician training on installation and maintenance of energy efficient heating and cooling options such as mini-splits, air source heat pumps, ground source heat pumps, and electric water heaters.

Implementation Suggestion: Task the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) with setting and enforcing building codes (or at least the energy code) for jurisdictions without any (DOLA has existing authority over codes for factory-built housing as well hotels, motels, and multifamily in areas without any codes). Ensure that there are energy standards in place and code enforcement: Emission standards for furnaces and water heaters – the biggest energy users in houses and the second and third biggest (after lighting) in commercial buildings.

IRA Funding Potential

- A. Title V, Subtitle A, Sec. 50122 (High-efficiency electric home rebate program) awards grants to State energy offices to develop and implement a high-efficiency electric home rebate program at the point of sale to income eligible individuals for efficiency improvements such as heat pumps, induction stoves, insulation, electric load service center upgrades, and wiring. Could be administered by the Colorado Energy Office.
- B. Title V, Subtitle A, Sec. 50123 (State-based home energy efficiency contractor training grants) provides states with funds to implement a training program for contractors involved in energy efficiency and electrification.
- C. Title V, Subtitle A, Sec. 50131 (Assistance for latest and zero building energy code adoption) provides grants to assist states and local entities to adopt more stringent building codes and zero energy building codes.
- D. Title VI, Subtitle A, Sec. 60107 (Low Emissions Electricity Program) provides for grants to low-income and disadvantaged communities and to offer technical assistance to industry, state, and local governments as they work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- E. Title VI, Subtitle A, Sec. 50121 (Home energy performance-based, whole house rebates) awards grants to state energy offices to create a HOMES rebate program, which will provide

rebates to contractors and homeowners for completing a whole-house energy retrofit up to \$4,000 for single family homes and \$400,000 for multi-family homes. Could be administered by the Colorado Energy Office.



OUTDOOR & INDOOR AIR QUALITY

- It is widely studied and known that air pollution can cause health problems – such as heart disease, strokes, diabetes, asthma and high blood pressure – that have been identified as pre-existing medical conditions that increase risk of death from COVID-19, RSV, the Flu, and other respiratory infections. Both indoor and outdoor air quality are of the utmost importance in the ongoing fight for a healthier state.
- Fund stringent air quality control measures through the rapid decarbonization of all sectors of our economy through investments in renewable energy, transitioning away fossil fuel production, and implementing strict regulations on polluting industries.
- Continue to fund investments in the clean energy sector to support transportation electrification, building efficiency, and decarbonization of our aviation industry.
- Establish more stringent regulations on polluting industries such as power plants and oil & gas operations. Colorado took an important step towards this goal with the passage of HB22-1244 (Public Protections from Toxic Air Contaminants) and must continue to build on this progress.
- Build on the important progress made with the passage of SB22-193 (Air Quality Improvement Investments) by continuing to fund and expand the clean air grant program established by SB22-193 to support voluntary projects to reduce air pollutants from industrial and manufacturing operations.
- Provide funding to support fire management and controlled burns in areas of increased wildfire risk.
- Install air purifying technology in all state and public buildings in Colorado, provide funding for small businesses to install these systems as well.
- Ensure that there is an added credit for likewise installing renewable energy systems alongside the air filtration systems.
- Continue to build on the important progress made with the passage of HB22-1012 (Microgrids for Community Resilience Grant Program) by continuing to fund and expand the microgrids for community resilience grant program created by HB22-1012.
- Study the impacts of air disinfection devices on ambient air quality to inform scale.

IRA Funding Potential

- A. Title VI, Subtitle A, Sec. 60103 (Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund) provides \$7 billion to states, municipalities, and tribal governments to make grants and loans for zero-emissions technologies in disadvantaged communities and an additional \$20 billion to nonprofits (green banks) to provide loans and grants to greenhouse gas and air pollution reduction programs – \$8 billion of which is set aside for disadvantaged, low-income communities.
- B. Title VI, Subtitle A, Sec. 60105 (Funding to address air pollution) provides grants, rebates, and loans for Air Pollution Monitoring with an emphasis on benefits for disadvantaged communities exposed to persistent air pollution.
- C. Title VI, Subtitle A, Sec. 60107 (Low Emissions Electricity Program) provides for grants to low-income and disadvantaged communities and to offer technical assistance to industry, state, and local governments as they work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- D. Title VI, Subtitle A, Sec. 60114 (Climate pollution reduction grants) provides grants for programs, policies, measures, and projects that will achieve or facilitate the reduction of greenhouse gas air pollution.
- E. Title VI, Subtitle B, Sec. 60201 (Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grants) provides grants for community-led pollution monitoring, prevention, and remediation, and investments in low- and zero-emission and resilient technologies and related infrastructure and workforce development to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants.



RACIAL EQUITY

- Upward Mobility: Build on the important progress made with the passage of SB22-182 (Economic Mobility Program) by continuing to invest in initiatives to make public benefits more accessible and devoting more state dollars to programs devoted to improving health and educational outcomes associated with reduced poverty and improved economic mobility such as the economic mobility program created by SB22-182.
 - Evaluate and expand upon the successful elements of HB22-1359 (Colorado Household Financial Recovery Program) by broadening its scope beyond those negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic to become a reliable source of affordable banking products and other financial services for low-income individuals and households, with an emphasis on historically underserved communities of color.
 - Establish a state commitment that federal dollars will go preferentially to low-income communities. Start with the recently signed small business stimulus bill. Have the business community provide support, resources and a scholarship fund focused on BIPOC students.

- Engage the business community to provide support for the students of color to navigate the educational/training system, especially for first-generation students.
- Free community college for two years for all students graduating from a Colorado high school.
- Ensure that documents containing post-high school information are available in languages including Vietnamese, Chinese, Arabic and Spanish to eliminate the language barrier.
- Set up an auto-sealing program (or auto-expungement) program to seal/expunge records of convicted persons of now legal drug-related crimes as well as other low-level non-violent offenses.
- Workplace – Work with NGOs such as Focus Points, Project Voyce, Colorado Inclusive Economy, Jobs with Justice and The Equity Project to advance racial equity in communities and workplaces.
 - Establish equity and inclusion standards in the trades.
 - Incentivize or offer training in equity, diversity and inclusion to employers so they can familiarize themselves with the obstacles of diversifying their workforce.
- Board Representation – Fund review of “State Blue Book” of Boards and Commissions to make board member selection inclusive, resulting in more racially and ethnically diverse appointees.
 - Increase the stipend for members from marginalized communities to serve.
 - Encourage members of boards and commissions to nominate BIPOC community members to replace them once their terms are over.
- Voting Access – Fund more voting centers and ballot boxes in BIPOC communities across the state.
- Environmental Justice Investments – prioritize directing investments in climate mitigation and clean infrastructure to disproportionately impacted, disadvantaged communities

IRA Funding Potential

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- D. Title VI, Subtitle B, Sec. 60201 (Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grants) provides grants for community-led pollution monitoring, prevention, and remediation, and

investments in low- and zero-emission and resilient technologies and related infrastructure and workforce development to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants.



COLORADO PUBLIC BANK

- Establish a large state public bank in Colorado that is owned by and serves Colorado citizens and can provide economic recovery during a time of financial recession. A Colorado Public Bank would operate as a public enterprise and exist to provide financial services that private banking institutions do not. *It is important to note that a public bank is not a replacement for private banking institutions and would not affect their operations.* Rather, the public bank's mission would be to (1) provide banking services for underbanked communities, particularly communities of color, where it is not financially feasible for private institutions to do so, and (2) finance public investments and policy initiatives on behalf of the state of Colorado without raising taxes.
- It is also important to distinguish this proposed public bank from existing entities within the state of Colorado, such as the Colorado Clean Energy fund and the Green Bank of Colorado. The Colorado Clean Energy Fund is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, and the Green Bank of Colorado is a Public Benefit Corporation (also known as a B corporation) – a for-profit corporate entity that includes positive social impacts in addition to profit as its legally defined mission. While both organizations engage in worthwhile missions, including financing green energy projects, they are more limited in scale, mission, and public financing capacity than a Colorado Public Bank established as a public enterprise would be.
- The bank would be controlled by Bank of the State of Colorado board and will work in concert with community banks and credit unions.
- A public bank would allow for a reduction or elimination of interest costs and enable government agencies to operate more efficiently. The bank would also prevent recessions or reduce their severity through counter-cyclical lending.
- The bank could follow North Dakota's model where the bank would have a separate set of statutes and regulations.
- The Bank would be set up as an Enterprise so that revenue generated would not count against the TABOR cap but still allow revolving funding and impactful investment in Colorado businesses.
- The Bank would start out small, requiring marginal investment from the State up front. \$500 million could kick start a Bank that would be transformational to the state economy.
- Colorado could pay off or refinance Certificates of Participation making the public bank profitable in the first year and save taxpayers money or fund it with taxes collected on polluting industries.

Nonprofit Partners:

- Rocky Mountain Public Banking Institute
- Colorado Public Banking Coalition
- Rocky Mountain Employee Ownership Center

IRA Funding Potential

- A. Title VI, Subtitle A, Sec. 60103 (Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund) provides \$7 billion to states, municipalities, and tribal governments to make grants and loans for zero-emissions technologies in disadvantaged communities and an additional \$20 billion to nonprofits (green banks) to provide loans and grants to greenhouse gas and air pollution reduction programs – \$8 billion of which is set aside for disadvantaged, low-income communities.

Additional Resources:

- [White Paper: Establishing Public Banks in Colorado – Rocky Mountain Public Banking Institute](#)
- [Proposed Bill on Colorado Public Banking](#)



IMPROVING COLORADO'S CIRCULAR ECONOMY

- Extended Polluter Responsibility (EPR) – Build on the excellent progress made with the passage of HB22-1355 (Producer Responsibility Program for Recycling) by continuing to support and fund this important new program as needed.
- Support and expand the work of the new circular economy development center (center) in the department of public health and environment (CDPHE) as created by HB22-1159 (Waste Diversion and Circular Economy Development Center) to further its mission to grow existing markets; create new markets; and provide necessary infrastructure, systems, logistics, and marketing to create a sustainable circular economy for recycled commodities and compost in Colorado.
- Explore making the center a permanent fixture in CDPHE's ongoing work rather than allowing it to be repealed on September 1, 2030 as currently required by HB22-1159.
- Market waste materials – Work with developers across the state of Colorado to create a market for waste materials that cannot be recycled to be converted for use in the built environment, modeled after the Sustainable Materials Research & Technology (SMaRT) program at the University of New South Wales, which uses a variety of waste materials to produce a range of 'green' materials and products. For example, waste streams that can be used to create green ceramics include waste wood (including beetle kill), glass, and plastics.
- Recycling Resources Economic Opportunity Program (RREO) – Direct more funding to RREO as they receive more applications for funding and explore expanding this program to:
 - Fund an end-market center to use recycled materials in Colorado.

- Research the possibility of universal curbside recycling bins and infrastructure for all communities.
- Public Education
 - Create a Colorado-centric communication campaign to bring awareness to recycling and composting that is easy to understand and targets Colorado residents and tourists.
 - Standardize communication across the state so it is easy to understand and is translated into different languages for all of Colorado's residents.

Nonprofit Partners: Recycle CO, Ecocycle

IRA Funding Potential

- A. Title VI, Subtitle A, Sec. 60103 (Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund) provides \$7 billion to states, municipalities, and tribal governments to make grants and loans for zero-emissions technologies in disadvantaged communities and an additional \$20 billion to nonprofits (green banks) to provide loans and grants to greenhouse gas and air pollution reduction programs – \$8 billion of which is set aside for disadvantaged, low-income communities.
- B. Title VI, Subtitle A, Sec. 60107 (Low Emissions Electricity Program) provides for grants to low-income and disadvantaged communities and to offer technical assistance to industry, state, and local governments as they work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



HOUSING EQUITY, AFFORDABILITY, & SUSTAINABILITY

- Housing Affordability – Address housing affordability, particularly for first time home buyers. Housing is a human right and should not be left to investors or speculators profiting from putting starter homes out of reach for young Coloradans.
- Continue to fund and expand public institutions committed to housing affordability such as the middle-income housing authority created by SB22-232 (Creation of Colorado Workforce Housing Trust Authority)
 - Build on the important progress made with the passage of HB22-1304 (State Grants Investments Local Affordable Housing) by continuing to fund and expand grant programs that support continued investment in transformational affordable housing programs and infill infrastructure projects that support affordable housing.
 - Fund housing innovation technologies ([like 3D printing](#)) to support affordable housing starts that are high quality in every county.
 - Create an escalating property tax or investment fee on each successive single-family property owned by an individual or corporation that they are not living in or using for more than a certain amount of time per year, i.e., a premium of 5% on property 2, 8% on

property 3, and so on. Put revenue generated from this fee into a fund for first-time homebuyers to help them compete with the aggressive cash offers pushing them out of the market.

- Fund affordable housing starts across the state but with attention to what each individual community needs. Promote [sustainable development](#) practices that improve the resilience of each community.
- Provide funding for energy efficiency improvements for existing and new housing construction to increase savings on energy bills and meet emission goals.
- Establish a statewide landlord / property ownership registry to provide policy makers with a full accounting of Colorado's housing stock, who owns Colorado rental properties and whether they are based in state, the extent to which investment LLCs and hedge funds currently control Colorado's housing stock, and insights into long term trends affecting Colorado's housing stock. Currently, this kind of information is only available on a piecemeal basis and makes it difficult to obtain a fully accurate understanding of the true scope of Colorado's affordable housing crisis.
- Construction shortages – There are not enough construction workers to meet the level of demand for housing. These labor shortages contribute to skyrocketing housing prices. Dedicate resources into apprenticeship programs to get more workers into the construction industry.
 - Create tax incentives for builders to help them mitigate the rising costs and uncertainty that comes with embarking on new construction projects.
- Zoning and land use
 - Reform statewide zoning regulations to encourage density and discourage sprawl, encourage energy efficiency and climate resiliency, encourage development of walkable, bikeable, and transit-oriented housing, and increase Colorado's housing supply.
 - Enact a statewide prohibition on minimum parking requirements. These Minimums tie the hands of developers and often force the inclusion of needlessly large parking lots in new development, increasing the cost of building new housing and moving Colorado further away from its climate goals by encouraging sprawling, inefficient development.
- Housing assistance
 - Simplify eligibility requirements to allow for more broad-based access to housing assistance programs. One [potential model](#) is to approach housing assistance in a similar way to the SNAP food stamps program.
 - Increase support for affordable home ownership by increasing buyer assistance funds for buyers within the 30 to 140% AMI Ranges.
 - Fund Community Housing Trusts Across the state for the development of climate-friendly, efficient homes for buyers within the 30% to 140% AMI Ranges.
 - Expand available resources for rental assistance to help renters weather high costs and periods of economic difficulty, and keep people housed instead of allowing them to fall into homelessness

- Renter protections
 - Establish statewide just cause eviction protections. Current Colorado laws are tilted heavily in favor of landlords and leave renters with minimal recourse in the face of eviction, which can lead directly to homelessness. Just cause protections provide a legally permissible set of reasons that must be cited in order to initiate eviction proceedings and can also require that tenants are provided with an opportunity to cure the issue in question before eviction proceedings are initiated.
 - Establish an affirmative case for eviction defense at the state level and increase available resources for eviction defense / right to counsel.
 - End the statewide prohibition on rent control. While it is not a silver bullet, rent control can be a powerful tool to prevent displacement and keep communities intact. It is wrong to tie the hand of local communities by prohibiting them from exploring a policy solution that has been successfully applied in other communities across the country.
- Disaster preparedness
 - Build on the important progress made with SB22-206 (Disaster Preparedness and Recovery Resources) by continuing to set aside funding for the repair and reconstruction of Colorado's housing stock to better resist and recover from the impact of more frequent and costly natural disasters driven by climate change.

IRA Funding Potential

- A. Title V, Subtitle A, Sec. 50122 (High-efficiency electric home rebate program) awards grants to State energy offices to develop and implement a high-efficiency electric home rebate program at the point of sale to income eligible individuals for efficiency improvements such as heat pumps, induction stoves, insulation, electric load service center upgrades, and wiring. Could be administered by the Colorado Energy Office.
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- E. Title VI, Subtitle A, Sec. 50121 (Home energy performance-based, whole house rebates) awards grants to state energy offices to create a HOMES rebate program, which will provide rebates to contractors and homeowners for completing a whole-house energy retrofit up to \$4,000 for single family homes and \$400,000 for multi-family homes. Could be administered by the Colorado Energy Office.



WATER CONSERVATION

- Water Plan – Commit Colorado to a water plan that prepares our state for an uncertain climate future. On our current trajectory, Colorado [could face a water shortage](#) equivalent to the water needs of 1.5 million homes by 2050.
- Implement the climate resilience concepts outlined in the Ten Strategies for Climate Resilience in the Colorado River Basin Report commissioned by American Rivers, Environmental Defense Fund, National Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, Trout Unlimited, and the Western Resource Advocates. The complete report, along with an overview of potential federal funding opportunities (including the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021) can be viewed at tenstrategies.net
- Prioritize replacing grass and other water-intensive plants in public spaces with pollinators and other drought tolerant plants. This would help communities across our state cut water use, reduce pollution caused by overuse of nitrogen in fertilizers thus reducing algae blooms in our waters, and reduce the warming of the waters and of the air. This would also increase available habitat for pollinators and pollination of food crops.
 - Build on the progress made with the passage of HB22-1151 (Turf Replacement Program) by increasing funding for the financial incentives for the voluntary replacement of irrigated turf with water-wise landscaping established by HB22-115
 - Evaluate and enact more aggressive policy prescriptions that go beyond HB22-1151's voluntary approach by looking for opportunities to mandate and financially support the replacement of irrigated turf with water-wise landscaping wherever possible
 - Refurbish all CDOT bus stops to have pollinator planters on top of or around them (bus stops are generally placed about as far as apart as bees can fly in a go.)
 - Create these stops/planters with recycled plastic that would otherwise be headed to the landfill.
 - Capture and measure these impacts and add those metrics to the state Greenprint.
- Engage in a statewide effort to plant drought tolerant shade trees in public spaces such as parks, public rights-of-way, and communities lacking in shade trees to increase drought resilience and mitigate urban heat island effects.
 - Require all new construction projects to utilize low-water use plantings instead of water-intensive plantings such as grass.

NGO Partners: Ecoshyft

IRA Funding Potential

- A. Title V, Subtitle B, Sec. 50233 (Drought Mitigation in the Reclamation States) Appropriates \$4 billion for grants, contracts, and financial assistance agreements to support water conservation, drought prevention, and habitat restoration (due to drought) in the reclamation states (States west of the Mississippi River), with priority given to the Colorado River Basin.
- B. Title II, Subtitle D, Sec. 23003 (State and private forestry conservation programs) provides \$1.5 billion in Grants to States through the Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program to acquire land, with priority given for land with high carbon sequestration potential and \$0.7 billion in grants to state agencies, local government entities, tribes, or nonprofits through the Forest Legacy Program for tree planting, prioritizing underserved populations.



WORKFORCE

- As Colorado prepares for the transition to a clean energy economy in line with the state's goal of 100% renewable energy by 2040, the need to upskill, reskill, and next-skill the workforce into this growing sector is vital to achieving the state's renewable energy goal. There currently exists a stigma around many skilled industry trades such as construction and electrical wiring. There's a pervasive belief that the trades don't require higher levels of education, or that these careers are for individuals that couldn't 'make it' in other industries. Critically, there's a sense that skilled trade jobs are disappearing with advances in technology. In fact, as the green economy expands, the demand for skilled technicians, including electricians, solar installers, and so many more will continue to rise exponentially. The disconnection between the perception of the skilled trades and the reality of the career-oriented jobs available couldn't be more pronounced. As we know, we are seeing a shortage in labor for these trades. Couple this with the massive amounts of student debt that come along with attending most 4-year universities. We need to communicate the benefits of working in the skilled trades, particularly for youth who are recently graduating high-school, and support investment in "experiential learning" and "apprenticeship" programs.
- Build on the progress made with the passage of SB22-140 (Expansion of Experiential Learning Opportunities) and its newly created incentive program to eligible employers to create high-quality, work-based learning opportunities for adults and youth by expanding funding for these incentives and targeting them to trades where Colorado faces workforce shortages and industries at the forefront of the transition to a clean energy, climate resilient future

- Run Public Education Campaign on: “Career opportunities in renewable energy” and “Returning to Work: The best time to transition to a career.” Focus the campaign to destigmatize the skilled trades, certificate programs and vocational training.
- Expand automatic record sealing for nonviolent offenses to ensure the 1/3rd of every Coloradan who has been involved with the criminal legal system does not have a record that prevents them from gainful employment.
- Commission a study by OEDIT of all existing state workforce programs and measure their effectiveness with a rigorous evidence standard, so dollars go to programs that either have (or are in the process of showing) rigorously measured impacts on learner earnings over time.
- Employ a sectoral employment and work-based learning model, so dollars go to programs with a strong alignment to skills and credentials high growth, high wage Colorado employers need, and can also support work-based learning.
- Ensure workforce programs have a strong equity focus, so the majority of dollars go to learners in poverty, learners of color, learners with barriers to employment, learners in rural communities, or learners on SNAP or TANF.
- Workforce programs should follow a repayment and sustainability model, so the fund is revolving, with learners making modest future capped payments back into it, (conditional on earning above a given threshold), and their employers make retention payments, so an ARPA seeded fund can stretch beyond 2024.

NGO/Agency Partners: Office of Future of Work, community colleges, CDHE, labor unions

IRA Funding Potential

- A. Title V, Subtitle A, Sec. 50123 (State-based home energy efficiency contractor training grants) provides states with funds to implement a training program for contractors involved in energy efficiency and electrification.



SUNCOR TRANSITION

- Permanently shut down Suncor Energy refineries. Suncor’s outdated permits allow emissions of 866,100 tons per year of GHGs and toxic compounds such as sulfur dioxide, benzene, and hydrogen cyanide. The refinery has malfunctioned numerous times which causes pollutants to increase. Suncor’s refineries are placed in low-income communities and contributes to a legacy of environmental injustice.
- The Suncor refinery has violated the neighborhood for too long. The pollution from the refinery has led to health problems for people in the area including cancer and asthma. It’s

time for the state to protect the people. All Coloradoans deserve clean air to breathe, and Suncor destroys the air quality while simultaneously contributing to the climate crisis.

- State officials should deny renewal of Suncor's Title V permit, due to its history of pollution violations.
 - If an immediate denial is not possible, then the Title V permit should require decreasing emissions levels for a full phase out within 5 years (rather than the increase in pollution limits Suncor is requesting).
- Suncor must be held accountable to pollution standards and violations. Provide community-based professional monitoring of Suncor's pollution, online data and warning systems that the community can access in Spanish and English, and enforce severe penalties for pollution violations, which must be immediately addressed.
- Increase support for existing just transition efforts to ensure Suncor workforce can transition into clean energy jobs or other carbon negative/neutral industries and close remaining Suncor plants.
- Upskill workers to do biochar remediation in the area and install agrivoltaics/community solar.
- Identify the cost to pension out workers over 50 years old.
- Support community air monitoring efforts in fence line communities
 - The state should supply personal air quality monitors to all homes in fence line communities.
- During the Suncor shut down it is imperative that there is increased support and focus on air monitoring (and air quality in north Denver) to see if a reduction in emissions is reflected in a decrease in production (Also important to track gas prices locally and see if what effect there is [if any] on pricing)
- Support a study bill to look at Suncor's profits, taxable revenue, and what investment is going back into the affected community (Suncor is still expected to be a "cash gusher" in 2023 making a HUGE profit, the surrounding community should see investment from that).

IRA Funding Potential

- A. Title VI, Subtitle A, Sec. 60107 (Low Emissions Electricity Program) provides for grants to low-income and disadvantaged communities and to offer technical assistance to industry, state, and local governments as they work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



GROWING CLIMATE SOLUTIONS ACT FOR COLORADO

- Introduce a Colorado version of the Growing Climate Solutions Act, a bill proposed during the 117TH Congress co-sponsored by a bipartisan group of more than 30 Senators to address land equity and access to environmental credits. The bill, which would start the process of allowing USDA, in this case the Colorado Department of Agriculture to certify entities that pay farmers for carbon sequestration and reduce barriers to “historically underserved, socially disadvantaged, or limited resource farmers.”
- Start a state land trust that would buy land from retiring farmers and set it aside for farmers of color, specifically Black and Indigenous farmers, who could buy in at a subsidized rate.
- Provide a capital gains tax exclusion for farmers who sell to young farmers and farmers of color. It might mean limiting the amount of farmland available to non-operator investors, or increasing funds for conservation programs that incentivize a reduction of acres planted, or increasing access to long-term loans and forms of ‘patient capital.’
- Provide grants to aspiring BIPOC farmers and ranchers (individuals, families, and co-ops) to buy and build sustainable farms and ranches. Give subsidies for land stewards in indigenous cultures who implement regenerative agriculture.
- Work with the CO Dept. of Corrections to pilot an agricultural workforce training program for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals.

IRA Funding Potential

- A. Title II, Subtitle B, Sec. 21001 (Additional agricultural conservation investments) provides funds to farmers that utilize climate stewardship practices such as improving soil carbon and reducing methane emissions from ruminants. While these funds are to be provided directly to individual farms, state lawmakers should explore ways to ensure Colorado farmers are made aware of this opportunity and receive assistance in applying for these funds if needed.
- B. Title II, Subtitle B, Sec. 21002 (Conservation technical assistance) provides conservation technical assistance through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and funds a carbon sequestration and GHG emissions quantification program through the NRCS.



COMPOSTING

- Increase funding for composting infrastructure with regional/ multicounty partnerships that have been working on infrastructure but may not have all the resources they need to put in infrastructure. Focused on local utilization of end products.
- Fund gap infrastructure (e.g., for composting) identified through the pending statewide organics management study conducted by CDPHE and DOA.
- Provide composting services to all residents in phases, utilizing local rec centers to reduce the costs of transportation and provide hyper-local economic stimulus.
- Ensure programs are developed with the tools and abilities to measure the social and environmental impacts it will have.
- Provide funding for Regional industrial composting facilities, composting education to the public and incentives for waste haulers to pick up and transport compost.
- Provide assistance for distribution of compost for agriculture and residential uses.

NGO Partners: Support and work with compost providers such as [Wompost](#), [Compost Colorado](#), and [Denver Compost Collective](#).



FOOD DISTRIBUTION & PROCESSING

- Food Distribution – Explore and develop different regenerative ways to distribute food including direct to consumer delivery and incentivize farmers to implement these practices.
 - Establish a program and purchase trucks and hire drivers to transport rural farm products to various locations in the urban corridor so that product can be efficiently moved to markets.
 - Support the Denver Emergency Food Access Partners in developing a stakeholder-driven distribution and redistribution network across the Denver Metro and Front Range that supports the organizations ensuring that Coloradoans have access to fresh and nutritious food.
 - Explore use of tax benefits to make local processing economically viable and seek ways to invest in local food processing.
 - Improve and expand programs focused on increasing accessibility of fresh, health food to low-income and underserved communities such as the small food business recovery

- and resilience grant program established by HB22-1380 (Critical Services for Low-income households)
- Meat Processing – Purchase mobile slaughter vehicles to service small ranches and farms, and train people to operate them to reduce overhead costs for small meat producers. USDA Assistance for Small Scale Meat Processing USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service and Rural Development.

NGO Partners: Denver Emergency Food Access



FOOD EQUITY

- Food Deserts: Identify and address food deserts throughout the state, focusing on rural and urban parts of Colorado. Create partnerships with agencies and NGOs capable of creating food producing operations there.
 - Fund community gardens in K-12 schools, prisons, mental health centers, municipal buildings, higher ed institutions, etc.
 - Incentives for grocery stores to open locations in food desert/gap areas.
 - Improve and expand programs focused on increasing accessibility of fresh, health food to low-income and underserved communities such as the small food business recovery and resilience grant program established by HB22-1380 (Critical Services for Low-income households)
- Establish state run chain of grocery stores as a public enterprise to provide access to healthy food in both urban and rural food deserts, with a mandate to source as much food as possible from Colorado farmers, ranchers, and other in-state food producers (potentially sourced from the community food consortium for small food retailers and Colorado-owned and Colorado-operated farms established by HB22-1380).
- It is simply not financially feasible for private actors to provide access to healthy foods in Colorado's many food deserts. This issue affects urban areas such as Denver's Elyria-Swansea and College View neighborhoods and rural areas including large swaths of the San Luis Valley and Baca, Bent, Prowers and Yuma counties. Establishing small grocery stores and public enterprises to combat food deserts has been successfully piloted at the municipal level [in Florida](#) – case studies like this could be replicated and improved upon at a statewide level in Colorado.
- WIC/SNAP – Allow WIC/SNAP to be used at most food locations and increase the eligibility for and benefits of WIC/SNAP.

- Continue to focus on streamlining and simplifying access to SNAP and other public benefits through more efficient eligibility and enrollment administration improvements such as those outlined in HB22-1380 (Critical Services for Low-income households)
- School Food Programs: Ensure successful implementation of Colorado's new universal free school meals program established by HB22-1414 (Healthy Meals for all Public School Students) and approved by voters in November 2022 by providing support and additional funding to school districts to assist with implementation if needed.
- Rural Food Markets – Provide funding for start-up costs and technical support to develop local and regional food markets in mountain and rural communities. Include supporting support systems for distribution that go with these projects.



REGENERATIVE FOOD SYSTEM ACTION PLAN

- Adopt [Colorado's Regenerative Food System Transition: Action Plan for Resilience](#). Support a transition to a Colorado food system that improves the health of the people, the diversity of the ecosystems, the vibrancy of local economies and sequesters carbon to mitigate climate change. Support the movement towards a regenerative food system where people, ecosystems and economies are supported to be vibrant, diverse, resilient, healthy, and joyful.
- It is time to modernize the statewide food system to create multiple layers of resilience. Such resilience should be developed to protect us against global food system distribution disruptions that may result due to future global pandemics, natural disasters, or political barriers. The Passage of SB22-206 (Disaster Preparedness and Recovery Resources) represents an important step towards this goal by setting aside funding to assist businesses experiencing disaster-related interruptions. Lawmakers should build on this progress by ensuring adequate, dedicated funding is committed to the resilience of our state's food system.
- Resilience should be developed by cultivating diversity in soil, ecosystems, and production and distribution methods to protect us against the worst impacts of climate change, pollinator collapse, soil erosion and depletion, and to ensure ecosystem survival and food production capacity.
- Resilience should also be created to protect human health so that the people of Colorado have access to wholesome foods no matter where they live.
- A resilient food system also includes economic resilience and requires robust small and midsize producers, processing, distribution, and educational sectors.



CLIMATE RESILIENCE

- Energy Impact Assistance Fund – Restructure the Energy Impact Assistance Fund (from oil & gas severance) to prioritize climate mitigation. Funding could be used for the following:
 - Renewable energy projects
 - Net zero energy (or next zero carbon)
 - Energy efficiency upgrades in existing local government buildings
 - Zero-emission heating, cooling, or water heating systems
 - Climate action plans
 - Just transition job training programs
 - Water and wastewater projects
 - Tree-planting
- Strengthen Colorado’s emission reduction targets – The current target of 90% reduction by 2050 is not even ambitious enough to give us a 50% chance of staying under 1.5 degrees Celsius of warming. We would need zero by 2050 for that 50/50 chance. We would need zero by 2037 for a 2/3 chance. By law, the current targets are 'at a minimum' but agencies are unlikely to make rules for better targets for fear of litigation. We need targets put into law that will allow us to achieve our goals and avert catastrophic climate change.
- Community climate action plans – Local governments in Colorado are encouraged and supported in the adoption of local Climate Actions Plans that address greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions emitted within their boundaries. The Colorado Energy Office has already provided a helpful website tool supporting such plan development. Some grants are available from the Department of Local Affairs Office, but funding to develop and implement such plans must be increased to achieve wider adoption of such plans. Climate Action Plans must be consistent with and inclusive of State GHG reduction policies and plans, and demonstrate sufficient action to achieve State GHG reduction goals within the boundaries of the community.
- The state should do more to incentivize or mandate that local governments adopt and implement Climate action plans. For example, if no such local government plan exists by December 2025, which identifies and schedules climate actions to achieve Colorado’s GHG reduction goals, said government could no longer be eligible to receive certain funds from the State of Colorado for infrastructure development within that community, including funds supporting the planning, design and construction of transportation, building, water and waste project(s). The Colorado Department of Local Affairs and the Colorado Energy Office should develop new guidelines and expand existing programs to assist local governments in this effort by no later than December 2023. This should include expanded funding and resources to ensure local governments have the required expertise and capacity

to develop and implement community climate action plans through actions such as establishing regional climate resiliency offices throughout the state to facilitate collaborations with relevant state agencies.

- Rural Programs – Provide funding for rural recovery capacity training, strategy planning and implementation with a focus on climate change mitigation and adaptation resilience. Leverage and align resources from state to local governments and staff this position.
- Stop expanding oil and gas development – Phase out of new permits by 2030 to stay in line with climate goals of 1.5 degrees Celsius. Define climate change as a serious and irreversible impact on public health, safety, welfare and the environment which needs to be addressed by decreasing the number of permits each year until phased out.
 - Make ozone nonattainment areas off limits for new permits.
 - Make fossil fuel companies ineligible for all state tax incentives (including general ones related to employment, growth, relocation).
- Disaster preparedness – Build on the important progress made with SB22-206 (Disaster Preparedness and Recovery Resources) by continuing to set aside funding for and devoting state planning resources to climate mitigation, adaptation, resiliency, and recovery.

IRA Funding Potential

- A. Title VI, Subtitle A, Sec. 60103 (Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund) provides \$7 billion to states, municipalities, and tribal governments to make grants and loans for zero-emissions technologies in disadvantaged communities and an additional \$20 billion to nonprofits (green banks) to provide loans and grants to greenhouse gas and air pollution reduction programs – \$8 billion of which is set aside for disadvantaged, low-income communities.
- B. Title V, Subtitle A, Sec. 50122 (High-efficiency electric home rebate program) awards grants to State energy offices to develop and implement a high-efficiency electric home rebate program at the point of sale to income eligible individuals for efficiency improvements such as heat pumps, induction stoves, insulation, electric load service center upgrades, and wiring. Could be administered by the Colorado Energy Office.
- C. Title V, Subtitle A, Sec. 50123 (State-based home energy efficiency contractor training grants) provides states with funds to implement a training program for contractors involved in energy efficiency and electrification.
- D. Title V, Subtitle A, Sec. 50131 (Assistance for latest and zero building energy code adoption) provides grants to assist states and local entities to adopt more stringent building codes and zero energy building codes.
- E. Title VI, Subtitle A, Sec. 60107 (Low Emissions Electricity Program) provides for grants to low-income and disadvantaged communities and to offer technical assistance to industry, state, and local governments as they work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- F. Title VI, Subtitle A, Sec. 50121 (Home energy performance-based, whole house rebates) awards grants to state energy offices to create a HOMES rebate program, which will provide rebates to contractors and homeowners for completing a whole-house energy retrofit up to

\$4,000 for single family homes and \$400,000 for multi-family homes. Could be administered by the Colorado Energy Office.

- G. Title II, Subtitle D, Sec. 23003 (State and private forestry conservation programs) provides \$1.5 billion in Grants to States through the Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program to acquire land, with priority given for land with high carbon sequestration potential and \$0.7 billion in grants to state agencies, local government entities, tribes, or nonprofits through the Forest Legacy Program for tree planting, prioritizing underserved populations.



TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR EXPORTED EMISSIONS

- State lawmakers should expand HB19-1261 (Climate Action Plan To Reduce Pollution) to address life-cycle/scope 3 emissions of fossil fuels so that our state takes responsibility for the enormous emissions of exported oil and gas. According to the US Energy Information Administration, 66% of gas is exported and The Greeley Tribune recently reported that 90% of oil produced in Colorado is exported.
- This exported product creates emissions when it is burned out of state, but exported emissions are not currently required by law to be reduced. For Colorado to take responsibility for exported emissions, the scope of HB19-1261 needs to be expanded to include them. This could be done by an amendment to specifically include exported emissions as emissions we are required to target for reduction or simply by defining 'statewide' emissions in such a way that it includes the exported emissions.



BAN HYDROFLUOROCARBONS (HFCs)

- Eliminate HFCs in all supermarkets & large format convenience stores in the state.
- Responsibly phase out all HFC based cooler systems & replace with natural refrigerant systems. Increase incentives for commercial cooler upgrades.
- Grants and investment in Technician Training on natural refrigerant systems, the importance of eliminating leaks and using only low global warming potential refrigerants, and disposing of all HFC refrigerants properly.
- Create HFC concierges who can walk independent grocers & convenience store owners through the process, with focus on low-income (including rural) communities first.

- Consider incentive (direct payments) take-back program for refrigerants and units with refrigerants that have high global warming potential.
- Increase consumer education on proper end-of-life handling for AC units & other items containing refrigerants.
- Ban or heavily tax the sale of HFC containing units in the state



ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS

- Employment
 - Offer job training programs for people experiencing homelessness in construction, restaurant industry, or other industries that have taken a hit during the pandemic.
 - Pilot basic income with attention to our most vulnerable – children, expecting mothers, people with disabilities (mental and physical), parents, LGBTQIA+ people, and others experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homelessness.
 - Create programs like [Fort Worth's Clean Slate Litter Program](#) that hire people already on the streets to clean the streets. Have the trash be sorted into the most effective waste streams.
 - Utilize and fully fund Colorado programs that are already serving the unhoused population
 - Provide wraparound services such as transportation, childcare, and employment training for those at risk or already are homeless so they can have steady upward mobility.
 - Ensure that all organizations created by these and auxiliary efforts are guided by staff, advisors, and boards that are made up of at least 50% by community members.
- Housing –
 - Construct permanent supportive housing communities modeled after the successful “housing first” approach employed by national and international housing policy leaders. Specifically, state lawmakers should consider drawing inspiration from international best practices employed in successful programs in nations like Finland and Austria, and US Cities like Salt Lake City, Utah and Denver’s Supportive Housing Social Impact Bond program.
 - Build on the important progress made with the passage of HB22-1304 (State Grants Investments Local Affordable Housing) by continuing to fund and expand grant programs that support continued investment in transformational affordable housing programs, with an emphasis on permanent supportive housing aimed at transitioning people out of homelessness

- Utilize empty hotels, abandoned buildings and single-family homes to house the homeless.
- Fund programs that support transitional and permanent housing for those experiencing homelessness.
 - Supportive Housing Social Impact Bonds
To address chronic homelessness, take the lessons learned from Denver's Supportive Housing Social impact Bond and expand it to other communities facing increasing levels of people experiencing homelessness.
 - Nearly all costs for the supportive housing program were offset by reductions in costs in the criminal justice and emergency healthcare systems for individuals who have historically been difficult to serve.
 - 86% of participants remained in stable housing one year after entering housing. At two years, the housing retention rate for living participants was 81%. At year 3, the rate was 77%.
 - **Additional Resources:** [Breaking the Homelessness-Jail Cycle with Housing First: Results from the Denver Supportive Housing Social Impact Bond Initiative](#)
- Mental Health Support –
 - People who fall into homelessness while also struggling with mental illness or substance use disorder face unique and extremely difficult challenges, which is why we must make aggressive investments in treating both.
 - Build on the components of HB22-1326 (Fentanyl Accountability and Prevention) that devote resources to substance abuse prevention and education and substance use treatment and harm reduction
 - Develop programs that provide mental health support for homeless individuals to receive treatment and rehabilitation.
 - Improving the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP): The state auditor recently found that Colorado's PDMP is currently ineffective in preventing people with drug-seeking behavior from "doctor shopping."
 - Enforce limits on opioid prescriptions; and add referrals to law enforcement or healthcare regulatory boards for those who don't comply.
 - Build on the components of HB22-1326 (Fentanyl Accountability and Prevention) that focuses law enforcement resources on fentanyl trafficking as overdose deaths due to fentanyl skyrocket.
 - Continue smart decriminalization of personal possession of drugs by expanding on progress made during defelonization efforts including setting different limits for different substances based on their lethality and other factors.

Note: While historic investments in mental health have been made in recent years through legislation such as SB21-137 (Behavioral Health Recovery Act), these actions only address a fraction of the problem, and more funding is needed to fully address this crisis.



ELECTRIC TRANSPORTATION PACKAGE

- EV infrastructure – Install electric car recharging stations across the state, particularly in areas of high population density.
 - Make as many as possible powered by solar or wind + battery backup.
 - Fund installation of Level 3 (rapid charging) and additional Level 2 EV charging stations at all state buildings to support the significant increase in electric vehicles and support state fleet electrification.
 - Fund Level 3 rapid-charging EV charging stations at all rest stops and state parks in Colorado.
 - Increase electric vehicle tax credit back to \$5,000 from current \$2,500
 - We are mindful of the concerns regarding housing costs expressed by Gov. Polis in his [veto](#) of HB22-1218 (Resource Efficiency Buildings Electric Vehicles), which would have required the inclusion of electric vehicle charging in the construction of certain new commercial buildings and multifamily residences. We urge lawmakers to explore additional ways to increase the number of electric vehicle charging stations in Colorado through actions such as expanding the Colorado Energy Office’s existing Charge Ahead Colorado program, which currently provides grant funding for community-based Level 2 and DC fast-charging (DCFC) electric vehicle charging stations.
- Incentivize Public Transport – Promote alternative transit development across Colorado such as light rail, commuter rail, bus rapid transit, and local bus service, depending on local needs and conditions.
 - Build on the success of SB22-180 (Programs to Reduce Ozone Through Increased Transit) by expanding free transit beyond ozone season and making RTD permanently fare-free
 - Ban sale of new gasoline cars by 2035. Note that this would not prohibit the use of non-Electric Vehicles – rather, it would prevent the sale of new gasoline powered vehicles beginning in 2034.
 - Establish large employer SOV reduction mandates.
 - Provide incentives to accelerate the consumer purchase of electric vehicles.
 - Encourage transit supportive land uses that will recover the costs of investment.
- Electric School Buses – Replace fleet of current school buses with electric buses. Old school buses can be repurposed as can transit buses replaced by EVs, which have much lower fuel and maintenance costs. Most buses run on diesel fuel which emit harmful compounds and particulate matter posing a risk to children.

- Colorado took an important step towards this goal with this inclusion of \$65 million in grants for electric school buses in SB22-193 (Air Quality Improvement Investments). We encourage lawmakers to monitor the progress of this program and allocate additional funds if needed to fully transition all Colorado school buses to electric buses.
- Electric Bicycles (e bikes)
 - Build on the important progress made through the creation of the community access to electric bicycles grant and rebate programs in SB22-193 (Air Quality Improvement Investments) by expanding funding for these programs and continuing to invest in policies that encourage Coloradans to use electric bicycles for their transportation needs
 - Determine the costs and prospective funding sources necessary to significantly expand Colorado's bicycle infrastructure (including permanent, protected bicycle lanes and bicycle highways designed to provide alternatives to commuting by car) modeled after international best practices from nations such as the Netherlands.
- *Metro Transportation* - Require metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to assess per-capita costs and benefits and require a nexus between transportation plans (like Metro Vision) and transportation investments.
- High Speed Rail – Fund and execute the plans laid out by Rocky Mountain Rail, providing profitable passenger and cargo rail transportation. Designed to use renewable energy powering trains with motors, bringing modern class-5 and class-6 to Colorado using mostly existing rail lines.
- Align the important steps taken in SB22-176 (Early-Stage Front Range Passenger Rail Funding) with the long-term goal of ensuring the development of a front range passenger rail corridor utilizes energy efficient, high speed rail technology

IRA Funding Potential

- A. Title VI, Subtitle A, Sec. 60103 (Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund) provides \$7 billion to states, municipalities, and tribal governments to make grants and loans for zero-emissions technologies in disadvantaged communities.
- B. Title VI, Subtitle A, Sec. 60107 (Low Emissions Electricity Program) provides for grants to low-income and disadvantaged communities and to offer technical assistance to industry, state, and local governments as they work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- C. Title VI, Subtitle B, Sec. 60201 (Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grants) provides grants for community-led pollution monitoring, prevention, and remediation, and investments in low- and zero-emission and resilient technologies and related infrastructure and workforce development to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants.
- D. Title VI, Subtitle E, Sec. 60501 (Neighborhood Access and Equity Grant Program) includes \$3.045 billion in grants to improve walkability, safety, and affordable transportation access through construction of projects that are context sensitive.

- E. Title VI, Subtitle E, Sec. 60505 (Environmental review implementation funds) includes funding to provide technical assistance and build capacity for states and local governments to make the environmental review process for surface transportation projects more efficient.



DIVEST PERA FROM FOSSIL FUELS

- Colorado's Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA), our state public workers pension fund, should not be investing in fossil fuel development. PERA currently has over \$2 billion invested in fossil fuel companies. PERA must assess the financial risk of their fossil fuel investments, as a fiduciary responsibility to their members. A 2019 study conducted by Corporate Knights estimates that PERA would be valued at least \$1.77 higher if it had divested from fossil fuels in 2009. As the world takes action to prevent climate change, the value of fossil fuel companies will plummet rapidly, creating stranded asset risk and the potential for rapid, unexpected, and significant loss of value.

NGO/Agency Partners: 350 Colorado



STRENGTHEN THE PAA

- The Pesticides Applicators Act (PAA) Sunset report will soon be released. The DORA report will result in legislation during the 2023 legislative session. The PAA fails to protect human health and the environment in its current form and updates are needed. Changes requested include repeal of state-level pesticide preemption, expanding pesticide notification, and providing alternatives to synthetic pesticide and fertilizer use. Of particular concern is the health of BIPOC, low-income and vulnerable populations such as children that bear a disproportionate risk from pesticide exposure.

NGO/Agency Partners: People and Pollinators Action Network

ADDITIONAL POLICY GOALS

Additional policy ideas shared by RRC members for lawmaker consideration



LAND RESTORATION & CONSERVATION

- Invest in reforestation and vegetation management as a natural climate solution. This provides jobs and restores Colorado's ecological diversity.
 - Dedicate all state-owned public lands to be carbon sinks, effectively becoming the first state program where available land is zoned for carbon sinks.
 - Rehabilitate existing brownfields with biochar remediation and open lands to be dedicated as open space.
 - Incentivize restoration and reclamation of degraded lands due to industrial operations.
 - Invest sufficient funds into public lands to ensure their ecological integrity, including strengthening existing infrastructure.

IRA Funding Potential

- A. Title II, Subtitle D, Sec. 23003 (State and private forestry conservation programs) provides \$1.5 billion in Grants to States through the Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program to acquire land, with priority given for land with high carbon sequestration potential and \$0.7 billion in grants to state agencies, local government entities, tribes, or nonprofits through the Forest Legacy Program for tree planting, prioritizing underserved populations.



WRAP-AROUND SERVICES FOR COLORADO WORKERS

- Provide wraparound services for Colorado workforce that make below \$35,000 per year. This could come in the form of childcare support, housing stipends, transportation stipends and educational incentives to support upward mobility.
- Investments to support new and existing childcare programs through the passage of SB22-213 (Child Care Support Programs) are an excellent example of the kind of wrap-around services this coalition supports, and we encourage lawmakers to continue to build on this progress.

Note: Providing these wraparound services would help to address the housing and poverty crisis by offsetting other costs as the housing market continues to skyrocket.



INITIATIVE PETITION FAIRNESS

- Getting an initiative on the ballot is a matter of how much money you have, not an initial show of support amongst potential voters. For big corporations and dark money groups, including oil and gas, getting on the ballot is a drop in the bucket. They hire paid signature gatherers, often from out of state. Environmental groups and other community-driven causes do not have those resources and getting on the ballot is near-insurmountable. We should examine approaches to requiring Colorado residency for paid signature gatherers.



RANKED CHOICE VOTING

- Implement Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) at the State level. RCV has been used in the US for over 100 years and is proven to meet legal requirements. Voters are better able to hold office-holders accountable when they can securely vote their values.
- Small municipalities in Colorado have successfully used RCV since 2011. HB21-1071 (Ranked Choice Voting in Nonpartisan Elections) supports counties and cities in implementing RCV elections for municipal races. State lawmakers should expand this option to county-level and school board elections as well as primary elections.

Note: RCV can also be paired with proportional representation, which fairly includes more viewpoints at the table.



BIKE SAFETY & INFRASTRUCTURE

- Implement the [Colorado Safety Stop](#). The Safety Stop creates a safer way for people on bikes to cross at intersections when they have the right of way. The maneuver allows people riding bicycles to: treat stop signs as yield signs and treat stop lights as stop signs.
- Bike lanes on state roads. Add bike lanes to existing state roads that already have a wide paved shoulder (with exceptions), covering the state within 10 years.
- Specify all state road resurfacing projects must add bike lanes if feasible (with criteria), and add public accountability and transparency.

- Transmission trail notifications and protections. Direct the Public Utilities Commission to notify local governments of the option for a bike path under planned transmission lines.
- Specify utility safety protections (e.g. utility can close path for repair without notice, they are not responsible for the path upkeep, they are not liable for accidents, they can specify minimum clearances and vegetation, etc.)
- Promote safe walkable, bikeable communities by closing streets, investing in last mile solutions and ensuring safe transit.
- Create a template plan for making towns more walkable, more bikeable, more accessible to nature and parks.
- Investigate existing zoning regulations that prohibit regenerative transportation options and modify codes to support regenerative practices.
- Build on the important progress made through the creation of the community access to electric bicycles grant and rebate programs in SB22-193 (Air Quality Improvement Investments) by expanding funding for these programs and continuing to invest in policies that encourage Coloradans to use electric bicycles for their transportation needs.
- Determine the costs and prospective funding sources necessary to significantly expand Colorado's bicycle infrastructure (including permanent, protected bicycle lanes and bicycle highways designed to provide alternatives to commuting by car) modeled after international best practices from nations such as the Netherlands.

IRA Funding Potential

- A. Title VI, Subtitle E, Sec. 60501 (Neighborhood Access and Equity Grant Program) includes \$3.045 billion in grants to improve walkability, safety, and affordable transportation access through construction of projects that are context sensitive.
- B. Title V, Subtitle A, Sec. 50131 (Assistance for latest and zero building energy code adoption) provides grants to assist states and local entities to adopt more stringent building codes and zero energy building codes.



WILDLIFE PROTECTION

- Prioritize investment into natural infrastructure including wildlife corridors per the governor's Executive Order to safeguard wildlife while enhancing public safety. Maintenance of urban green spaces to support our outdoor industries and the health of our communities.
 - Restore damaged natural infrastructure to support ecosystems.
 - Build on the progress made by passing [SB22-151](#) (Safe Crossings For Colorado Wildlife And Motorists) by identifying all locations where safe wildlife crossings are

- needed and ensuring that the newly-created Colorado wildlife safe passages fund is fully funded to cover this need
- Encourage the creation of more protected wildlife areas to protect our local biodiversity and to make wilderness areas more accessible to all the residents of Colorado. Coloradans strongly support protecting and expanding our public lands, and we should explore every available option to do so.



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Provide information on how families can engage at the state and local levels, and how individuals can connect to their city, state and federal government.
- Establish a statewide civics education program for youth and college students, focusing on inclusive participation.

PROPOSALS NEEDING FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

The policy ideas show promise but require additional development alongside lawmakers, policy experts, and impacted communities.



TRANSPORTATION ACCESS

- Cost-effective transportation investment to achieve transportation for all. Widening roads and highways have now been conclusively shown to increase traffic and pollution, on a 1:1 basis with the extra space in years 5-10. They are an extraordinarily expensive short-term fix which continues to deprive and over-impact the 20-40% of people in each community who do not drive.
- Build on the success of SB22-180 (Programs to Reduce Ozone Through Increased Transit) by making RTD permanently fare-free. Fares cover a relatively small portion of RTD's operating costs and could be covered with a modest tax increase for higher income brackets or other means. The fare free transit month pilot program conducted in August 2022 yielded significant increases in ridership. We should double down on this success and make it easier for people to get around without using cars by making fare free transit the norm across

Colorado. It would also be wise to include ways to address some of RTD's other ongoing challenges, like providing the requisite funds to hire enough drivers to provide frequent and reliable service.

- Re-open CDOT's Statewide and Regional Transportation Improvement Plans to require and ensure that any new construction helps CO meet 26% by 2025 and 50% by 2030 pollution reduction requirements.
 - Require CDOT to adhere to science-based targets under the 1.5-degree scenario. Any infrastructure maintenance or new project that receives funding should be net zero by 2040 and net negative by 2050.
 - This will speed adoption of many carbon-negative materials & technologies including CO2 sequestering concrete, atmospheric carbon containing limestone.
 - Implement the adoption in the near term of better than average materials & technologies like recycled, cold application asphalt; low-emissions steel.



SUSPENSION OR MODIFICATION OF TABOR

- Support a campaign to suspend and/or repeal TABOR to support investments in a regenerative recovery.
- State lawmakers should also build on the progress made through the passage of Proposition GG of 2022, which mitigates some of TABOR's worst impacts on revenue raising ballot language, by exploring additional ways to rein in TABOR's worst aspects in collaboration with state level fiscal policy experts.
- With the passage of Proposition GG in 2022, one of the worst aspects of TABOR – mandating loaded ballot language designed to discourage voters from approving revenue increases – will be mitigated by the inclusion of taxpayer impact tables organized by income bracket. Lawmakers should take advantage of this opportunity and assess the viability of referring progressive revenue raising measures to Colorado voters in order to fund regenerative policy priorities. Potential models for consideration include the City of Portland's 1% fee on corporations with over \$1 Billion in national sales.



CLEAN ENERGY CREDIT UNION

- Strengthen the Clean Energy Credit Union, a new financial institution focused solely on providing loans that help people afford clean energy products and services such as solar

electric systems, electric vehicles, home energy efficiency retrofits, electric-assist bicycles, and net-zero energy homes.



PERMACULTURE EDUCATION FOR HOMEOWNERS

- Educate Homeowners on the importance of permaculture for boosting soil health and sequestering carbon.
- Educate Homeowners on the values of proper xeriscaping and the dangers of improper xeriscaping on soil health.
- Ban the sale of glyphosate herbicides.
- Educate the public on the harm glyphosate herbicides have towards pollinator colonies & human health.



CARBON MARKETS

- Create a Colorado carbon market focused on ranchland carbon sequestration.



HYDROPONICS FOR FOOD RESILIENCE

- Create a network of converted Conex containers to grow hydroponic food in food deserts or areas with distressed soils. These can cut harvest variability due to changing conditions from climate change. Hybrids of traditional and hydroponic farming reduce risks from hail, temperature swings, drought and floods.



AGRITOURISM

- Encourage and promote agritourism and ecotourism for Colorado's mountain and rural locations.



CIRCULAR ECONOMY FOR AG EQUIPMENT

- Create a trade marketplace for farmers/ranchers and construction workers to share and swap big equipment, thus reducing their overhead and increasing the sharing economy. Explore the creation of a sharing economy for farming capital equipment. Encourage cooperative structures. Empower farmers to build local coalitions.



YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE

- Support young people getting involved in agriculture by classifying it as public service, and a method for repaying or forgiving loans and increasing the social status of agriculture work.



LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION

- Fund organic greenhouses and gardens on the roofs of grocery Stores.
- Develop aquaponic food growing systems for increased sustainability and reduced water consumption.



URBAN FOOD FORESTS

- Fund the use of a percentage of public green spaces as urban food forests and support the infrastructure that can collect data about carbon drawdown, soil health
- Teach current landscapers/landscape contractors to garden using known regenerative and permaculture practices.
- Fund interactive and immersive storytelling and education about the project and how to get involved.
- Ensure compost access and collection for the excess/anything rotten.
- Have Free Food Fridges adjacent to garden sites.
- Design the sites based on community observations and input.

- Fully fund organizations who can and do support community driven food-entrepreneurship to work alongside the urban food forests to utilize produce and create economic development for members, neighborhood and the surrounding community, and Denver as a whole.

Partners: Metro Caring, the CoOp At 1st, Comal.



FUND FARM & FOOD MOBILE WORKFORCE COLLABORATION

- Fund Uproot Colorado to expand their volunteer gleaning for food banks, and establish a worker-owned agricultural services cooperative.
- Link workers, producers and prospective farmers with the Farm & Food Mobile Workforce Collaborative (FFW).
- Fund the creation of a mobile workforce supplying producers and processors with on-demand labor so producers can sell more of what is now waste.
- Transition the mobile workforce pilot into an agricultural services cooperative to provide additional services to producers (e.g., a tool library with machine knowledge; marketing services; legal services; processing services)

Partners: Uproot Colorado



COLORADO GRAIN CHAIN

- Fund The Colorado Grain Chain to add value to Colorado-grown grains (heirloom, heritage and landrace) grown by family farms by connecting these grains to added value Colorado producers (distillers to home bakers.)
- Include a Colorado Grown logo, technical assistance, training and market info. CGC has received a small grant from the USDA to create this.

Partners: The Colorado Grain Chain



ASPARAGOPSIS

- Scientists have discovered that a type of red algae in the genus *Asparagopsis*⁵ contains compounds that stop animals with rumens from emitting methane. Methane is produced in the guts of ruminant livestock because of enteric fermentation. Asparagopsis supplements contain bioactive compounds which prevent methane production in ruminant livestock. This is achieved by competitively inhibiting the enzymatic pathway which produces methane at the last stage of digestion. Methane has a global warming effect 28 times that of CO₂, causing livestock to contribute 16% of global greenhouse emissions. Studies have shown that livestock whose diets contain ~0.2% of an Asparagopsis supplement will have methane reductions up to 98%.
- Lawmakers should commission more research to see if using this seaweed as an alternative to traditional cattle feed is a strong option for Colorado to reduce methane emissions. Run a pilot program and get researchers involved to track data. See if this is a viable, large-scale solution to reduce GHG emissions.



CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

- Engage the chambers of commerce of the communities of color across the state.



REMOTE ACCESS

- Better enfranchise remote communities. For example, the west slope/east slope program that involves remote communities through technology; increases opportunities to participate in giving remote testimony; enabling remote communities to better connect with their state government.

⁵Asparagopsis is a red seaweed native to Australian Coastal waters. Through photosynthesis it captures carbon from the atmosphere which makes up 40% of its biomass. Over 25% of the CO₂ we produce annually ends up being absorbed by our ocean, which is having a harmful impact on marine life. Growing seaweeds helps to clean and de-acidify our oceans through absorbing nutrients and CO₂ via photosynthesis. Seaweeds grow faster than land-based plants because the whole organism photosynthesizes.



COUNTER DISINFORMATION

- Encourage television networks to promote a website with public accountability that provides information about upcoming elections and counter disinformation.



TUITION INCREASE FREEZE

- Implement new scholarship/grant programs targeted to first generation college students.
- Make universities use their endowment funds to provide more opportunities for disadvantaged Colorado students.



RUBBER SIDEWALKS

Work with Colorado recycling centers to source discarded tires and plastic to create [Rubber Sidewalks](#), theoretically reducing the cost found by [this commission](#) in 2017. Figure out the right-of-way and who pays for it across the state.

- Measure the emissions savings and track metrics for implementation.
- Create businesses around maintenance, repair, and replacement of sidewalks.

Note: Rubber sidewalks are developed with recycled tire materials and plastic. They are more flexible than concrete, meaning nearby trees and roots do not damage the sidewalks and their design allows for more permeability of rainfall runoff.

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POLICY PLATFORM CONTRIBUTORS

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APPENDIX

POLICY ICON KEY

The policy recommendations included in this document are marked with the following icons to indicate which of our eight regenerative building blocks they align with. We have also included icons to indicate potential funding sources for these recommendations, including a separate icon to indicate policies that could potentially qualify for funding through provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022.



**Energy &
Environment**



Agriculture



Workforce



Business



Circular Economy



Equity



Governance



Infrastructure



**Potential Funding
Source**



**Potential IRA
Funding**