



Colorado Communities for Climate Action Highlights (October 2023)

Colorado Communities for Climate Action is a coalition of 42 counties and municipalities across Colorado advocating for stronger state and federal climate policy. In the seven years since we formed, CC4CA has evolved from a promising idea into an influential coalition with an outsized impact on climate policy.

Our members span the Western Slope and Front Range; small rural towns and major suburbs; counties and municipalities; and wealthy, middle income, and low-income neighborhoods. Representing more than one-quarter of all Coloradans, with rural communities making up two-thirds of the membership (and half our member communities on the Western Slope), and with populations ranging from under 1,000 to more than 500,000, CC4CA has become a high-impact local government voice for clean air, climate action, and public health protection.

Legislative Successes

During the 2023 legislative session, CC4CA evaluated more than 80 bills and directly engaged on 46. Of those, we secured a full or partial success on 44. Some of the most consequential wins will enhance the availability of tax credits and refunds for Coloradans that make climate-friendly purchases of electric cars and trucks, e-bikes, geothermal systems and heat pumps, and lawn and garden equipment. Importantly, many of these rebates are at the point-of-sale, creating immediate benefits for customers and businesses. Other successes included:

- Strengthening the state's greenhouse gas targets with interim targets;
- Key guardrails on carbon management and other emerging technologies;
- Expanding electric vehicle charging infrastructure in new multifamily residential construction, an important win for Coloradans at all income levels given that a higher proportion of low- to moderate-income households are in multifamily homes;
- Stronger emission standards for gas furnaces and water heaters;
- Reducing the rate hikes Coloradans experience in their utility bills and prohibiting Xcel from using ratepayer money for lobbying and advertising (which is typically against the interests of the ratepayers);
- Ending the practice of subsidizing natural gas pipelines for new construction;
- Extending free transit during peak ozone season;

Adams County · Aspen · Avon · Basalt · Boulder · Boulder County · Breckenridge · Broomfield · Carbondale
Clear Creek County · Crested Butte · Dillon · Durango · Eagle County · Edgewater · Erie · Fort Collins · Frisco
Gilpin County · Glenwood Springs · Golden · Lafayette · Lake County · Larimer County · Longmont · Louisville · Lyons
Mountain Village · Nederland · Northglenn · Ouray County · Pitkin County · Ridgway · Routt County · Salida
San Miguel County · Snowmass Village · Summit County · Superior · Telluride · Vail · Wheat Ridge

- Adopting a standardized definition of “disproportionately impacted communities” for state agencies, a key Environmental Justice Action Task Force recommendation for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of environmental justice efforts by the state;
- Establishing an interim legislative committee focused on addressing the ozone crisis; and
- Banning false marketing practices around compostability and a study to enhance statewide diversion of compostable organic materials.

Pushing for Strong Executive Branch Policies and Programs

Transportation is the second leading source of greenhouse gas emissions in Colorado, and CC4CA saw significant wins in reducing vehicle emissions in 2023 through the unanimous adoption by the Air Quality Control Commission of Advanced Clean Trucks and Colorado Clean Cars regulations. Advanced Clean Trucks will require an increasing sales percentage of zero-emission medium and heavy-duty trucks beginning in 2027 and ramping up through 2024, as well as cleaning up emissions in new diesel heavy duty vehicles. While these trucks are only 10% of the vehicles on the roads, they produce 22% of on-road GHG emissions, 30% of on-road NOx emissions, and 40% of on-road fine particulate emissions. The Colorado Clean Cars rules take Colorado’s commitment to electric vehicles to the next level by ensuring that 82% of new vehicles sold in 2032 are electric. Importantly, CC4CA and our allies successfully fought to ensure this rulemaking also includes a requirement to revisit these rules before they expire in order to consider extending them through 2035, as other leading states have done.

Existing buildings also represent a major source of emissions, and following the direction of SB21-1286, the Air Quality Control Commission adopted a menu of options for building operators to ensure their largest buildings (over 50,000 square feet) reduce emissions by 7% by 2026 and 20% by 2030. CC4CA members served on the task force that developed the rules and played a major role in securing this regulatory success.

For **air quality**, CC4CA engaged in multiple rulemakings and proceedings. Staff and members have been collaborating closely with legislators, advocacy organizations, and other allies to prioritize fixes for glaring deficiencies in the state's approach to compliance with federal air quality standards – fixing the state's faulty inventory, lawn and garden equipment, and a stronger Ozone State Implementation Plan and statewide protections for Coloradans. Additional rulemaking is underway this December for stronger ozone protections. In May, in another successful advocacy effort, the Air Quality Control Commission unanimously adopted stronger modeling, monitoring, and permitting requirements for multiple pollutants in disproportionately impacted communities (DICs).

GHG emissions from **electric and gas utilities** has been a major focus, as well. In part due to the sustained pressure from CC4CA and other local governments within its service area, Tri-State finally committed to 80% greenhouse gas emissions reductions by 2030, and through our successful campaign in coalition with other aligned groups, we locked this in through the Tri-State Electric Resource Plan. This ERP also dramatically expands the ability of member co-ops to procure clean energy, improves energy efficiency, avoids construction of new natural

gas plants, and may even result in accelerated retirements of their coal plants. The results of our efforts on Xcel's Electric Resource Plan are similarly substantial, including accelerated coal plant retirements, no new natural gas plants, and retiring the Comanche 3 coal-fired power plant (the worst of the remaining facilities) by 2031.

CC4CA has been actively engaged in ensuring stronger protections for communities impacted by **oil and gas extraction** and ensuring emissions are reduced across all pollutants. CC4CA, as a part of the Local Government Coalition that also included Denver and Commerce City, collaborated with our allies in the oil and gas "GHG intensity" rulemaking. CC4CA pushed to strengthen the rules with better-defined direct measurement technologies requirements, tightening auditing and reporting requirements, establishing third-party verification provisions, increasing transparency and accessibility to emissions data, and incorporating strong protocols for measurement technologies that must be updated as the rapidly advancing measurements field matures. Remarkably, nearly all local government, conservation, community groups, and industry parties to the rulemaking reached consensus on all issues, and the Commission unanimously adopted the rule in July.

There were other significant outcomes over the past year, as well. Building off the important wins of the Producer Responsibility Legislation in 2022, CC4CA successfully engaged its members to provide their feedback to the statewide needs assessment. CC4CA engaged with the Public Utilities Commission's Equity Initiative and their Gas Pipeline Safety Rulemaking to ensure that leaks from gas lines are minimized and greater transparency in pipeline locations is available to all. CC4CA worked with the Colorado Energy Office to ensure that its members' feedback and needs are included in the state's GHG Roadmap 2.0, participated in their sessions on the Energy Code Electric and Solar Ready building code process, and submitted a comment letter to CEO on their Energy Sector Study scenarios.

Local Government Briefings

Over the past year, CC4CA hosted and co-hosted seven briefings for local elected officials and local government staff, with more than 400 participants, including:

- A briefing on how to partner with Colorado's Green Bank to advance and accelerate local climate work
- A webinar on the New ERA (Empowering Rural America) federal grant program, which makes loans and grants available to rural electric cooperators to advance their clean energy projects
- A webinar with Boulder County and 350 Colorado to share a Climate Finance Toolkit for Local Governments
- A briefing on federal funding opportunities at the Fall 2023 Mountain Towns 2030 conference.
- Multiple local government briefings on outcomes from the 2023 legislative session.

Elevating the Local Government Voice

CC4CA ensures that the local elected officials and local government staff of our member jurisdictions have the opportunity to serve as witnesses during legislative hearings, meet with their legislators, testify during agency rulemaking processes, speak to reporters, and publish opinion pieces in local and statewide media outlets. In the past year alone, we supported:

- 62 local officials testifying in 27 regulatory hearings and sessions
- 33 elected officials submitting written comments in regulatory proceedings
- 33 local officials testifying in 10 legislative hearings
- 58 public officials in 19 meetings with state and federal lawmakers

Additionally, more than 240 local officials joined sign-on letters to members of Colorado's federal delegation, we supported 29 elected officials in publishing guest editorials and letters to the editor, and we helped influence at least 35 news stories.

Importantly, for 119 of the people we worked with in regulatory proceedings, publishing opinion pieces, and in other ways this was the first time we had worked with them, representing a substantial expansion in our network of engaged local officials.

Connecting Members to Unprecedented Levels of Federal and State Funding

With the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the federal government is making the single largest investments in climate change and energy in American history. CC4CA has stepped up to support our members who are on the frontlines of implementing climate mitigation and resilience efforts in their communities.

In March, we launched a new newsletter that features state and federal funding opportunities so members can access the resources they need to advance climate-forward projects in Colorado. CC4CA has been working closely with the Colorado Energy Office on multiple state funding proposals to the federal government, and we provided a letter of support for CEO's new building performance standards grant proposal. We also collaborated with CEO and Colorado Clean Energy Fund on a framework for a coordinated approach for applying for EPA funding.

We will announce shortly the hiring of our new federal funding concierge to help our member jurisdictions identify the most promising funding opportunities and support them in competing for those dollars.

For more information:

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