

We owe it to future generations of Coloradans – generations of Coloradans we will never meet – to protect our natural resources, our water supplies, and our crisp mountain air.

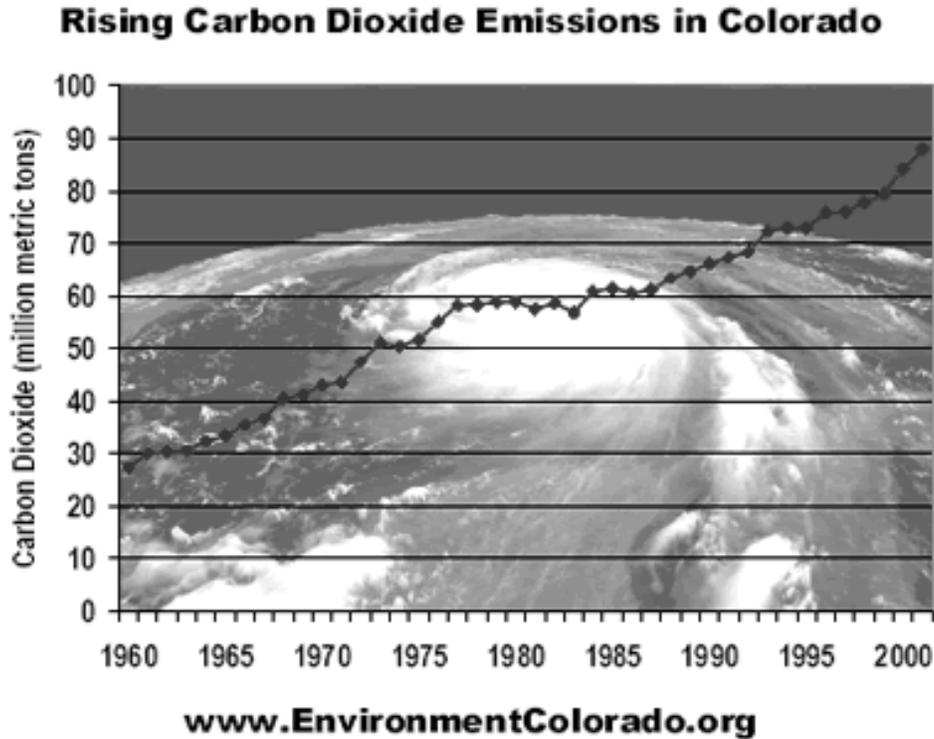
—Governor Bill Ritter, The Colorado Promise

e n v i r o n m e n t

Environment: Where We Are Now

- ◆ In Colorado, the cumulative lifetime risk of cancer is one in two for males and two and five for females.¹
- ◆ Between 1997 and 2002 Colorado lost 1.26 million acres of agricultural land, averaging 690 acres per day. Colorado is third in the nation, behind Texas and New Mexico, for overall agricultural land lost in the past five years.²
- ◆ Asthma rates among children under age four have skyrocketed 160% between 1980 and 1996.³
- ◆ Colorado currently has the second highest estimated prevalence of asthma in the nation.⁴
- ◆ Carbon dioxide emissions in Colorado continue to increase contributing to pollution and poor health.⁵

**This section includes concepts from and supports the recommendations put forth by the Colorado Climate Action Network. We are also excited to see that Governor Ritter has put forth similar goals in the Colorado Climate Action Plan.*



Goals: Where We Need to Go

1. **Clean energy:** generate electricity from clean renewable resources.
2. **Clean cars:** reduce carbon emissions from cars by adopting emission standards.
3. **Clean buildings:** create incentives to promote sustainable homes, schools and other buildings.
4. **Clean, green education:** implement an environmental education plan.

Governor Ritter and Colorado legislators proved in the 2007 legislative session that protecting our environment is a top priority. The state of Colorado is now poised to lead the rest of the nation in seriously addressing climate change and keeping our promise to future generations of Coloradans. We applaud the passage of the following legislation:

- House Bill 07-1281, doubled Colorado's renewable energy standard to 20% by 2020. Voters already approved a constitutional amendment, Amendment 37, in 2004, which raised the standard to 10%.
- House Bill 07-1132, a landmark bill to protect Colorado water quality.
- House Bill 07-1087 establishes a "Wind for Schools" grant program.

Clean energy: generate electricity from clean renewable resources.

- ◆ Global warming is happening with tailpipe and smokestack emissions largely to blame. Carbon emissions in Colorado have increased 34% since 1990.⁶
- ◆ Coal-fired power plants are the single largest source of mercury pollution in the US, responsible for 33% of the total mercury emissions nationwide.⁷
- ◆ State health regulators have found unsafe levels of mercury in fish at five lakes in Colorado. These lakes previously had undetectable levels of mercury, and now there are a total of fourteen lakes in Colorado with unsafe levels of mercury. The bulk of these lakes are near a cluster of coal burning power plants in southwest Colorado.⁸



The best available science indicates that greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced 80% below current levels by 2050 to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere and avoid the worst impacts of global warming (www.ucsusa.org/global_warming/science/emissionstarget.html). As the world's largest emitter, this translates into an important opportunity to personally, publicly and politically adapt our lifestyles for our children and our world. In order to meet the reduction goals that scientists say are necessary, the Colorado Children's Agenda includes the following 5 goals adapted from the work of the member groups of the Colorado Climate Action Network. By adapting these goals, Colorado will move toward an interim benchmark of cutting carbon dioxide pollution levels to 1990 levels by 2020.

Legislative Recommendation 1A: Create energy-efficiency programs that save money and reduce electricity use statewide 10% by 2020.

Legislative Recommendation 1B: Require new coal-fired power plants to cut their global warming pollution in half through advanced technologies. Continue to monitor impact of coal-burning power by continuing to measure mercury levels of rivers and lakes, as the most mercury-sensitive groups are pregnant and nursing women and young children. Mercury can harm the developing nervous system, crimping thinking and learning abilities.

Clean cars: reduce carbon emissions from cars by adopting emissions standards.

- ◆ Coloradoans drove 47 million miles in 2005, reflecting a 114% increase since 1980.⁹
- ◆ According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the number of vehicle miles driven from 1990 to 2004, amounted to 36% of CO₂ emissions in Colorado.
- ◆ The economic burden of asthma has been estimated at \$14 billion in 2002.¹⁰
- ◆ Reducing air pollution reduces asthma attacks. By reducing daily peak ozone levels by 28%, Medicare and private health management companies (commonly called HMOs) both saw their claims for the acute asthma care of children (such as emergency room visits, oxygen, etc) drop by 40% and 19% fewer children hospitalized for asthma.¹¹

Executive Recommendation 2A: Adopt a Clean Cars Program that will cut global warming pollution nearly 30% from new cars.

Executive Recommendation 2B: Increase consumer choice and encourage sales of cars that go further on a gallon of gas. Twelve states have already adopted the program that regulates tail pipe emissions of green house gases. The program will reduce air pollution and will reduce gasoline consumption.

Legislative Recommendation 2C: Reduce the carbon content of transportation fuels 10% by 2020 through incentives for low carbon bio-fuels and electric vehicles.

Clean buildings: Create incentives to promote sustainable homes, schools and other buildings.

- ◆ The average school facility in Colorado was built in 1967 of concrete masonry as a single floor building. Additionally, facilities managers reported that just under half of the facilities (49%) had air conditioning and about 23% of facilities had at least one temporary structure.¹²

Executive Recommendation 3A: Work in partnership with the private sector to retrofit school buildings and use as models to Colorado communities. Establish a companion bill to HB 07-1087 establishing a “Solar for Schools” grant program.

Legislative Recommendation 3B: Create incentives to promote construction of new high-performance homes and commercial buildings that use 50% less energy than today’s, and promote widespread energy retrofitting of existing buildings.

Clean, green education: implement a statewide plan and establish a grants program to fund projects.

- ◆ According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, there is “high confidence” the West faces significant reductions in snowpack, larger and more frequent wildfires, and more intense heat waves.¹³

If we choose not to take immediate action to reverse climate change, our children and grandchildren will bare the consequences as well as the costs.

Executive Recommendation 4A: Implement an environmental education plan modeled after California’s Education and Environment Initiative. The Education and the Environment Initiative (EEI) was signed into law in 2003 Assembly Bill 1548¹⁴ and more recently Assembly Bill 1721.¹⁵ It mandates a broad-ranging strategy to bring education about the environment into California’s K-12 schools. Specifically, this law requires the State to:

- Develop Environmental Principles and Concepts (EP&C) to complement the State’s academic content standards;
- Incorporate the EP&C into the State Board of Education’s criteria for adopted instructional materials in science, history/social science, English/language arts and mathematics;
- Design, develop and disseminate a K-12 standards-based curriculum to teach these EP&C to California’s K-12 students;
- Align state agency programs with the EP&C; and,
- Establish an interagency partnership to implement the EEI.

Executive Recommendation 4B: Establish a “Clean Education” grants program and seek matching contributions through federal grant programs. Promoting environmental education and projects will result in long-term educational benefits for all Coloradans. Programs should promote environmental educational materials and hands-on environmental projects including implementing “Garden to Table” programs, establishing outdoor classrooms that replicate Colorado ecosystems and creating and maintaining zero-waste schools.



- ¹ Finch, Jack, M.S. *Cancer in Colorado 1998-2003: Incidence, Mortality, and Survival*. P. 7.
- ² Environment Colorado, *Losing Ground; Colorado's Vanishing Agricultural Landscape* April 13, 2006
- ³ Environmental Defense, <www.environmentaldefense.org>.
- ⁴ US Environmental Protection Agency, <www.epa.gov>.
- ⁵ Environment Colorado, *The Carbon Boom: National and State Trends in Carbon Dioxide Emissions Since 1960*, June 22, 2006
[The_Carbon_boom_2006.pdf](#)
- ⁶ US Environmental Protection Agency.
- ⁷ Environment Colorado, <www.environmentcolorado.org>.
- ⁸ Hartman, Todd, "Fish advisory revives fight on coal-fired plants," *Rocky Mountain News*, January 26, 2007.
- ⁹ Environment Colorado.
- ¹⁰ Environmental Defense.
- ¹¹ Friedman, MS., Teague, G., et al, "Impact of Changes in Transportation and Commuting Behaviors During the 1996 Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta on Air Quality and Childhood Asthma," *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 2001 Feb, p. 285:897-905.
- ¹² *School Facility Assessments, State of Colorado*, (Donnell-Kay Foundation), April 2005.
- ¹³ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, www.ipccinfo.com/west.php
- ¹⁴ Pavley, *Statutes of 2003*.
- ¹⁴ Pavley, *Statutes of 2005*.

The voters have entrusted us to serve them well. Not to be placeholders, but to be leaders. Not to tinker around the edges, but to find real solutions to real problems. Not to advance narrow agendas, but to be ambitious and courageous.

—Governor Bill Ritter, The Colorado Promise

Before us is an unprecedented opportunity to answer the silent cries of children. These are not the wishes for new bicycles or Nintendo games, rather these are visions for children's basic needs for food, shelter, safety, protection, as well as the opportunity to learn and grow healthy and strong in the Colorado air. The recommendations put forward by the Children's Action Agenda provide the solutions to the most serious challenges facing Colorado's children. Some of the recommendations cost money, while others save money. Some require a significant change in policy, while others require small changes from leadership. All of these recommendations, however, provide sound solutions to improve the systems already in place. Now is the time to act. Here lie the opportunities to provide a lasting foundation for our children and our future.

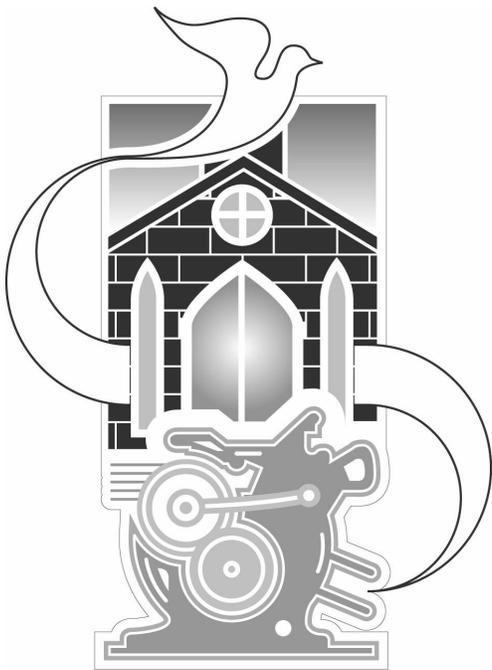
We're fighting for actual children — real, breathing, powerless, trusting, ever-learning, hopeful children — not agendas, numbers, affiliations, power, or semantics. If you do not see your organization's name on the current list of supporters, call and ask them why. Share this agenda with your school board members, city officials, community leaders, chamber of commerce members, department heads, government representatives, and Governor Bill Ritter. Please join with us in advancing these recommendations, improving the services and sustaining the infrastructure that will protect and serve Colorado's children. If we act too late, today's children will have outgrown their childhoods — and these basic opportunities for success.

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MOTHERS ACTING UP

