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**We know the problems and we have solutions, but Colorado government isn't listening**

Frontline communities say the Governor's GHG Roadmap doesn't go far enough

*We live on the land of the Ute, Cheyenne, Arapahoe, and 48 surviving tribes whose descendants are still living and traveling through what we now call Colorado.*

In Colorado, frontline communities are bearing the brunt of the climate crisis. For generations, communities of color and low-income have experienced the worst air quality, the worst water quality, and disproportionately live on contaminated soil—by no accident. Landfills, toxic waste treatment facilities, and polluting industries are more likely to be located near communities of color and low income. This concentration of pollution—compounded by extreme weather (heat waves and storms) and a lack of resilient community infrastructure, including healthcare and housing—means that these same communities, especially segregated rural and workforce communities, end up disenfranchised and struggling to survive.

To truly protect communities disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis we must first acknowledge then dismantle the harmful practices of environmental racism, white supremacy and predatory capitalism—made all the more clear by COVID19. Exclusion from decision making processes coupled with government negligence has resulted in environmental violence to our communities for generations, with little to no consequences for violators. We have sought to improve our relationship with the government so that we may heal these systemic problems and government sanctioned sacrifice zones together. We demand a government that is ready to guarantee the equal protection of us all under the law, for these laws to put our health and safety first, and for their policies to be made in consultation with the people most harmed by the legacy of pollution and the climate crisis.

- It has been almost two years since HB19-1261 passed, and our communities have yet to see tangible action to rein in toxic air pollution or climate crisis-causing emissions. Our state needs to start moving rulemakings and policy now to make sure pollution in frontline communities is reduced and that our state's climate goals are met. Every moment we delay, the communities who have been most harmed by pollution continue to live with the associated health impacts.
- Colorado's Climate Action Plan requires engagement and support of disproportionately-impacted communities, yet we are still waiting for CDPHE's Equity Framework. The delay of this framework signals that disproportionately-impacted communities were not sufficiently consulted or centered, and therefore, are unlikely to reap the benefits that could come from the Governor's Roadmap.
- It is past time that we protect the people and respect the science. To be good ancestors for the next seven generations, the government should no longer silo and sideline equity efforts and instead actively work to untangle the systems that created these disproportionate impacts in the first place.

“The responsibility now rests on Colorado lawmakers and policy makers to build trust by giving the equity analysis top priority on their path to climate action. To truly remedy the generations of inequity and harm imposed on communities not afforded the same platforms to protect ourselves we need to stop doing with politics and economics what has been done to BIPOC communities for generations. That means no longer ignoring, flushing out, or choking out those communities most at risk to environmental and social injustice.”

- Renee Millard-Chacon, Commerce City, CO Spirit of the Sun, 720-224-4204

“We have known for decades that when it comes to environmental pollution, BIPOC communities suffer the most. This pandemic is highlighting the disproportionate impact on our communities. So many Coloradans have voiced their concerns to our government agencies and even to the Governor himself. Each time we are told there will be change, yet polluting sites all over the state are still in operation despite dangerous, documented violations. If real actions are not taken now, by the time relief from environmental racism reaches us, it will be too late.”

- Patricia Nelson, mother of a student of Bella Romero Academy Greeley, CO 337-532-0135

“Farmers and farm-workers are on the frontline of climate change daily — facing the threats of deepening drought and increasing heat. They are facing the impacts head-on and also ready to be part of the solution. Rural communities, agriculture, and workers all need to be central in conversations about climate action.”

- Pete Kolbensschlag, Delta County, CO Colorado Farm & Food Alliance 970-261-0678

“Because our communities tend to have fewer financial resources, which translates to less political power, it tends to be easier for polluters to get away with contaminating our environment. Additionally, being in Southern Colorado away from the Capitol we have even less power. Our neighborhoods are used as waste dumps and rather than polluters paying for proper pollution prevention and waste management, the people of our communities end up subsidizing their profits with our health. Colorado regulators would be wise to recognize that our communities are the most directly and severely impacted and we have first-hand knowledge of the polluting practices of some of the worst corporate actors and therefore, have the potential to be an extremely valuable resource of information in the regulatory process.”

- Jamie Valdez, Harmed by Xcel Energy's Comanche Plant's pollution, Pueblo, CO 720-933-6363

“The Greenhouse Gas Roadmap must ensure that communities of color who have been disproportionately impacted by harmful pollution and climate change are first in line for clean air protections. Governor Polis must fully listen and learn from Indigenous, Black and Brown people's experience with pollution in order to protect the health of Colorado's most impacted communities. Colorado's most precious resource is its children — they all deserve clean air from this day forward.”

- Shaina Oliver, member of the Dineh (Navajo) and Field Organizer for Moms Clean Air Force Colorado 303-994-2421

"Environmental racism is not holding Polluters accountable, it is overwhelming communities with bureaucratic processes that are only meant to check boxes, and othering our communities by not giving us equal protection under the law. Justice isn't charity — we have rights to a healthy environment. Racism will continue as long as the government continues to sanction sacrifice zones, where our rights can be ignored for profit."

- Lucy Molina, Suncor is her deadly neighbor Commerce City, CO, 720-275-5479

"As a former oil and gas worker, I have seen first hand the destruction the oil and gas industry has on the land, workers, and rural communities, especially Indigenous nations. Now, I see gentrification pushing our Black and Brown people out of cities and down valleys. Often this redlining and gentrification puts us into toxic environments, and if they aren't yet the industry has plans to seek the minerals beneath our homes at any cost, including our health."

- Emmett Hobley - Denver, CO, 720-610-6969

We the undersigned acknowledge the moral responsibility of centering and lifting the voices of communities and organizations that work with frontline communities in government sanctioned sacrifice zones.

350 Colorado  
Clean Energy Action  
Colorado Fiscal Institute  
Colorado Farm & Food Alliance  
Colorado Latino Forum  
Colorado Rising  
Colorado Sierra Club  
Conservation Colorado  
Defiende Nuestra Tierras  
EarthJustice  
E2- Environmental Entrepreneurs  
Environmental Defense Fund  
Good Business Colorado  
GreenLatinos Colorado  
Healthy Air and Water Colorado  
Moms Clean Air Force  
Mountain Mamas  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
North Front Range Concerned Citizens  
Progress Now Colorado  
Spirit of the Sun  
WildEarth Guardians

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