

Testimony of Suzanne Jones
Mayor, City of Boulder, Colorado

U.S. House of Representatives Select Committee on the Climate Crisis

August 1, 2019

INTRODUCTION

Chair Castor, Ranking Member Graves and distinguished members of this select committee, good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today before the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis on the subject, “Colorado’s Roadmap for Clean Energy Action: Lessons from State and Local Leaders.”

I am Suzanne Jones, Mayor of Boulder, Colorado. I want to welcome you to our great city and thank you for holding your first field hearing here. As leaders in local climate action, the Boulder community is honored to discuss our accomplishments, challenges and ideas for addressing the climate crisis with you and the American people.

Today, I’d like to share Boulder’s perspective on the importance of climate and clean energy action at the local level—and the urgent need for equivalent leadership and action at the federal level. Specifically, I will describe the urgent threats our communities face, the opportunities and benefits of responsive actions, a brief overview of Boulder’s environmental and climate legacy that has given us decades of lessons learned, and my thoughts on the path forward to achieving our carbon-free energy and climate goals.

As I will emphasize, this path forward must include all of us, at all levels of government, acting decisively and urgently to combat the existential threats posed by climate change and achieve a cleaner, healthier and more just energy system.

THE THREATS

Boulder is a community that embraces innovation and seeks answers to hard problems, with our national labs, vibrant start-ups, large manufacturing companies and Colorado’s flagship university, the University of Colorado. We are blessed to call this place home, and like so many communities across the country, we are passionate about protecting and preserving it for future generations.

There is global recognition and consensus that the climate is changing and will continue to change. It is now just a question of how much, when and whether catastrophic impacts can be avoided. In Boulder, the urgent threat of climate change is challenging our ability to ensure that our city remains a safe and vibrant place to live. Boulder has already experienced a range of climate-related impacts, including temperature and weather extremes, increased wildfire and drought, species disruptions and air quality concerns.

Since 1983, average temperatures in Colorado have risen more than 2° Fahrenheit and are continuing to warm, with Colorado experiencing some of the fastest-warming summers in the United States. We are seeing more destructive wildfires, more severe droughts and changing precipitation patterns. We have had four costly wildfires and a major flood in the past 20 years alone.

The 2010 Fourmile Canyon fire burned 6,200 acres and was the most destructive wildfire in Boulder County's history, burning hundreds of homes. The September 2013 flood swept away roads, bridges and homes across Boulder County, and the 2013 floods across Colorado caused nearly \$4 billion in damage. Climate scientists have found that the severe effects of the 2013 flood were enhanced by human-caused climate change. And due to milder winters, the mountain pine beetle has decimated more than four million acres of forest across the state.

There are also significant economic threats to consider, as the cost of adapting to climate change will be substantial. In Boulder County alone, analysts conservatively estimate¹ at least \$100 to 150 million of additional, non-disaster costs to taxpayers between now and 2050 as a result of the need to adapt to increased threats from wildfires, heat waves and extreme weather. Specifically:

- The projected damage from wildfires will increase by almost 50% from 2020 to 2050. Mitigation efforts to prevent additional property damage to privately-owned homes alone are projected to total upwards of \$20 million.
- Increasing temperatures will impact public health costs due to extreme heat events and extended growing seasons, with potential increases in allergy and asthma symptoms.
- More intense, short-duration precipitation events will impact urban drainage systems, increasing the likelihood of localized flooding.
- The projected annual road maintenance cost per mile of road could increase from \$650 per mile historically to \$1,130 per mile by 2030 due to increased damages from higher temperatures and changes in precipitation and flooding events.
- Projected improvements to Boulder County bridges could exceed \$68 million.
- Government-owned buildings in Boulder County will experience a cumulative increase in cooling costs of 31–45% by 2030 with an increase of 54–75% by 2050.

Such estimates do not include the additional emergency response and recovery costs of future natural disasters, which we know will come. Climate change will likely also impact macro-level factors such as food prices, economic stability and increased risk of contagious vector-borne diseases. Simply put, cities can't afford the extreme weather events and climate change impacts that scientists are predicting and that we have already begun to experience.

Further, many in our communities are at a disproportionately greater risk to the effects of climate change. Seniors, children and people with lower incomes are particularly impacted by the cost of recovering from events, declining air quality and rising energy and food costs.

In short, without significantly drawing down carbon from the atmosphere, we anticipate continued drastic and possibly catastrophic changes in our environment, economy and way of life.

THE OPPORTUNITIES

Though the threats from climate change are daunting and the rapid shift to a carbon-free energy system will be challenging, we are presented with a real opportunity for Boulder and other cities to strengthen our communities and improve quality of life through the process of climate mitigation and adaptation.

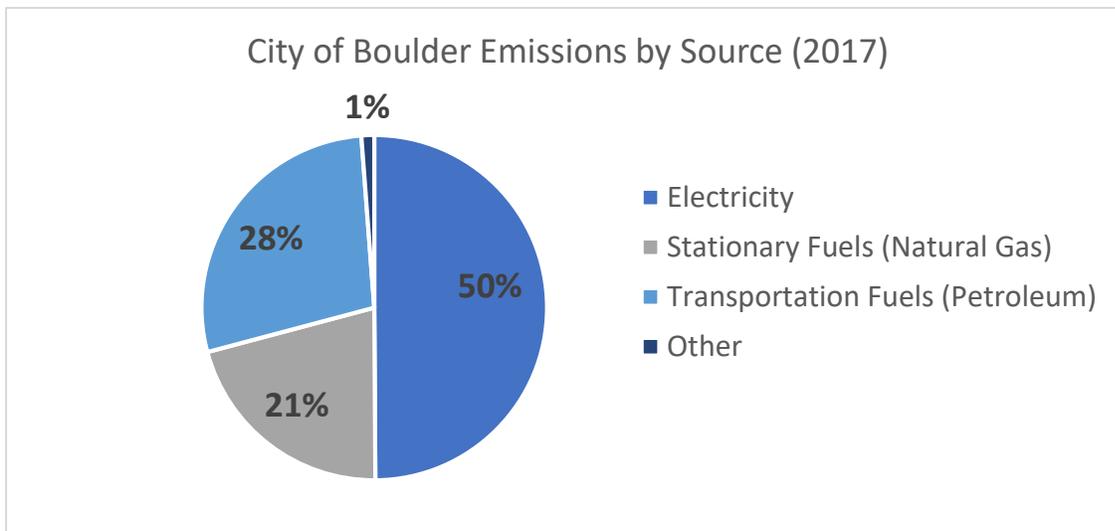
¹ Chinowsky, Paul S. *The Impact of Climate Change: Project Adaptation Costs for Boulder County, Colorado* (2018) <https://assets.bouldercounty.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/resilient-analytics-report-impacts-of-climate-change-boulder-county-colorado.pdf>

Based on the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report², leading cities across the country and the world are quickly mobilizing to respond to the accelerated sense of urgency combined with the magnitude of carbon reductions needed. In Boulder and elsewhere, achieving the 1.5°C temperature goal will require:

- Rapidly shifting to a carbon-free energy system;
- Accelerating existing greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals to the goal of achieving net zero emissions;
- Developing carbon sequestration/negative carbon strategies; and
- Focusing beyond community boundaries in setting goals and tracking progress to achieve systems-level change.

From an emissions perspective, our energy system—from how we power our homes and businesses, to how we get around—is the single-greatest opportunity to draw down carbon. We know that we need to rapidly shift to a carbon-free energy system, and we’re not alone. Many localities have announced 100% clean energy or renewables goals, and momentum is building. In Colorado alone, Boulder is joined by 11 other cities and counties that have made community-wide commitments to transition to 100% clean, renewable energy no later than 2050, some as soon as 2030.

Figure 1: City of Boulder Emissions by Source



Electrification of our entire energy system is the single greatest opportunity to reduce carbon emissions in Boulder.

Rapidly transitioning to an energy system that runs on 100% renewable energy means quickly ending the use of fossil fuels. Our energy future will run on the abundant and increasingly cheap renewable resources like the wind, water and the sun, laying the foundation for the electrification of all our energy needs, including heating and mobility. And at the same time, we must increase the energy efficiency of

² IPCC, 2018: Summary for Policymakers. In: *Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty.* <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/chapter/summary-for-policy-makers/>

homes, businesses and other buildings, and adopt the widespread use of batteries to store the energy from renewables.

This transition provides a chance to improve many aspects of our everyday lives. It will remove pollutants from the air we breathe inside and out of our homes, reducing healthcare costs for individuals and whole communities. It will also provide significant savings to customers, further protecting the most vulnerable to rising utility costs. In Colorado, new wind energy plus storage is becoming cheaper than energy from the state's existing coal plants, and new solar and wind is cheaper than 75% of the state's coal energy. As our state lawmakers have said recently, renewable energy is not the "alternative" any longer. It has become the cheapest power available, including solar plus storage for three cents per kilowatt-hour. Furthermore, we know there is plenty more wind and solar that is ready for development in our state, as evidenced by the many low-cost renewable bids still left on the table after Xcel's recent Electric Resource Plan.

While making this transition, we can also create an energy system that is more responsive, resilient and equitable. In fact, transitioning to a carbon-free resilient energy system is a priority in Boulder's Resilience Strategy, which guides our preparedness for—and ability to respond to—future challenges. Building on lessons learned as one of the inaugural cities participating in the 100 Resilient Cities program, this plan recognizes that we need a grid that's better prepared for the weather disruptions that will become more common in a warmer climate, such as stronger wind and heavier snow storms that can damage power lines. As we transition more of our energy use to carbon-free electricity, it will become even more important to protect our grid from disruptions that will harm our quality of life, limit our economic production and threaten our critical infrastructure and emergency response capability.

We also can't overlook the tools nature already provides for carbon reduction. We see important opportunities in using public and private land to sequester the carbon that's already in our atmosphere. In 2018, the City of Boulder and Boulder County jointly launched soil-based carbon sequestration initiatives. These efforts use demonstrated techniques such as the Marin Carbon Farming project's application of compost to rangelands. We are also experimenting with new and emerging strategies, such as innovative tillage, enhanced soil health practices and other regenerative agricultural techniques, to accelerate carbon drawdown and enhance local ecosystem productivity. When fully implemented, we believe these approaches could conservatively sequester 10% to 20% of local emissions. They also provide significant agricultural and ecosystem benefits such as increased resistance to drought and extreme weather events.

Finally, we have a chance to seize the economic potential of guiding this transition. We can train new work forces to power our energy future and invent new technologies that can be deployed in cities across the globe. For instance, through 2018, every dollar the city invested in residential energy efficiency rebates leveraged about \$9.73 in private investment—local investments that ripple through our economy. In Boulder, we are increasingly seeing this challenge before us as an opportunity to make our community healthier, more prosperous and more resilient, and we will realize these benefits the sooner we take them.

BOULDER'S ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE LEGACY

The city's long legacy of environmental protection and climate action demonstrates that we are not starting from square one. We've been working on this topic for several decades and have success stories and challenges to share.

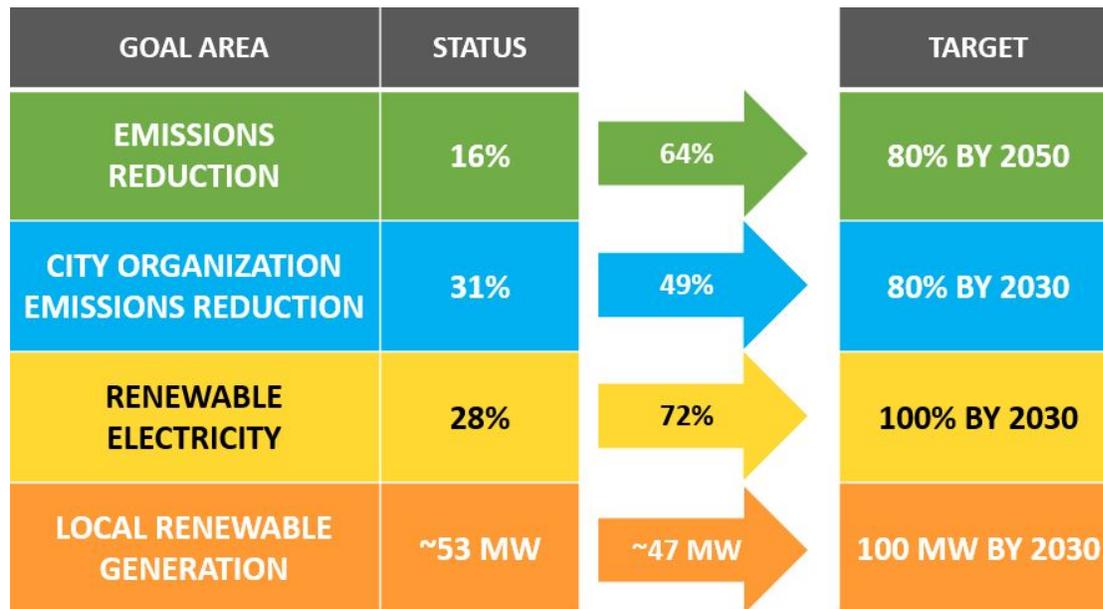
Over the last century, Boulder has consistently served as a destination for individuals defined by their creative and innovative spirit, originating some of the most progressive policies in the United States. Our

history of anticipating change and enacting forward-thinking environmental policies dates back to at least 1898 with the public acquisition of mountain open space. In 1967, Boulder was the first municipality in the country to tax itself for the purpose of acquiring open space, of which we now have over 45,000 acres. Since the 1990s, Boulder’s transportation planning has been focused on reducing environmental impacts by reducing vehicle trips, expanding the network of our transit, cycling and pedestrian systems and integrating with land use planning to create walkable neighborhoods.

In the early 2000s, Boulder’s environmental consciousness turned to climate action. With our large concentration of scientists, many of whom have contributed to several IPCC reports, and an active constituency of environmentalists and outdoor enthusiasts, our community demanded that we take aggressive actions related to climate change. In 2002, Boulder City Council adopted a resolution to commit to the Kyoto Protocol goal, at a time when the federal government refused to sign on.

In 2006, the city and concerned community members published a comprehensive Climate Action Plan that addressed energy, buildings, transportation, waste and natural environment impacts. The plan was most recently updated in 2017 and includes the following specific targets:

Figure 2: Boulder’s Current Climate Action Plan Targets



The Boulder community has also voted on multiple occasions to tax itself to pay for climate programs and services. The city’s 2006 per-kilowatt tax collected on electric utility bills became the country’s first tax dedicated to addressing climate change, and it continues to fund our climate work today. Residents also voted to levy a trash tax that funds the city’s zero waste efforts and a Utility Occupation Tax that funds the city’s analysis of creating a local electric utility.

Accomplishments of Boulder’s Climate Programs and Partnerships

Since 2006, the city has been at the forefront of innovation in leading the energy transition, and through its strong partnerships with key public and private organizations such as Boulder County and the University of Colorado, Boulder continues to design new programs and approaches that have been replicated across Colorado.

In partnership with Boulder County, the city developed a national model for delivering energy-advising services that has helped more than 18,000 households and businesses in Boulder County implement energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements. Their participation in the EnergySmart and Partners for a Clean Environment (PACE) programs save 16 million kilowatt hours per year.

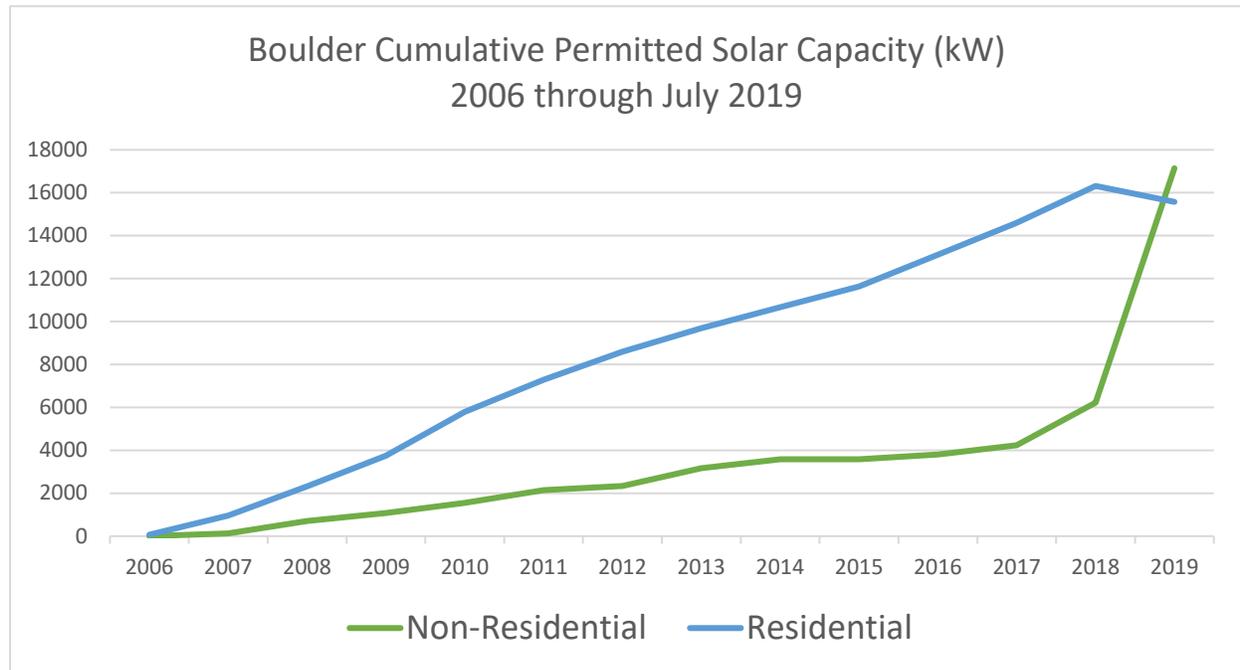
Moving beyond voluntary programs, the city enacted an energy code for new buildings that is among the most stringent nationally, with the goal of achieving net zero building codes by 2031. In the past few years, more than half of newly constructed homes in Boulder have achieved a net-zero impact. The city also requires rating, reporting and energy efficiency requirements that reduce energy use and improve the quality of Boulder’s existing commercial and industrial building stock. Participating buildings have reduced their energy use by 3% from 2015 through 2018.

The city also mandated minimum energy performance standards for rental units, called SmartRegs. Through the eight-year compliance timeline, over 22,000 rental units, or approximately 96% of licensed rental units, achieved compliance with the requirements.

Boulder County has one of the highest adoption rate of electric vehicles in the state, in part by partnering with Boulder County on group bulk purchasing programs to lower the price for consumers. Called “Benefits Boulder County,” this program also included e-bikes and rooftop solar.

Boulder has achieved one of highest rates of installed solar capacity per capita in the United States, earning recognition as a Platinum-level Solar Friendly Community from the Colorado Solar and Storage Association, with 39 megawatts currently installed on homes and businesses. The city’s programs support widespread solar adoption in the community, including a partnership with a local credit union to provide low-interest loans on energy-efficient and solar upgrades and the city’s Solar Grants and Rebates program, which provides financing for solar power installations at homes, businesses and facilities, bringing solar to more income levels.

Figure 3: Boulder’s Cumulative Permitted Solar Capacity Over Time



Boulder’s current commercial and residential solar capacity combined is 39 megawatts.

One of the most impactful initiatives we have undertaken, in partnership with Boulder County, is the creation of Colorado Communities for Climate Action (CC4CA), a coalition of cities and counties across Colorado that advocate together for climate-friendly policies. With a current membership of 28 cities and counties, CC4CA represents a significant portion of the state’s population and has already experienced significant success in influencing meaningful climate policy at the state legislature and state agencies.

Finally, one of the city’s most high-profile climate projects is municipalization, the city’s effort to explore the creation of a community-owned, city-run electric utility that would bring clean, local, affordable and reliable electricity to Boulder electric customers. When Boulder residents first voted to explore municipalization in 2011, it was clear that Boulder needed to drastically reduce its emissions from the electricity generation sector in order to meet the city’s GHG reduction targets. Since then, our community has voted several times to fund our municipalization exploration process. The city’s analysis to date demonstrates that local electric utilities can better reflect the values of the communities they serve and have the flexibility to offer services like microgrids that will prepare their communities for the impacts of climate change. Boulder has learned a lot from Colorado’s 29 other municipal electric utilities and is actively sharing lessons learned from this effort with other cities considering municipalization, such as Pueblo, Colorado.

Through these actions, and through the addition of renewable resources by our current electricity provider, Boulder achieved its 2020 GHG emissions reduction target of 16% below 2005 levels in 2017—three years early—even as our community saw growth in population, jobs and economic activity. Achieving this reduction is largely attributable to two key factors: mitigating the increase in demand associated with population and economic growth through strong building codes and incentive-based efficiency programs, and reduced grid emissions due to state-level utility renewable energy standards and deployment of local solar.

Now, in recognition of the challenges ahead, the city and county recently declared a “Climate Emergency.” This declaration comes as the city kicks-off a new process to mobilize city residents and businesses to do everything within our grasp to tackle the climate crisis. It’s not just up to city and county governments alone to address the local causes and impacts of climate change—we need our entire community’s participation, too. I believe the Boulder community is up to the task.

LESSONS LEARNED IN THE TRANSITION TO CARBON-FREE ENERGY

I am proud of Boulder’s accomplishments and the progress our community has made in transitioning toward carbon-free energy, reducing our emissions and planning for a resilient future. We also know that we still have a long way to go and have learned many lessons along the way.

Need for Systemic Change

Many efficiency and GHG reduction strategies that communities have implemented rely on voluntary, individual behavior change. While Boulder has seen success with these programs, they also have limitations. Incentives-based efficiency programs such as rebates and energy advising tend to influence a resident or business to choose a better technology when they are already considering an improvement project, but they are generally insufficient in motivating someone to undertake a project they were not otherwise considering. Mechanisms such as toll roads and high-occupancy vehicle lanes create some behavior change; yet, a key challenge is ensuring persistence of the change. Over time, behaviors tend to revert to what is easier or more convenient. Systemic change, to the point where the good choice is

the only choice, or at least the easiest and simplest choice, is the only way to ensure persistent behavior change. And systemic change is not something Boulder—or any city—can do alone.

Just Transition Must Be at the Center of All Programs and Policies

We have found that participation in voluntary, incentives-based programs tends to be limited to more affluent residents and businesses, leaving a significant portion of the community underserved, including renters and lower-income residents. Regulatory approaches, such as Boulder’s energy codes and performance standards for buildings, must balance the amount of savings that can be achieved against creating undue financial burden for residents or businesses. The cost of converting an existing building from gas to electric, especially in older buildings that may lack the needed electrical infrastructure, is a significant financial burden and raises significant equity concerns.

As a community, we need to ensure that all our buildings and systems remain resilient as the climate continues to change; that every community member prospers, remains healthy and can enjoy a good quality of life; and that our economy remains strong. Equity and resilience must be the foundation of our path forward.

Current Financial Mechanisms Are Inadequate

Due to the need to balance the financial burden of regulation with the intended goals, regulatory approaches such as building codes tend to be limited to lower-cost, short-payback upgrades. Cities do not control or have enough resources to direct or manage the enormous changes in infrastructure needed to transition to a carbon-free energy economy on their own. New, robust financial mechanisms are needed to achieve deeper savings. Resilience will need to be a growing priority for public investment, and equity must be central to all planning and deployment to avoid continued adverse impacts to our most vulnerable communities.

Our Progress Has Not Been Fast Enough

Perhaps our greatest lesson learned is that our progress, while substantial and ahead of schedule, has not been fast enough. Our existing public and private sector commitments are insufficient to stabilize climate, and energy-related emissions reductions will not alone achieve climate stabilization. The IPCC report tells us that carbon recapture is now essential if we are to avoid the worst of predicted climate impacts. In addition, we know that other significant warming factors beyond energy and transportation must also be addressed, for example, by pursuing regenerative agriculture practices and a circular approach to materials use that prioritizes reducing, reusing and recycling and composting.

Solutions Must Be Replicable

Given that local action alone won’t come close to adequately addressing climate change, Boulder has worked hard to coordinate and lead initiatives that can be replicated in other communities. Our city participates in several global and national coalitions, including the Urban Sustainability Directors’ Network, Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance, the Under 2 Coalition and the Mayors’ Compact. These efforts allow Boulder to interface with other cities, learning and sharing best practices. We’ve learned that our actions are most effective when they are replicable for other communities.

THE PATH FORWARD AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Urgent, large-scale change is needed at all levels and in all sectors of society, with cities continuing to play a critical role in the path forward. In terms of making this transition, we largely know what needs to happen.

Half of Boulder’s current GHG emissions continue to come from electricity generation and use, making continued investment in solar and wind power a high priority. Recognizing the central role of clean electricity, Boulder will continue to take innovative actions to make this transition. We are committed to 100% renewable electricity by 2030, 100 megawatts of local generation by 2030, and emissions reductions aligned with or more aggressive than the State of Colorado’s goal of 80% emissions goal by 2050. I expect that cities across the country will continue to join in making similar commitments.

Investing in enough renewable energy to supply our current electricity demands is an essential step. But to fully transition to carbon-free energy, we need to quickly shift away from natural gas and petroleum and electrify all aspects of our daily lives: how we heat our buildings, produce hot water and power our vehicles and transit system. Boulder was one of the first cities in the nation to launch efforts to develop strategies to rapidly electrify homes. Through these efforts, we have also helped organize a consortium of over 20 leading cities in the U.S. to form the “Building Electrification Initiative.” This initiative is developing a technical assistance, policy development and implementation platform to accelerate building electrification nationwide.

It is important to recognize, however, that this transition will require significant investment. The cost to electrify all 18,000 single-family houses in Boulder will alone require approximately \$700 million. A critical task facing policy makers is the development of mechanisms to enable large-scale capital investments that reduce the upfront costs for these household investments and enable long-term repayment as part of improved household benefits—reduced costs, improved safety and greater resilience to climate impacts.

At the same time, the city has taken a leading role in transportation electrification. The city is currently working on electrifying our fleet of 18 local buses and mapping the strategy for the broader electrification of transit. Again, this will require significant investment. For Boulder’s local bus line alone, electrification will cost nearly \$20 million. The much broader electrification of delivery vehicles, ride-hailing services and other fleets will require much greater investment across both public and private sectors.

However, switching from fossil energy to electricity in transportation and buildings also holds tremendous potential to dramatically increase grid flexibility, reduce total household and business energy costs, and reduce air pollution and GHG emissions—a concept called “beneficial electrification.” A recent analysis in California found that designing new all-electric homes reduces building costs by \$1,500–6,000 and reduces homeowner utility bills by \$4,000–10,000 over 20 years. The retrofit of existing homes to high-efficiency heat pumps also provides much-needed cooling in climates that previously did not need air conditioning. Heat pumps also significantly improve indoor air quality and reduce the incidence of respiratory health conditions, particularly in children, the elderly and other vulnerable populations such as pregnant women.

There are similar and, in some cases, even greater economic opportunities in transportation electrification. In a recent analysis, Boulder-based Southwest Energy Efficiency Project (SWEET) estimated that due to the higher efficiencies, lower maintenance costs, avoided carbon impacts and improved health outcomes, transitioning to electric transportation in Arizona would result in cumulative net financial benefits of \$3.8–32 billion by 2050, depending on how quickly it is implemented. At a household level, electric vehicle adoption could result in the costs of personal vehicle use dropping by 50% or more.

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE AND TRANSFORMATIVE CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGY

Recognizing that achieving changes of this magnitude will require the involvement of the entire community, Boulder is also embarking on a renewed climate commitment—our Climate Mobilization Action Plan—which will accelerate our targets and identify actions that will produce the greatest impact in reducing and capturing emissions.

Key to this new plan is a renewed focus on systems-level change and the formation a new network of climate collaborators. Action at this scale will require new types of partnerships with a range of public, private, academic and non-governmental entities. It will require accelerating innovation, as the rate of change now taking place—both in the pace and impacts of climate change and in technology, social perspectives and policy—requires new models of rapid development, implementation and modification of climate action strategies. It will also require grounding actions in local benefits, designing strategies that deliver tangible, local quality-of-life benefits while contributing to emissions reductions.

Cities have in many ways been on the leading edge of this work. We have helped pioneer big steps in energy efficiency and fostering the development of more renewable power. But we know we have more to do. Cities must continue their push for more sustainable building policies, take greater steps to tackle transportation emissions and better track progress to know which investments have the greatest impact. With our innovation, ingenuity and resolve, we can build prosperous and equitable low-carbon communities.

THE CRITICAL ROLE OF STATE AND FEDERAL ACTION

Even with the growing engagement of cities, however, the scale of the climate crisis is far too great for local or even regional collaborations to solve the climate crisis on their own. While we believe our goals are achievable, statewide, national and global steps are essential for us to meet the demands of this challenge.

As you heard from Governor Polis, during the 2019 Colorado legislative session more than a dozen new climate and energy bills were signed into law, arguably making this session the most impactful yet in Colorado’s efforts to address the climate crisis. The city is very appreciative of these actions and is proud to have played a role in their creation and passage.

These new bills cover an array of issues, including: regulating emissions from the major sectors; oversight of electric-generating companies; how companies must factor climate change into their decision-making; and new regulations on how oil and gas drilling is governed in the state. While the design and implementation of these new policies will be critical to their success, we expect that Boulder’s efforts will be significantly supported and bolstered by this legislation.

Continued leadership and action at the state level is essential, and Boulder will continue to serve as an active member of CC4CA to reach the coalition’s goals of:

- Supporting actions to implement the 2025 GHG reduction goals identified in the Colorado Climate Plan, as well as more aggressive goals necessary to limit the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above preindustrial levels, and to pursue an increase of no more than 1.5°C;
- Increasing consumer energy choice and innovation; and
- Supporting improvements to the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission’s oversight of drilling and preservation of local control to adopt regulations, moratoriums or other limits as necessary.

At the federal level, we support a suite of policies and legislation to achieve deep, long-term reductions in GHG emissions and the transition to carbon-free energy, including:

- Expanded use of regulatory mechanisms to create a level playing field for all energy technologies and energy sources, by adequately incorporating the full environmental costs and benefits of different energy strategies;
- Continued and expanded investment in clean energy infrastructure, including advanced grids, battery storage and electrical vehicle charging;
- Continued and expanded fuel efficiency and emissions standards for the entire transportation sector, including both light-duty and heavy-duty vehicles;
- Market-based programs that put a price on carbon emissions, such as a carbon tax or cap-and-trade program, which require emission reductions but let the private sector determine the most cost-effective way to achieve them (for example, House Resolution 763, the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act of 2019);
- Expanded support for carbon sequestration efforts, particularly programs that support innovation and adoption of carbon sequestration in the agricultural sector; and
- Expanded use of the Natural Resources Conservation Service to support regional-scale land management that improves community resilience to climate change.

CALL TO ACTION

Though the challenges of addressing climate change may seem daunting, our collective response is an enormous opportunity. If we work together across all levels of government and all sectors, we can strengthen our economies, improve community health, protect our vulnerable populations and strengthen our resilience.

I want to express my deep appreciation for the select committee's leadership in elevating the urgency of the climate crisis. The federal government was essential in enacting solutions to past large-scale environmental crises—from the Dust Bowl to toxic pollution that poisoned our waters and air. It is now time, again, for a clear vision at the federal level that harnesses the innovation in our country and galvanizes action to tackle the existential climate crisis facing us. In so doing, we can realize the enormous benefits to the environment, public health and the economy that we can have today and for future generations.

As I conclude my remarks today, I want to recognize that Boulder is not alone in its efforts. Communities worldwide are stepping up to the challenge of reducing their GHG pollution and are pressing other levels of government and the private sector to do much more to combat climate change. We are proud to collaborate closely with so many leading regional and global cities working to achieve carbon neutrality, which will engender greater economic prosperity, social equity, enhanced quality of life and climate resilience for the people and businesses in our communities. We are also deeply honored to work closely with our peer communities in Colorado, our close colleagues at Boulder County, the University of Colorado and federal agencies on such an important and defining issue.

On behalf of the Boulder community, thank you for inviting me to testify today. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.