



# 2021 Legislative Agenda



Each year, Environment Colorado sets out goals for the upcoming legislative session. The legislative agenda lets decision-makers, media, and the public know which high-priority environmental issues our members want to see prioritized.

## Building electrification

To prevent air and water pollution and the worst impacts of global warming, America must move toward meeting its energy needs with 100 percent renewable energy. Getting there will require that we get the most out of every bit of energy we use — and that we end the burning of fossil fuels in our homes and commercial buildings. That is why Environment Colorado supports:

- **Beneficial electrification in buildings:** The Healthier Homes Act of 2021 helps utilities develop plans to replace gas and propane-powered appliances with high efficiency versions. It will also implement plans that include education on the benefits and maintenance of efficient appliances, financial incentives for those who purchase high-efficiency appliances. Lastly, it requires utilities to publish annual reports on the impact of their beneficial electrification programs.
- **Benchmarking commercial building energy usage:** The Building Energy Performance Act of 2021 requires most large commercial, multifamily, and public buildings over 50,000 sq. ft. to benchmark energy use and reduce emissions. Buildings will receive a score based off of their energy use. This data will be provided by major utilities and the Colorado Energy Office. Less-efficient buildings will make improvements to help reduce climate change. Lastly, the Colorado Energy Office will provide training and support for the steps laid out above.

## Beyond Plastic

Single-use plastics including bags, cups, food containers, cutlery, and straws, pose several local impacts to our community. They litter our streets and waterways, emit dangerous greenhouse gasses, endanger local wildlife, and contain toxic additives that can threaten public health. These disposable plastics are often unnecessary and take centuries to decompose - every piece of plastic ever produced still exists and will for centuries. When they do break apart, they become microplastics that can be ingested by wildlife and eventually humans. Single-use plastics also undermine local recycling efforts - most cannot be recycled and can clog and jam recycling machines. That is why Environment Colorado supports:

- **A statewide restriction on polystyrene:** One of the worst forms of plastic is polystyrene, commonly known as Styrofoam. The bill proposed we restrict retail and food establishments' from using polystyrene.
- **Eliminating restrictions on communities' ability to manage single-use plastic waste:** Currently, there is a restriction in the Colorado statute that limits local governments from setting their own limitations on single-use plastics. The proposed bill would restore the rights of communities to set their own single-use plastic limitations.
- **A statewide restriction on plastic bags paired with a fee on paper bags:** By prohibiting retailers from providing single-use plastic carry-out bags and requiring stores to charge \$0.10 each for paper bags to reduce overall bag consumption.



## Keep Colorado on Track to Meet Climate Goals

When HB1261 was passed in 2019, it gave the Air Quality Control Commission authority to undergo the rulemaking process to ensure Colorado meets its science-based targets for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) pollution- 50% by 2030 and 90% below 2005 levels by 2050. It is important that we stay on track to meet our climate goals because we all want a safe, healthy future for our children and grandchildren and that means urgently addressing climate change. We need additional accountability measures in place to ensure that we address the climate crisis in Colorado. The is why Environment Colorado supports:

- **Roadmap Implementation:** This bill would establish Governor Polis' climate goals in law and also increases the ease with which advocates can engage at the Air Quality Control Commission. It also includes changes to Air Pollutant Emission Notice Filing fees (APEN) which increase funding to implement the Colorado roadmap through the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

## Transportation

Transportation is the biggest source of greenhouse gas emissions and we need to reduce the amount of driving by increasing options like transit, walking, and biking as well as ensure all driving is in a clean electric vehicle. The is why Environment Colorado supports:

- **A transportation funding bill:** This bill would increase funding for transportation in Colorado as long as it focuses dollars on things that reduce vehicle miles traveled and accelerates transition to cleaner EVs. We need to ensure that any new funding would ensure that the dirtiest forms of transportation are paying the most.