CLIMATE CHANGE IN COLORADO

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED!

SUPPORT NEW EPA STANDARDS THAT WILL, FOR THE FIRST TIME, LIMIT CARBON EMISSIONS.

CONTACT THE CENTER FOR RURAL AFFAIRS TO GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SUPPORTING STRONG SET OF STANDARDS.

TALK TO YOUR LOCAL POWER PROVIDER ABOUT ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CLEAN, RENEWABLE ENERGY OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO YOU.

VISIT THE WEBSITE GLOBALCHANGE.GOV TO LEARN MORE ABOUT METHODS TO ADAPT AND MITIGATE CLIMATE CHANGE, AND STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO SHRINK YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT.

THE CASE FOR CUTTING CARBON EMISSIONS

- In 2012, the U.S spent more than $100 billion responding to climate-related disasters, with every taxpayer shelling out about $1,100 to foot that bill. Colorado endured the most costly wildfires of any state in 2012, where several hundred residences were destroyed.

- 40% of U.S. carbon emissions come from existing power plants. Currently the U.S has established limits for arsenic, mercury, sulfur, lead, and cyanide emitted from power plants, but not for carbon dioxide, the leading cause of climate change.

- In 2013, 64% electricity generated in CO came from coal, while 17% came from renewable resources. We can do better – wind power is capable of meeting more than 24 times the state’s current electricity needs.

IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

- According to the National Climate Assessment, Colorado is already seeing the impact of climate change in snowpack and streamflow reductions, declining water supply reliability, shifts in vegetation and stress on forests. Increased heat, drought, and insect outbreaks, all linked to climate change, will lead to increased intensity of wildfires like the ones in 2012. In fact, 2012 might become our new normal.

- Drought is projected to become more frequent, intense, and longer lasting than in the historical record, presenting a huge challenge for regional management of water resources and natural hazards such as wildfire. About 55% of the Colorado’s counties face higher risks of water shortages by mid-century as the result of climate change.

- Extreme weather and temperatures are expected to reduce agricultural yields and negatively impact the tourism and recreation industry. Higher temperatures earlier in the growing season will be countered by the impacts of extreme weather. Low-snow winters cost Colorado resorts an estimated $154 million dollars in resort revenue and over 1800 jobs.

- Many people are facing air quality threats that will worsen with climate change, especially an estimated 113,600 kids and 299,100 adults living with asthma. Five counties in Colorado have unhealthy smog levels.

LOCAL ACTION IN COLORADO

- The Colorado Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) was enhanced in 2010 and requires investor-owned utilities and cooperatives to provide 30 percent of their 2020 electricity through renewable and/or recycled energy.

- Wind energy enabled Colorado to eliminate 6,849,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions in 2013 alone.

- CO ranks 5th in the nation for number of wind-related jobs, supporting 3,000 to 4,000 direct and indirect jobs.

- It takes a lot of water to generate electricity using fossil fuels. Using wind power to generate electricity saves Colorado more than 1,607,000,000 gallons of water per year.

EPA STANDARDS FOR EXISTING POWER PLANTS

These standards will add momentum to efforts that Colorado is already committed to by:

- Setting first-ever limits for carbon emissions from power plants and encouraging clean energy development as a carbon emissions-free source of power.

- Keeping hard earned dollars at home, rather than exporting cash in exchange for imported coal, all while creating jobs in clean energy and energy efficiency.

- Protecting health and welfare of communities, particularly the most vulnerable and poor.