

## Colorado GOP and Climate Change

*Published in the Denver Post on April 13, 2016*

Re: "Wasting Colorado's money on EPA's Clean Power Plan," April 2 guest commentary.

State Senator Jerry Sonnenberg claims to want to prevent the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) from wasting taxpayer dollars on studying how to comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan. He acknowledges that the amount of money in question is less than 0.1 percent of the CDPHE's budget, or about 0.001 percent of the state's budget.

Sonnenberg doesn't really care about the dollars. Instead, he's doing his best to prevent the state from taking any steps whatsoever toward addressing climate change. We saw another example of this recently, when Sonnenberg and his fellow Republicans on the Senate Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Energy Committee killed House Bill 1004, which would have required the state to do what over 20 Colorado cities and counties have already done: adopt measurable goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

How long can Coloradans afford to let Sonnenberg keep his head in the sand on this issue?

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*An earlier version of this letter was sent to the Denver Post shortly after Senate Republicans killed House Bill 16-1004. The Post did not publish a news story concerning that bill, but did offer Jerry Sonnenberg a platform on its Opinion Page to express his denial of anthropogenic climate change. The earlier version of the letter follows.*

Colorado Senate Republicans killed House Bill 16-1004 in a committee vote on March 30th. That bill would have strengthened the Colorado Climate Plan by requiring it to include measurable goals.

A plan without goals is a plan that's unlikely to accomplish much. Evidently, that's what Senate Republicans want. That's clearly what Governor Hickenlooper wants too. The Climate Plan that he released last September does not include any goals, but instead simply celebrates "business as usual" efforts to moderate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and adapt to a warmer environment.

Over twenty Colorado cities and counties have adopted measurable goals for reducing their GHG emissions, as have three major corporations located here. Given the seriousness of the threat posed by climate change to our environment and economy, it's time for the State to do likewise. Coloradans need to find a way to bypass the obstructionism of the Governor and Senate Republicans.