

**Testimony in Support of HB16-1004:
Concerning a Requirement to Include Measurable Goals that are Subject
to Deadlines in Colorado's Climate Action Plan**

*Presented to the Colorado House Health, Insurance, and
Environment Committee on February 4, 2016*

In December of 2014, members of the FCSG began a series of conversations with Representative Arndt, Representative Ginal, and Senator Kefalas to discuss the recently-released "Colorado Greenhouse Gas Inventory Update." We had two primary concerns: 1) the Inventory documented a steady rise in Colorado's greenhouse gas emissions between 1990 and 2010 while projecting a continuing rise in emissions through 2030, and 2) the Inventory made no mention of the goals established by the Ritter Administration in 2007, which are to reduce our State's greenhouse gas emissions 20% by 2020 and 80% by 2050 compared to 2005 levels.

Our concerns intensified when the "2015 Colorado Climate Plan" was released in September of last year. That document referred to the Ritter Administration goals only in passing, did not compare the State's performance to date to those goals, and did not establish any new goals. It seemed to us that the Executive Branch was attempting to back away from any goals to reduce the State's greenhouse gas emissions.

The science concerning global climate change has only become more firmly established since 2007, and suggests that the goals set forth by Colorado back then are not as ambitious as they should be. In August of last year, the FCSG joined with sixteen other members of the Colorado Coalition for a Livable Climate (CCLC) in calling on our State to adopt the goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2030, which supports limiting the global average temperature rise to 1.5° C (2.7° F) or less by the end of this century. This limit was of course endorsed by the signatories to the climate agreement resulting from the talks held in Paris last December.

House Bill 16-1004 offers a way both of requiring the State to analyze its progress toward achieving its current climate goals and to update those goals periodically. We believe that the following three amendments would close a couple of potential loopholes in the bill as currently drafted:

1. Add “based on the best available science” after the phrase “measurable goals” on line 9. This would help ensure that our state goals are in alignment with what scientists are telling us humanity needs to do to prevent catastrophic climate change.
2. Change “either” and “or” on line 10 to “both” and “and”. As written, the bill would allow the Executive branch to choose between mitigation and adaptation, which arguably is what it did in the “2015 Colorado Climate Plan.” We need to address both mitigation, i.e. the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change, and adaptation, i.e. upgrading our infrastructure and policies to help our State cope with the climate change that is already occurring.
3. Add “on a percentage basis relative to the State’s 2005 emissions” after the phrase “Colorado’s greenhouse gas emissions” on line 10. This change would further reinforce the need to adopt goals based on the best available science.

With these changes, House Bill 16-1004 would help Colorado re-establish its leadership in addressing the problem of global climate change. We urge you to adopt these three amendments and to approve the bill for consideration by the full House.