



## **Colorado's Economic Recovery 2020-2021: Barriers and Solutions to Growth and Resilience**

### **Executive Summary**

Today, a dollar invested in a wind or solar energy project will create far more power per megawatt hour than the same dollar in extractive energy sources. The former harnesses natural energy to create clean fuel. The latter emit toxic chemicals into our air and atmosphere.

Signal Tech Coalition, a key business stakeholder on Colorado's emissions reductions roadmap, wrote two new analyses that present the primary barriers to recovery and resilience followed by practical next steps to create economic opportunity in a clean energy economy.

Fossil fuels got us to where we are today, however our nation and state's competitive advantage rests firmly in our ability to innovate, and there is a better energy future and economy at our doorstep. Denver's consistently unhealthy air quality is reason enough to change our system. The tech and business communities believe that economics is making a comparably strong case.

There are practical ways to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic and recession that redirect Colorado's economy toward growth and resilience. Let's create public-private partnerships that strengthen our data-sharing frameworks. This will imbue clarity and an ethos of collaborative participation in the evolving cleantech market, while attracting new businesses to Colorado. Let's ensure that public incentives move toward green investments while supporting ongoing transition efforts for our towns that depend on the fossil fuel industry. The public investments will send a signal to asset managers across the country who are looking for opportunities to invest in cleantech economies. Bringing this capital here can make Colorado a powerhouse in the next two decades. Let's update our regulatory industry to incentivize community renewable energy projects, in contrast to its current limitations that do the opposite. Towns small and large can use energy savings to reinvest back into their communities.

In short, the two included analyses are a nod to the state government: the tech and business communities are ready to join you in recasting our state's economy toward a future where every Coloradan has the chance to work and live in a clean energy economy and environment.

These analyses look at both the barriers and actionable solutions to moving our economy toward a more robust job market as we recover from the current recession. They are collected and written from numerous conversations with successful tech entrepreneurs, economists, scientific experts, policy experts, senior state energy advisors, as well as in-depth research.

*Key Highlights:*

→ BARRIERS

- ◆ The existing financial relationship with the traditional energy industry is one of the primary barriers to the clean energy transition.
- ◆ We are not supporting local governments and communities with the resources that they need to transition to clean energy economies.
- ◆ We need to redefine what resilience means in the 21st century.

→ SOLUTIONS

- ◆ Invest in the Green Bank developed by the Colorado Clean Energy Fund (CCEF). They are prepared with financial instruments designed for clean energy and energy efficiency projects. For example, investments in updates to Colorado's buildings are still too small for big banks, but, when aggregated, have huge potential to lower emissions and utilities bills for Colorado businesses. The CCEF can provide this capital, and their success will attract the larger private players.
- ◆ Partner the Green Bank with a dedicated cleantech accelerator program that can work with the state's emissions reductions goals.
- ◆ Incubate cleantech innovation with the best entrepreneurial minds in the world through financial incentives for businesses and partnerships with Colorado's research institutions.
- ◆ Update 15-year-old regulations from the Renewable Energy Standard that disincentivize community renewable energy generation.
- ◆ Develop pollution free transportation zones where EV's, bikes and other non-ICE vehicles gain discounted or free access. This will reduce ground-level Ozone and send a signal to the tech industry that Colorado is ready to make big changes.