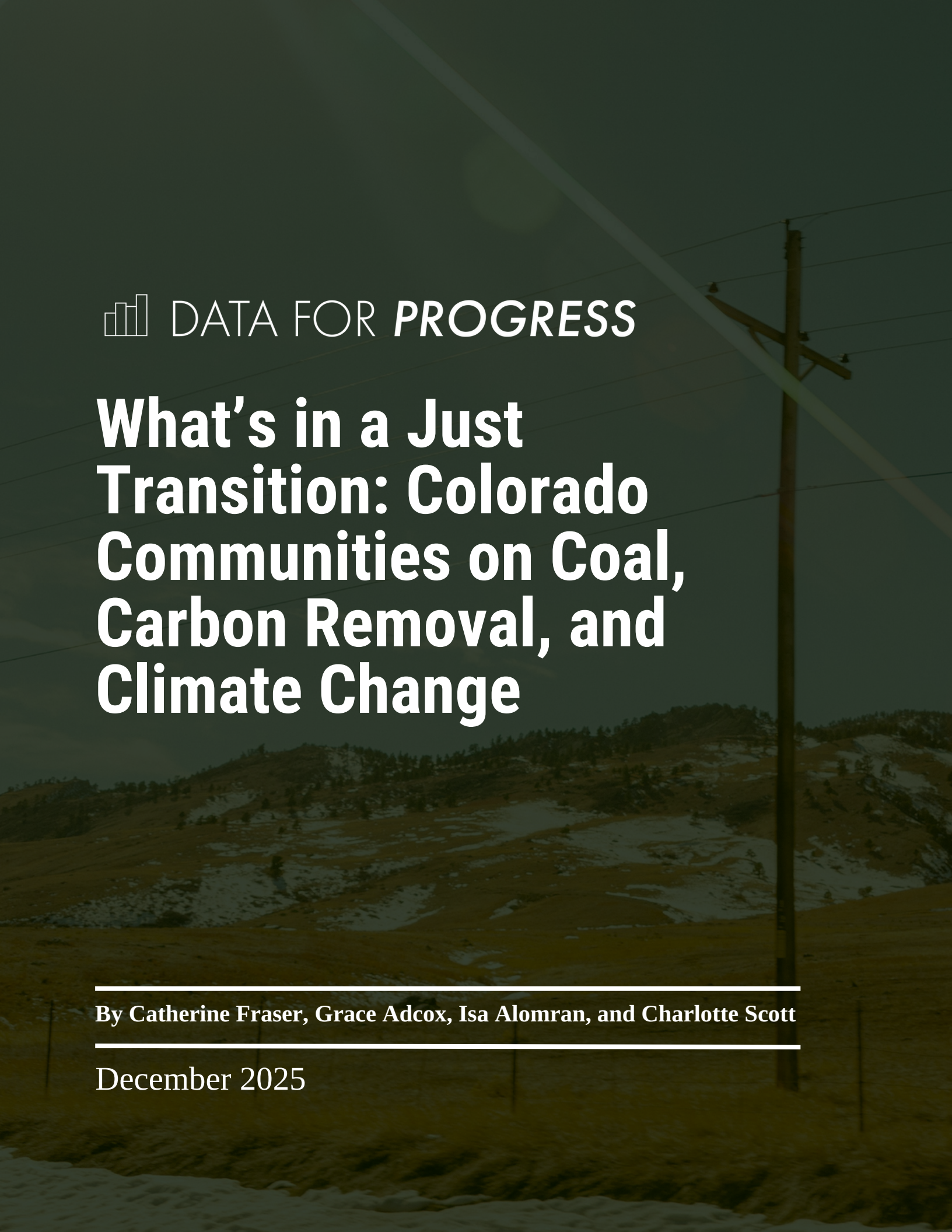

DATA FOR *PROGRESS*

What's in a Just Transition: Colorado Communities on Coal, Carbon Removal, and Climate Change

By Catherine Fraser, Grace Adcox, Isa Alomran, and Charlotte Scott

December 2025

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We dedicate this report to these coal workers and their communities. We stand with you and commit ourselves to the ongoing work of building a dignified future for everyone.

Introduction

Ten years after the adoption of the Paris Climate Agreement, it is clear that humanity will miss the agreement's target of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres recently warned that such overshoot is inevitable — and that it will result in "devastating consequences," particularly for those most vulnerable to (and least responsible for) climate change. The path forward is crystal clear: The world must rapidly cut emissions and phase out fossil fuels, while scaling up carbon removal technologies to prevent as much climate catastrophe as possible.

The irreversible devastation of our new overshoot reality cannot be an excuse for giving up or kicking emissions cuts down the road. Instead, overshoot must impel us to take on the work of revolutionary mitigation — which tackles the root causes of climate change, phases out fossil fuels, ensures a dignified transition for fossil fuel workers and their communities, and puts people and the planet over profit. Along with mitigation, we must also advance clear-eyed and socially responsible removal of past emissions of carbon dioxide to achieve negative emissions via carbon dioxide removal technologies, like direct air capture (DAC) and biomass carbon removal and storage (BiCRS), which aim to capture and permanently store past emissions of carbon dioxide.

Despite a year of gutting setbacks for climate policy, mitigation, and carbon removal at the federal level, Colorado offers a glimmer of hope: The state has bold plans to both scale up clean energy and carbon removal technologies *and* phase out coal in the state, while supporting coal workers and communities with the state's first-of-its-kind Office of Just Transition.

Data for Progress published its progressive platform for carbon removal in 2021, and has been steadily beating the drum, lending a progressive voice, and — increasingly — sounding the alarm that carbon removal is off track in the U.S.

The carbon removal industry in the U.S. is not being scaled and deployed quickly enough to draw down the necessary gigatons of emissions this century. Reliant on voluntary carbon markets and dubious offset schemes, and overly indulgent of fossil fuel companies seeking to perpetuate their business models and kick emissions cuts down the road, today's carbon removal industry is a far cry from the aspirations laid out in Data for Progress' progressive platform.

Colorado has a sharp, clear-eyed vision for carbon removal as part of a broader greenhouse gas emissions reductions strategy, which aims to reduce the state's emissions 26% by 2025, 50% by 2030, and 100% by 2050 compared with 2005 levels. Though the state hasn't made a plan for a complete phaseout of fossil fuels, instead aiming for net-zero emissions by 2050, it has planned a phaseout of coal-fired power by 2031, along with other measures to scale renewables, invest in energy efficiency, electrify transit, and cut emissions across the economy. Alongside these policy commitments, the Colorado state government has also raised important questions about

the impacts and challenges faced by communities that stand on the frontlines of the energy transition, including the state's coal communities.

To this end, Data for Progress conducted three workshops in the Colorado coal communities of Pueblo, the West End, and Craig, to understand how these communities are experiencing the transition away from coal. The workshops sought to explore each community's economic, social, environmental, and cultural contexts and perspectives on the coal industry and its planned phaseout, as well as attitudes toward the potential development of carbon removal, namely DAC. To complement these workshops, Data for Progress also fielded a statewide survey of Colorado voters to assess how views compare with the perspectives shared by residents of coal communities.

As evidenced by both the state's ambition and the outcomes of this research, Colorado offers a huge opportunity to build policy and momentum around decarbonization, carbon removal, and a just transition for fossil fuel workers and communities. With Colorado's total closure of coal-fired power plants just a few years down the road, now is the time to understand the needs, hopes, and strengths of Colorado coal communities. No industry will be a one-to-one replacement of coal — or any other fossil fuel — in terms of jobs, economic benefits, and more. But, by asking communities themselves what they envision for their futures, we can collectively build a future that supports workers and communities, and ensures everyone has access to dignity, both in work and in life.

What's in a "Just" Transition?

Much ink has been spilled about what a just transition means for the climate, the fossil fuel industry, and fossil fuel workers and communities, and it is important to note that the phrase "just transition" can have many meanings depending on the speaker and context. As such, it is worth clarifying that Data for Progress uses energy transition scholar J. Mijin Cha's definition from her book, *A Just Transition for All: Workers and Communities for a Carbon-Free Future*, which asserts that a "*just transition requires (1) an actual transition away from fossil fuels where fossil fuel use is largely, if not completely, eliminated and (2) it must be just.*" Meeting the criteria of a "just" transition requires that the shift away from fossil fuels accounts for uneven impacts that individuals and communities will face — particularly workers and vulnerable communities on the frontlines of climate change and climate mitigation — and invites those communities to be front and center in shaping the policy responses and support tools available to build a fossil-free future.

Of course, what "just" actually looks like will inherently vary and be determined at the community level, but Cha's *Four Pillars of Just Transition* — discussed in the recommendations — help unpack what justice can and should look like.

Importantly, Cha points out that many discussions of a just transition don't interrogate the fact that, often, fossil fuel phaseout isn't actually happening. However, there's one state where that's not entirely the case: Colorado. As this report will discuss in depth, the state has emerged as a national leader in climate policy and just transition planning, establishing plans for the simultaneous buildout of clean energy and phaseout of coal and a first-of-its-kind Office of Just Transition. Given the state's commendable and novel efforts to phase out coal, this research aims to assess how Coloradans and coal communities are experiencing the state's transition and provide recommendations to ensure the state's transition is indeed just.

Colorado Context

Colorado as a national climate leader

Colorado has long led the country in state-level climate action. In 2004, Colorado voters became the first in the country to implement a renewable portfolio standard via a ballot initiative, which requires utility companies to source a certain percentage of their energy from clean sources. This continued under Democratic Governor Bill Ritter, who signed a 2008 executive order that mandated the creation of regulations around greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reporting and emissions reductions from cars.

In 2019, Colorado passed HB19-1261, which codified initial goals for emissions reductions, and the state strengthened its goals in 2023 via SB 23-016. The 2023 law requires emissions cuts of 65% by 2035, 75% by 2040, and 90% by 2045 from 2005 levels, as well as a target to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

Accordingly, the state updated its Greenhouse Gas Pollution Reduction Roadmap in 2024, establishing an "achievable pathway" to reaching its climate goals via the deployment of renewable energy and advanced climate technologies.

Although some sectors, such as buildings and electricity, are on track to meet Colorado's emissions targets, slow progress on reducing emissions from transportation may prevent Colorado from meeting its first set of targets, as — like most states — Colorado remains highly dependent on cars. However, Colorado continues to make progress when it comes to electric vehicle adoption. The state has offered incentives to consumers for electric vehicles (EVs), especially for income-qualified residents. And in the third quarter of 2025, Colorado ranked first in the nation in EV adoption, with 32.4% of new vehicle sales during that period being EVs — the highest single-quarter percentage for any state ever.

Despite challenges in meeting its climate targets, the current administration has continued to pass climate legislation, with Gov. Jared Polis expressing the goal of achieving 100% clean power by 2040 through legislative action in 2026. Finally, Colorado has also taken steps to advance environmental justice, passing the Environmental Justice Act in 2021, which created the Environmental Justice Action Task Force, a designated Environmental Justice Ombudsperson, and the Environmental Justice Advisory Board.

Colorado advances carbon management

Beyond emissions cuts and efforts to scale up clean energy, the state has also advanced carbon management. In 2023, the Colorado General Assembly passed HB23-1210, spurring the creation of the state's Carbon Management Roadmap. The roadmap sets a path to meet the state's goal of carbon neutrality by 2050, as well as the Paris Agreement's 1.5 C target, via

emissions cuts and a transition to clean energy, along with carbon management, which includes carbon capture and storage, carbon removal, and carbon utilization.

The roadmap clarifies Colorado's plans to utilize its geologic storage potential — especially areas of high potential storage, like the Denver Basin — and in-state clean energy technologies — like geothermal, solar, and wind — to support the development of DAC. Beyond DAC, Colorado also plans to explore developing BiCRS utilizing agricultural residuals to create bio-oil that can be stored and injected underground.

Colorado has also signed a memorandum of understanding with the state of Wyoming to explore how DAC can complement new and existing industries, and spur economic development while cutting carbon emissions.

Beyond action at the state level, the city of Boulder, Colorado, has joined forces with four other western cities, including Flagstaff, Arizona, and Salt Lake City, Utah, as part of the Four Corners Carbon Coalition. Through locally funded and selected projects, the coalition seeks to support carbon removal projects that deliver durable removals and environmental and economic benefits.

Federally, Colorado Senator Michael Bennet has introduced the Carbon Dioxide Removal Investment Act, which would provide a new tax credit for carbon removal in the U.S. As part of its $242 million CarbonSAFE Initiative, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) awarded Colorado School of Mines, Carbon America, and Los Alamos National Laboratory $32.6 million for Project Eos to explore a potential carbon sequestration hub near Pueblo. In addition, DOE awarded $3 million to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Carbon America, and other partners to study the feasibility of developing a DAC hub near Pueblo in 2023. However, since taking office, the Trump administration has clawed back funding awarded for DAC under the Biden administration.

A brief history of mining, coal, and fossil fuels in Colorado

Despite all of Colorado's leadership on climate and carbon removal, the state is still one of the U.S.'s top oil producers, and has a long history of mining for coal, copper, gold, uranium, and more. In the 1860s, the coal industry arrived in Colorado. The growth of steel mills, rising demand for energy, and expansion of the railroad all fueled the coal industry's rapid growth in the state in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Coal mining historically has been and remains a dangerous industry for workers. Colorado has a history of coal mining disasters, including the Hastings Mine explosion of 1917, which was the deadliest in state history. Particularly during the 1800s and early 1900s, miners faced poor working conditions and compensation, and in 1912 the death rate for coal miners was twice the national average. In 1890, miners formed the United Mine Workers of America and won improved conditions, wages, and hours, but not without fierce retaliation from and violence

levied by mining companies. Nowadays, coal mines and plants can offer some of the best wages in parts of Colorado, and have been the backbone of economies across the state.

Since its peak in Colorado in 2004, coal production has declined with the widespread adoption of cheaper forms of energy, like natural gas and renewables, and growing environmental regulation. Today, coal is primarily used for electricity generation in the state. As more facilities have retired, including the ahead-of-schedule closure of the coal-fired power plant in Nucla (in the West End) in 2019 and the Martin Drake plant closure in Colorado Springs in 2022, only six coal-fired power plants and six mines remain in operation throughout the state (See Appendix D).

Colorado's transition away from coal

To meet its climate goals and reduce regional haze under the Clean Air Act, Colorado plans to phase out coal in the state. The last six coal power plants are slated to close or convert to natural gas by 2031, which will shrink demand for coal from the state's last six coal mines.

Deciding that policies to transition Colorado to clean energy were a priority for the state legislature – and thus likely inevitable – Colorado unions coalesced to advocate for embedding worker- and community-centered policies in the transition, and commissioned a report on a potential Green Growth Program for Colorado in 2018. This report and ongoing discussions on a worker-centered transition informed union-led just transition legislation ahead of the 2019 legislative session.

And in 2019, Colorado unions were critical in passing HB 19-1314, which made a "moral commitment" to a just transition for coal communities and created Colorado's — and the nation's — first Office of Just Transition (OJT) to aid the roughly 2,000 impacted workers and communities. Steered by an advisory committee of various stakeholders, the OJT aims to provide job training and reskilling, financial support for impacted workers and their families, and direct investment in designated coal transition communities via its Just Transition Action Plan (see Appendix C for details).

In this transition, Colorado has identified eight coal transition communities, which the state defines as "a community that had or has a coal mine or coal-fired power plant that was producing or operating at any time in 2017." These communities are separated into two tiers: Tier I Coal Transition Communities, or those most impacted by coal mine and plant closures, and Tier II Communities, or those that are impacted but to a lesser extent than Tier I Communities (see Table 1).

Table 1. Colorado's Coal Transition Communities			
Tier I		**Tier II**	
Community	**Coal Operation(s)**	**Community**	**Coal Operation(s)**
Morgan County	Pawnee Station	Delta and Gunnison counties	Elk Creek Mine**, West Elk Mine
Pueblo County	Comanche Station	El Paso County	Ray Nixon Power Plant, Martin Drake Power Plant
The West End of Montrose County and the town of Norwood in San Miguel County	New Horizon Coal Mine and Nucla Station*	La Plata County	King II Mine
Yampa Valley including Moffat, Rio Blanco, and Routt counties	Hayden Station, Craig Station, Trapper Mine, Colowyo Mine, Deserado Mine, Twentymile Mine	Larimer County	Rawhide Station

Information from the Colorado Office of Just Transition website.
**New Horizon Coal Mine closed in 2017 and Nucla Station in 2019.*
***Elk Creek Mine closed in 2013.*

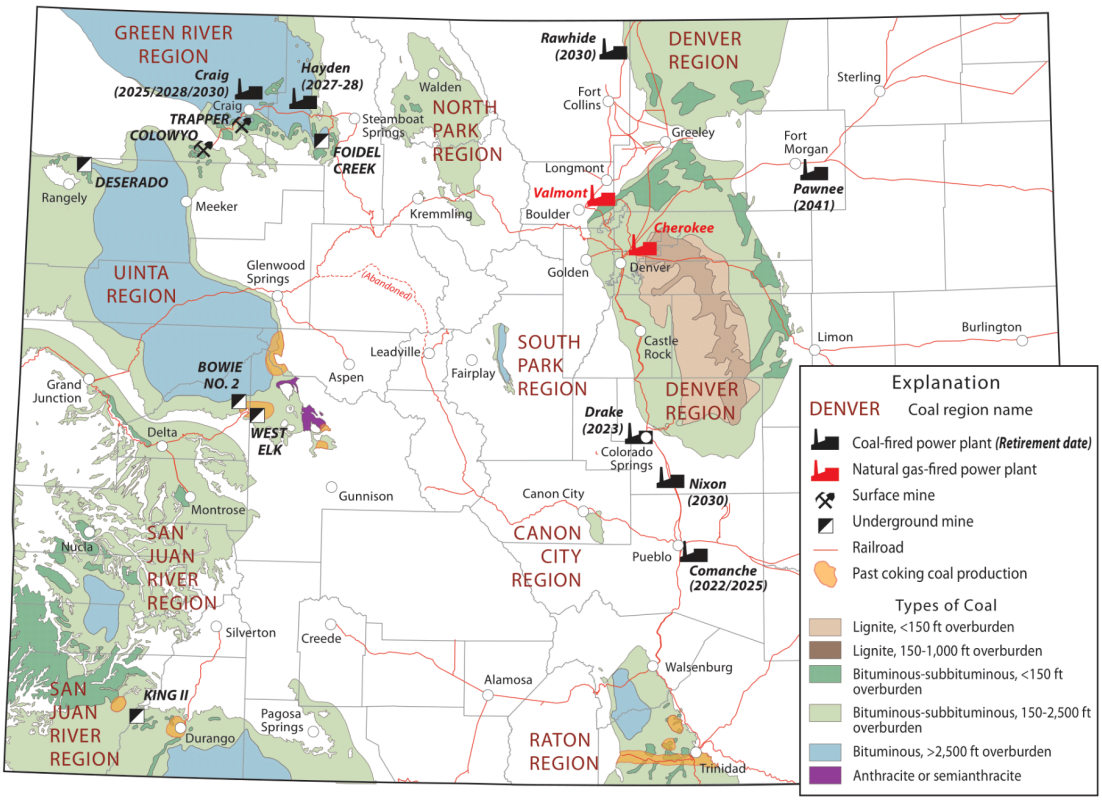


Image 1. Map of active coal mines, railroads, and power plants in Colorado (Colorado Geological Survey)
Note: Bowie No. 2 Mine closed in 2016.

A survey of coal workers in the Yampa Valley (at Craig Station and Trapper and Colowyo Mines), published by Colorado's OJT, has shown that most of the region's coal workers:

- Have 10+ years of experience in the industry;
- Earn higher wages than local medians and receive strong benefit policies;
- Are between the ages of 35 and 55; and
- Have one or more children.

In thinking about the transition away from coal and the potential for losing their livelihoods, these coal workers say their top concerns are losing their salaries and health care benefits. Though data shows that workers are interested in careers in renewable energy, construction, and manufacturing, research from the BlueGreen Alliance finds that there are often few of these types of jobs available in Colorado coal communities, and even fewer jobs that would provide comparable pay.

To support these workers, the OJT has established a suite of core services for Colorado residents (and their families), including individualized support from "transition navigators" — OJT staff members who can help workers and their families access benefits and plan for their future — as well as free financial counseling and education. The state has also earmarked over $15 million in grant funds for coal transition communities, to support economic and workforce development and diversification. In addition, the state offers "enhanced transition services" for some eligible workers. Workers who qualify for enhanced transition services can receive an allotment of up to $11,250 in funding to participate in a range of opportunities. This includes the STEP Initiative (or Support for Training, Education, and Professional Growth), which provides funding for coal workers to access training and education opportunities, including courses at colleges and universities, continuing education classes, apprenticeships, industry-recognized training programs, trade schools and programs for professional licenses, and costs for tuition and books. Other enhanced benefits include business startup assistance and microgrants, retirement assistance above a certain age, and other services consistent with OJT's legislative guidance. Appendix E outlines the eligibility requirements for both the core and enhanced transition services for workers.

Colorado State University has also launched a certificate program in carbon management to train the emerging carbon removal workforce in the state, with Charm Industrial among the carbon removal companies that has a facility in the state.

Site Selection

All three sites — Pueblo, the West End of Montrose County, and Craig — chosen for this project are Tier I Coal Transition Communities, meaning they will experience the greatest impacts of mine and plant closure in the state. Most of these impacts are economic, since the coal industry directly employs over 800 people across all three sites (see Table 1). As the state shifts away from coal and explores new industries and economic opportunities for these three communities, these workshops were designed to understand each community's needs, views of the coal industry and its planned phaseout, and openness to future industrial development, particularly carbon dioxide removal and DAC. The following section provides a brief summary of the communities where workshops were conducted.

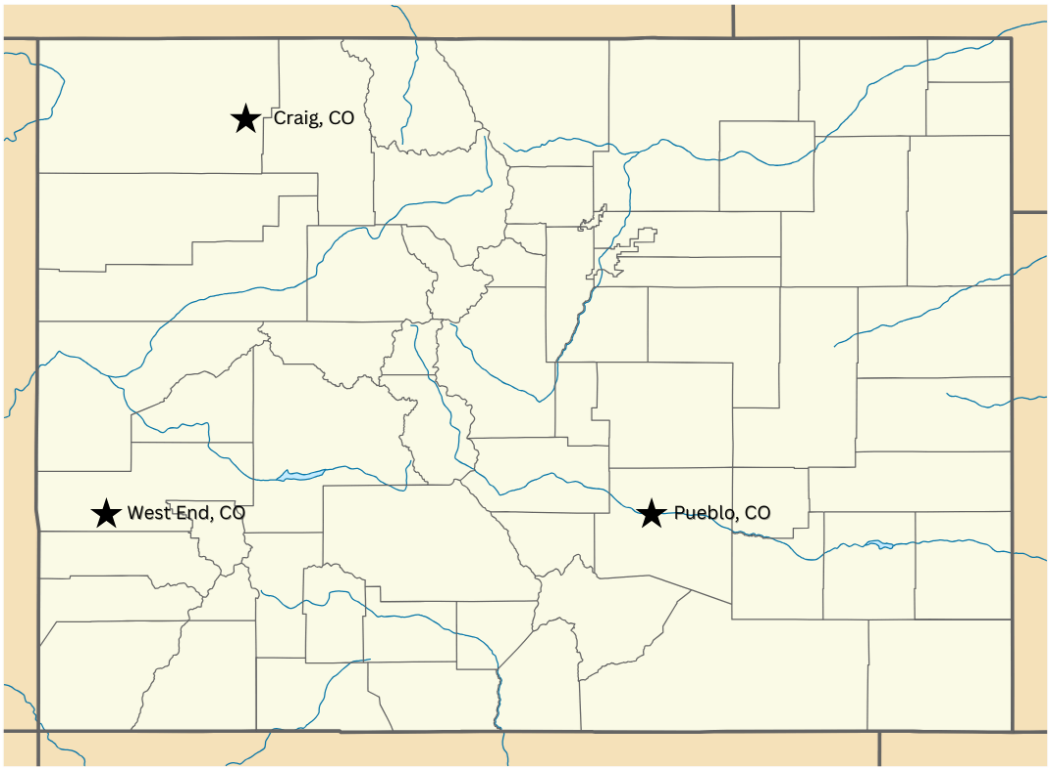


Image 2. Map of the three DFP Colorado workshop sites (Annotated by DFP from original map published to Wikimedia Commons).

Pueblo

Pueblo is a city located in south-central Colorado, in the Front Range. Pueblo is also the most populous of Colorado's Tier I Coal Transition Communities, and more urban relative to the West End and Craig.

The gold rush and the railroad brought residents to Pueblo in the mid-to-late 1800s, but steel soon became the city's biggest industry. Because of the influence of the steel industry, Pueblo is sometimes called "the Pittsburgh of the West," though the steel industry has declined steeply

since the 1980s. Clean energy, hospitals, and marijuana have since filled some of the city's industrial gaps, though almost half of Pueblo households still struggle to make ends meet.

Comanche Station, the city's large coal-fired power plant — which employs about 150 people and paid more than $29 million in property taxes in 2018 — is slated for full retirement by 2030. The plant's operator, Xcel Energy, has indicated that it has some plans to replace Comanche Station with other energy production facilities, including potentially a nuclear plant.

To ease the closure of Comanche, the state of Colorado has allocated $930,000 in grants to Pueblo County since 2021, including over $450,000 for the city of Pueblo to hire a full-time transition project manager for three years. The manager will develop and write a long-term transition strategy and investment plan to address the expected job and property tax losses from the closure of Comanche.

Beyond investment from the state, Xcel Energy has agreed to continue paying taxes on one of Comanche's three coal-fired units through 2040.[1] The unit was initially planned to continue operating until 2070, but is now set to close by 2031. In its initial transition plan proposal to the state, Xcel laid out plans to replace Comanche with a mix of renewable energy, battery storage, natural gas, and/or nuclear, though its final plan is still in progress. Although Comanche's second coal-fired unit is set to close in 2026, regulators have allowed Xcel to keep it open for one more year, with demand for energy rising due to data center development and Comanche's third unit being offline for repairs.

The West End

The West End is a region that encompasses the western parts of Montrose and San Miguel counties, and includes the towns of Nucla, Naturita, and Norwood. Data for Progress held its West End workshop in Norwood, but workshop participants were recruited from the greater West End area. Nucla and Naturita are two adjacent small towns, located to the west of Uncompahgre National Forest in Montrose County. Radium was discovered in Nucla in 1912, and until the partial nuclear meltdown at Pennsylvania's Three Mile Island in 1979, mining for radioactive materials was a consistent and lucrative source of industry. In 1959, a 100-MW coal plant called Nucla Station started operations in the area. The nearby New Horizon Coal Mine supplied coal to the plant, ceasing operations in 2017 and delivering its last coal to Nucla Station in 2018 before the plant shut down in 2019. Collectively, Nucla Station and New Horizon Coal Mine employed over 90 workers and paid $1.8 million in property taxes to Montrose County in 2017.

Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association (the company behind Nucla Station), however, has made plans to construct new clean energy facilities in Montrose County. Since the power plant's closure and the disappearance of the radioactive materials mining industry, the

[1] This commitment was also part of Xcel's 2021 Electric Resource Plan proceeding No. 21A-0141E before the Colorado Public Utilities Commission.

West End Economic Development Corporation has marketed Nucla, Norwood, and Naturita as recreation destinations.

The state of Colorado has allocated $5 million for the West End in grant funding to date, including:

- Almost $1.5 million for the towns of Naturita and Nucla to upgrade their water and wastewater treatment systems. Since their current systems are old, out of date, and, in Naturita's case, in violation of state health standards, these upgrades will help the towns attract new and expanding businesses that may see the existing systems as a barrier to new development;
- $20,000 to the town of Naturita to convert a historic building to a town hall and public meeting space to better facilitate community services and host events;
- Over $300,000 to the town of Norwood to conduct a study and create a plan for a drainage system in the town to upgrade its infrastructure and enable it to attract new businesses; and
- Over $300,000 to the West End Economic Development Corporation to hire an office and grant administrator (to be shared with the towns of Nucla, Naturita, and Norwood) and to help fund its Main Street Facade Improvement Project, which offers grant funds to main street businesses in Nucla, Naturita, and Norwood to upgrade business facades to increase business and bolster sales tax revenue.

In addition to investments by the state, Tri-State offered $500,000 in funds to support the community with the closure of Nucla Station and the New Horizon mine.

Craig

Craig is a town of about 9,000 residents located in northwestern Colorado in Moffat County. Data for Progress held its workshop in Craig, but participants were recruited from across the surrounding Yampa Valley, including Hayden and Steamboat Springs. When it was first established in the late 1800s, Craig was a homesteading site, but today it's a popular elk hunting destination and the site of Craig Station, a 1,400-MW coal plant that's a staple of the local economy and employs around 150 people. Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, which operates the plant, plans to retire it completely by 2028. Due to the influence of the coal industry on Craig's economy, the town is debating how to respond to the plant's closure. So far, it has considered transitioning to nuclear energy, and Tri-State hopes to build new energy facilities in Moffat County.

In addition to Craig Station, the Yampa Valley is home to Hayden Station (set to close both of its coal-fired units by 2028), as well as the Trapper Mine, Colowyo Mine, Deserado Mine, and Twentymile Mine. The state of Colorado reports that the two coal plants and four mines in this region collectively employ around 1,000 workers and paid more than $19 million in property taxes in 2018.

Since 2021, the state has earmarked $7.9 million in grant funds for the Yampa Valley, and has awarded several grants, including:

- Over $1 million to the city of Craig to purchase property for a new business and industrial park;
- Nearly $400,000 to Moffat County and the city of Craig to build infrastructure along the Yampa River to attract more outdoor recreation-based tourism, including the development of a new boat ramp and whitewater park;
- $150,000 to Moffat County to fund a study of the impacts of a proposed pumped storage hydropower project in Craig and Hayden;
- Around $2 million to Moffat County to develop the Moffat County Fairgrounds' Multi-Use Events Center to expand the county's capacity to host events and drive tourism; and
- Over $200,000 to the Yampa Valley Regional Airport in Hayden, to connect the airport's new aviation business park to the runway. The airport plans to partner with a local community college to establish internship and apprenticeship programs with businesses at the new business park.

In addition to direct investment from the state, the local utility company, Tri-State, which operates Craig Station, has agreed to pay $22 million into a Community Economic Development Trust Fund over four years to help ease the transition, starting in 2026. Notably, Moffat County and the city of Craig are the first communities in Colorado to secure "direct benefit funding dedicated to an economic development fund," which allows the community to determine for itself how to invest these funds. Tri-State has also agreed to provide another $48 million in payments starting in 2028 if it decides to reinvest (by building new assets) in Moffat County. In return, any tax revenue generated from Tri-State's reinvestment would be deducted from its payments. Beyond monetary payments, Tri-State is also giving Moffat County augmentation water rights, up to a value of $3 million. These commitments were made through negotiations with Moffat County and the City of Craig, and became part of Tri-State's settlement agreement in its 2023 Electric Resource Plan before the Colorado Public Utilities Commission.[2]

[2] These commitments were made as part of proceeding No. 23A-0585E before the Colorado Public Utilities Commission.

Table 2. Workshop Site Characteristics					
	Craig[1]	The West End			Pueblo[5]
		Norwood[2]	Nucla[3]	Naturita[4]	
Population Estimate	8,903	565	634	520	111,166
Demographics	82% white, 16% Latino, <1% Asian, <1% Black	93.8% white, 6.3% Hispanic	96% white, 7% Latino, 0% Asian, 2% Black	98% white, 2% Latino, <1% Asian, 0% Black	70% white, 48% Latino, <1% Asian, 3% Black
Median Household Income	$69,256	$56,324	$44,038	$28,021	$55,305
Percent of Population With a Four-Year College Degree	20.8%	38.9%	14.5%	6.1%	22.8%
Top Industries	Utilities, mining, hunting, agriculture	Retail, accommodation and food services, construction	Retail, health care	Education, construction, public administration	Steel, agriculture, utilities, health care

[1] *U.S. Census Bureau: Craig, Co*

[2] *World Population Review: Norwood, Colorado*; *Census Reporter: Norwood, CO*; *Norwood Chamber of Commerce*

[3] *U.S. Census: Nucla, Colorado*; *Census Reporter: Nucla, CO*

[4] *World Population Review: Naturita, Co*; *U.S. Census Bureau: Naturita, Co*; *Census Reporter: Naturita, CO*

[5] *U.S. Census Bureau: Pueblo, Colorado*

Workshop Findings

Across these workshops, Data for Progress sought to understand how community members in three of Colorado's coal transition communities are experiencing the state's transition away from coal and what they envision for their futures. Specifically, Data for Progress assessed attitudes toward DAC, seeking to understand what may drive openness or opposition to a potential new DAC facility, and to understand what ownership structures these communities might prefer for DAC.

To read more about the structure and recruitment for the workshops, see Appendix A. Each workshop began with a short presentation on DAC, including a publicly available video from *Grist* on the technology, and a brief overview of the potential environmental, human health, and economic risks, benefits, and costs associated with DAC, such as the significant energy needs of DAC and its potential to create both short-term and long-term jobs.

In each presentation, Data for Progress framed DAC development as something that would come with trade-offs, and each group discussion similarly focused on the potential *benefits*, *costs*, and *risks* of DAC and infrastructure development generally. The presentation and discussion guide were designed to first inform and then assess participants' perspectives on key considerations for DAC, such as its energy needs and source, water usage, job creation potential, and more.

Each site had a distinctive historic and ongoing relationship with coal, development, and the local environment, which in turn informed participants' views of DAC and new industries that could potentially fill the void left by coal. This report lays out findings across all three workshops, including information on participants' perceptions of their local community's needs, strengths, and hopes; views toward DAC and clean energy infrastructure; the relationship with and view of the coal industry and Colorado's planned coal phaseout; and thoughts on how their community would like to be engaged in and involved with any potential DAC project.

Pueblo

Community context

Pueblo is facing an affordability crisis. Throughout the workshop, participants widely cited the lack of affordable housing and the rising cost of utility bills. Participants described how wages have not kept up with the rising cost of living, with most new jobs in the retail and service sectors, which tend to offer low wages and limited long-term stability. One participant described the stagnation of wages in Pueblo, saying: "*The economy is not good in this town, and so people are struggling. A lot of people aren't working, or the wages are not where they should be.*"

When discussing the rising cost of utility bills, which are some of the highest in the state, participants frequently brought up Black Hills Energy — the investor-owned private utility that serves much of Pueblo, which was described by participants as "a pretty unpopular company here in town." They felt that Black Hills inflated prices to maximize profits and shareholder returns at the expense of ratepayers.

Just this year, Colorado's Public Utilities Commission approved a $17 million, 6.7% rate increase for Black Hills. High sensitivity to electricity price increases could also be seen in a recent ballot measure put forth to Pueblo voters: Residents roundly rejected a measure that would have allowed the city of Pueblo to acquire Black Hills Energy's generation, transmission, and distribution assets, but this acquisition would have come at a high municipal cost anticipated to place further pressure on customers' bills.

In contrast, San Isabel Electric Association — the electric cooperative that served participants from West Pueblo — was viewed more positively than Black Hills, with participants feeling like San Isabel maintained fairer prices and provided better service.

Participants felt Pueblo had experienced systemic disinvestment, especially compared with nearby Colorado Springs. Participants shared that Pueblo has fewer job opportunities and less social infrastructure and amenities, like doctor's offices, relative to Colorado Springs. They described Pueblo as a community with high potential that had largely been overlooked. As a result, existing infrastructure and businesses failed to meet community needs and were insufficient to encourage new generations of businesses and residents to join the community, resulting in a lack of opportunity to disrupt this cycle of disinvestment.

In particular, this sentiment could be seen with younger generations and families: Participants reported that there were few, if any, reasons for young people to stay in the community absent new opportunities for advancement and growth. A young parent who participated in the workshop shared similar challenges as a result of Pueblo's inability to attract and keep professional talent, saying, "*We are on our fourth pediatrician and my child is 7. Because they just keep moving away*."

Participants broadly acknowledged that this trend impacted their own habits, including the distances they had to travel to seek health care or visit retail businesses. One participant stated, "*Half the places I want to go visit or shop at, I have to go to the Springs one because there's none here*." Pueblo was seen as particularly ill-equipped to serve certain health care needs, like veterinary care or specialists for human health, with multiple participants noting the necessity of making the 45-minute drive to Colorado Springs to reach those services.

Participants also felt that systemic disinvestment in Pueblo extended to the city's infrastructure, with one saying: "*Pueblo's infrastructure is something that needs to be addressed. Because roads are awful, there's no proper transportation, there's no infrastructure here.*"

Reflecting some of the resentment felt about this larger pattern of disinvestment, participants expressed strong distrust of city and state government, as well as local institutions, with one saying: "*There's so much distrust because we elect people to represent us, and then they have their own agendas when they get into office, and that happens on both sides.*" Beyond elected officials, many participants described their specific distrust of and dislike for the Pueblo Economic Development Corporation (PEDCO). Participants did not want these entities to lead on the development of a potential DAC facility. In contrast, some potential trusted actors that participants named included the local utility co-op San Isabel and community organizations that serve underserved communities, like housing organizations and local food pantries. Participants described local government as being captured by influential, wealthy elites who consistently held power over Pueblo's city politics for nearly a century, with one participant saying: "*If you see new asphalt in Pueblo, a politician probably lives on that road*."

Environmental and health concerns were front of mind for participants, particularly around water use. Participants also expressed concern about the proper cleanup and management of industrial sites, given their past experiences with the steel mill and other industrial infrastructure. Indeed, Pueblo County has some of the highest rates of cancer in the state, and studies have found elevated levels of heavy metals in area topsoil. Pueblo also has above-average rates of heart disease and respiratory illnesses, and children in Pueblo are more likely to have elevated levels of lead in their blood. Experts tie these poor health outcomes to the county's history of heavy industry, including that of coal, steel, and smelters producing lead, gold, and other metals.

Participants expressed widespread support for renewable energy, particularly solar energy. Many participants had personal experience with rooftop solar either on their own property or in their neighborhood, and were familiar with larger solar energy projects supplying power in the area, including to the formerly coal-powered steel mill.

Views of direct air capture

Participants had mixed views of DAC, but some expressed openness to it. When asked specifically about DAC's potential water use, participants were concerned about a DAC technology that would require significant amounts of water or negatively impact local water quality and access, given local drought conditions and water rights issues. One participant said: "*I'm really a little worried that it could require large amounts of water. That's No. 1.*"

In addition, when asked about how a DAC facility should be powered, participants broadly wanted any potential facility to be powered by a new, independent energy source, rather than plugged into the existing electrical grid. Though grid reliability and DAC's potential impacts on the grid weren't a huge concern, participants were worried about DAC's potential to further raise utility bills if it drew power from the grid.

Participants were also concerned about storing and transporting the captured carbon dioxide underground and via pipeline, with many participants skeptical about safety. Given the importance of ranching and agriculture to Colorado's economy, many were concerned about the

potential impacts of injecting and storing carbon dioxide underground on groundwater, with one participant saying about the practice: "*My big concern is what does that do to the water in the water table?*" What's more, given past negative experiences with the cleanup of local toxic sites — like Pueblo's Smelter Superfund site — participants were concerned that a DAC company wouldn't properly clean up or address any accidents or carbon dioxide leaks.

Finally, participants were curious about the extent of local carbon dioxide storage capacity, worrying that a DAC company would leave if and when local capacity to store carbon ran out, and thus upend the local economy if it came to rely on DAC.

Community engagement

However, **some participants could see a path forward for developing DAC if there was strong community engagement, localized benefits, and transparency.** Participants expressed interest in a community benefits agreement to ensure the delivery of community benefits and investments, as well as opportunities for meaningful involvement in a project. Notably, Pueblo residents — who've borne the negative impacts of past industry — felt that companies needed to make credible commitments to hosts of DAC projects, including by sharing validated evidence about the outcomes of DAC. This desire was summarized by a participant who said:

> *First and foremost, they're going to have to show the sustainability and safety protocols to know that everybody here is going to be safe, that we're not putting anybody in danger. Second, they're going to have to show where it's actually going to be a benefit, not just to the environment, but also a financial benefit to this area, not a burden.*

Participants hoped that a new DAC project could accompany investments in better social programs, including in affordable housing, education, infrastructure, and health care. Participants also hoped that any DAC development in the area could help reverse a pattern of young people leaving the community by creating education and job training pathways for local youth, giving them early career security and an anchor to Pueblo.

Views of coal

Though participants were familiar with the nearby Comanche coal plant, they did not perceive the coal industry to be central to Pueblo's local identity or economy. In other words, workshop participants knew the Comanche plant was still operating, but coal was not as salient in their view of the local economy as other industries, like steel. Indeed, several participants described the steel mill's conversion from a coal-powered smelter to an electric-powered smelter as part of the energy history of the community. This sentiment contributed to how participants viewed Colorado's plan to close its coal plants and mines by 2031, with one participant saying: "*We're not going to be hurting when we shut down the coal plants*." Even as participants expressed these views about the state's plan, however, Xcel Energy has requested

approval from state regulators to continue operating the second unit of the Comanche Station for at least another year after its planned retirement at the end of 2025.

When asked about the state's plan to move away from coal, most participants had already heard about the plan and weren't necessarily opposed to it, with many participants recognizing the environmental and health impacts of coal, including the sentiment: "*Let's be real, it's dirty.*" However, despite openness to phasing out coal, many felt the state's plan hadn't been thoroughly considered and were concerned that there wasn't a plan for what happens to the local economy, workers, and energy supply once the Comanche plant — and coal mines and plants across the state — closes. Participants' knowledge of the coal closures was often imprecise, reflecting that the plan hasn't fully filtered even into communities that are expected to face some of the greatest impacts of coal closures, as evidenced by a participant who commented, "*Yeah, they're going to shut down our coal-powered plant in two years, three years? And I don't know that they have a 100% replacement plan.*"

Many raised the question of what energy sources would fill the void left by coal, including a participant who asked, "*If they're shutting down all these facilities, what are they replacing it with?*" Some participants suspected that Pueblo would be asked to host a potential nuclear facility to fill energy needs left by coal, and were worried about the community's ability to influence such a plan.

Despite these hesitations, participants often recognized that transitioning away from coal was needed to address climate change and environmental problems, with one participant saying:

> *It's necessary. With what we're doing to the planet, it's got to be stopped. But yeah, it's just a question of what are we going to put in [coal's] place? Do they have something solid or are they doing the, "Ah, well we're going to try this"? What are we going to do? But the thing is, it's got to be done. Oil, coal, we're going to have to get away from all that stuff eventually. I'm just worried about the timeline.*

Indeed, **some participants thought that coal workers could transition into working in the DAC industry,** and that a DAC company could utilize these workers' expertise and skills. However, with decreasing employment from the coal industry in the area, both as a result of the phased retirement of the Comanche power station and Comanche's use of Wyoming — not Colorado — coal mines for fuel, there was more interest in a new DAC industry providing viable pathways to employment for young people than supporting workers in the coal industry with reskilling or retraining to shift to DAC.

Ownership and governance

Of potential ownership models for a DAC facility, including private, municipal, and cooperative ownership, **participants were most interested in cooperative ownership modeled after the local electric cooperative, San Isabel.** They were not interested in a DAC facility that would be

owned or operated by the city of Pueblo, Black Hills Energy, or PEDCO. In fact, distrust in local and state government institutions was so great that most participants said they would prefer a private company over government ownership. Citing their positive views of San Isabel and its cooperative structure, and excitement about the potential for the community to directly benefit from and shape a facility, some participants were interested in worker ownership of a potential DAC facility and the opportunity for community members to buy shares and earn dividends from it.

Trade-offs

On the whole, many participants thought investing in and building DAC locally may be worth it, but only under specific conditions. Some said that they could support a DAC facility if they received additional information and clear answers assuaging concerns around safety and other questions they had on DAC, while others felt that a DAC developer would need to enter into a CBA with the community in order to gain their support for a project. Generally, participants were interested in and open to new industries and investments, particularly if the industry could help overcome stagnant economic conditions in Pueblo and offer opportunities for young people.

The West End

Community context

Participants described the West End as economically depressed and lacking a sustainable economic base. Nearby industry has largely closed down, including uranium mines, coal mines, and coal plants, and there's a lack of good, long-term jobs, services, health care, and affordable housing. One participant described the area's limited job opportunities, saying:

> *It's a pretty depressed area. We used to have a coal mine and a power plant, [but] they're no longer. They were tied together, obviously, but other than Telluride, where a lot of people go … for work, job opportunity here is very limited … We have a lot of natural resources but no jobs available, really. It's pretty tough.*

Another participant described how wages have not kept up with the rising cost of living, and housing in particular: "*It's just really out of balance. I guess that would be an understatement, probably, but it's really very out of balance.*"

Others talked about limited access to health care, with residents sometimes forced to drive several hours just to see a specialist or reach emergency medical care. Given the lack of facilities in the rural West End, one participant put it plainly, "*When it comes to medical care, you better get hurt or sick between 9 to 5*."

With the shuttering of local mines and power plants, some participants described the West End's increased reliance on outdoor recreation and tourism for income, and expressed that any new

industry that would negatively impact these industries represented a strong red line. That said, many participants recognized the often seasonal and unreliable nature of work in outdoor recreation and tourism, with one saying: "*You have reliable work in the summer and winter, but during off-season, it's like, what am I going to do?*"

As a result, some participants hoped that new industries could complement outdoor recreation and tourism to help boost the area's economic base: "*I would welcome any kind of other industry other than just outdoor recreation. I don't want to hurt our outdoor [industry] — don't get me wrong — but I think we can bring in compatible industries that benefit all. We need something, we really do.*"

The towns of Norwood, Nucla, and Naturita have seen sharp economic and population decline after years of little investment in the West End of Montrose County, compared with the nearby wealthy ski town of Telluride. Many participants described the growth of Telluride's population and resulting upward pressure on the cost of housing, pushing workers out of unaffordable Telluride and into towns like Norwood, Nucla, and Naturita in the West End. One participant described Telluride's boom and its spillover effects:

> *Telluride's becoming uber-expensive. No one can afford to live there anymore and all the houses that were available got bought up by the millionaires and billionaires, and they sit empty three-quarters of the year. So that whole housing stock was lost. So now these satellite communities like Norwood, Naturita, Ridgway, Montrose — tons of people live in Montrose and commute 130 miles a day to go work in Telluride.*

In contrast to the money and investment flowing into Telluride, participants described how local infrastructure, ranging from water distribution systems and schools to roadways, was fragile and poorly equipped to sustain a new industry without robust investments. One said:

> *Our water system is incredibly old and fragile. And then we desperately need a new school in Norwood too. And we don't have the funds in our community, tax-base-wise, to pay for a lot of these things, so we're at the mercy of the government, and of grants and all that stuff.*

These challenges were also seen as intractable, as participants reported feeling a lack of agency and little opportunity to influence decisions at the state and county level, with one saying, "*We just have dysfunctional government to begin with and shoestring budgets.*" As a result, participants were skeptical of what influence they could have over local infrastructure development, for DAC or otherwise.

The West End has a long history of failed industry, broken promises, and exploitative (or perceived as such) economic models that have left communities worse off. Several participants described work in uranium and coal mining as unsafe and had personal connections to health impacts from work in the industry: "*My dad actually … worked most of his*

life in the uranium mines. And he actually got that lung disease from the uranium mines, before they put in all the rules and regulations of the clean air and the fans when you work underground." Another talked about a 2013 accident at a nearby gold and silver mine, which killed two workers and left lasting health impacts on others: "*My co-worker works with one of the guys that was in the accident and he has chronic health conditions because of it, he didn't see a dime from it. I mean you're talking again, it's like that disparity. You come in and then you use people, you exploit them, they get hurt and then you're done.*" The mine then shut down and hasn't restarted production since.

Beyond mining, participants cited several examples of industries that came to town promising jobs and economic benefits, only to pick up and leave shortly thereafter. One shared a story of such an experience in nearby Ouray:

> *If you want to talk about exploitation, we had it in Ouray. They built this big plant and they called it Biota and they were going to bottle water, because the water in Ouray is so good. So they created Biota Water, a big factory, and they lasted, I don't know, five years. And so now when you drive into town, there's this, now it's kind of become the industrial sort of area, there's a big warehouse there now. But it's that same thing. You're going to come in, you're going to come out, and then you're going to leave this huge warehouse, or this huge factory.*

Another participant described a candy manufacturing plant that had been successful since it opened in Montrose in the 1970s, only to shut its doors in recent years:

> *Even the one that did succeed, Russell Stover's, a huge candy manufacturing plant and they paid no property taxes for however many years, quite a long time, like 25 or 30 years. They provided minimum wage jobs. They were terrible employers and they got unionized. So they left, and they left a huge empty building that is still sitting and doing nothing.*

One participant summed up their view that the West End had been burned time and time again by new local economic development projects, saying: "*I guess what we're all saying is we're really sick of being exploited.*"

Overall, participants expressed strong distrust in industry promises, leading to a wariness of potential developers of a new DAC facility and any economic and environmental promises they might make.

Views of direct air capture

Participants were skeptical that DAC could work in the West End, with its limited economic base and access to water. One participant also described how the area's remote nature could impede facility construction and operation, saying: "*We're a long way from anywhere, so we don't have any rail service or anything like that. Everything would have to be trucked in.*"

However, some were optimistic about the potential for DAC to bring needed new jobs, especially by hiring local people, but were unsure if local workers would have the requisite skills to get a job in DAC right away without additional training. In addition, some participants were concerned about DAC's potential impacts on wildlife in the area and conflicts with the region's increasing reliance on the outdoor recreation and tourism industries.

On the whole, DAC's water requirements were the top concern for participants in considering their view of a potential DAC facility. Participants said that aging municipal water infrastructure, paired with the region's 20-plus-year drought and limited water rights, made them skeptical about the success of DAC locally. On issues of water use and rights in particular, participants wanted to hear from ranchers and farmers, and were concerned about the impact of DAC's water use on their industry. One participant described their concerns: "*I think water's going to be the decider on this. I just don't see it. And people would have to decide, like, do we want water for municipal needs, or are we going to shift it all to this plant?*" Another summed up plainly the premium placed on water in the region, given its scarcity: "*Water is gold here*."

Participants felt the electrical grid was reliable and held favorable views of their local electric cooperatives, but had concerns about the grid's ability to absorb demand from new industrial facilities, like DAC. With participants skeptical that new local energy generation would be built any time soon, they were uncertain that the grid could support a new major industrial facility. As an example of the challenges around building new local energy generation, several participants cited a recent unsuccessful plan to build a solar project in Norwood, which received widespread opposition from community members. Many in the community worried that the solar project would harm the viewshed and character of the area, and were frustrated that the developer had engaged the community little or not at all before announcing the project. Given this experience, participants expressed limited appetite for utility-scale renewable energy, but were more open to small-scale projects, like rooftop solar.

When asked about DAC's carbon dioxide storage and transport needs, some participants were open to transporting carbon dioxide via pipeline and storing it underground because of existing experiences with pipeline infrastructure, but many were concerned about the safety of the practice. As a result, participants wanted to learn more about the potential risks of pipelines and storage, and specifically worried about the severity of an accidental leak of carbon dioxide or seismic activity from underground storage. Many feared that companies wouldn't be properly held to account for storage or transportation malpractice or accidents. In accordance with the region's increasing reliance on outdoor recreation for economic activity, like Norwood's International Dark Sky Community designation, participants were particularly opposed to above-ground pipelines, saying they could disrupt the local scenery.

Overall, participants saw little potential for DAC to work in the remote towns of the West End, but thought that larger cities nearby, like Montrose or Grand Junction, may have better access to infrastructure and resources, and thus could be a better fit.

Community engagement

Participants stressed the importance of effective community engagement in advance of the potential development of DAC or any other industry. They emphasized the need to talk to people often and early, and to meet people in their towns, rather than making them drive an hour to a public meeting. Workshop participants observed that they came from nearly half a dozen different towns across the West End, and reflected that, if given the opportunity, people across the entire West End would likely be actively engaged in any potential project sited in the area, given the tight-knit nature of their community. Some participants described interest in a community advisory committee that could influence development proposals and deliver meaningful investment to the economically depressed West End, but only if such a committee was truly representative of the community and had meaningful decision-making power. One participant described an instance where they served on such a committee where that was not the case: "*I was part of a tourism advisory committee and it was very clear to me that my opinion did not matter. It was a show thing. But if you had a real community advisory committee … I think that could be it.*" Beyond just setting up an advisory committee, participants stressed the importance of educating the community and any such committee about the project, so that they could make informed decisions.

In terms of engaging the local community, participants said that developers or project proponents would need to use an all-of-the-above communication strategy, given limited access to TV, radio, and news, with one participant saying: "*I think in these areas you have to do everything. You have to have meetings. You have to have things online. You have to have flyers. You have to have newspapers. Have to have town meetings. Radio. You kind of have to hit it all.*" Participants also wanted to hear from trusted experts, such as local farmers and engineers, and indicated that developer engagement should be direct, rather than led by local government.

Several participants brought up the recently failed solar project in Norwood as an example of what not to do in terms of community engagement, with one saying:

> *One of the things that brought down that solar factory is they just presented it to us as like, "Here's what we're doing," and they didn't work with the community to develop the proposal, or even let people know what they were thinking about. So I think transparency, getting in early, explaining it, bringing people along, or not, and just live with the results of whatever might happen and don't fight the community to try to get it done. That's the worst thing they could do.*

Finally, after being asked about a community benefits model for community engagement, participants expressed interest in specific benefits, like affordable housing and water infrastructure investments, but were wary of any agreement that made the community feel like a developer bought them off.

Views of coal

Coal is part of the cultural, political, and economic fabric of the West End, even as its presence wanes after the closure of its coal mines and plants, and the broader loss of local industry. Participants described dwindling class sizes and school closures, hundreds of people losing good jobs, broader population decline as people sought employment in other communities, and other trickle-down effects of Nucla Station and New Horizon mine closing.

In addition, participants had personally seen the health impacts of mining, especially subsurface coal and uranium mining, with some describing family members or friends who'd directly experienced adverse health effects from work in the mines, and some speculating that lung problems from work in mining has contributed to higher rates of people on oxygen in the region.

Participants also described the often dangerous working conditions in the mines, while acknowledging the reality that mining jobs were often some of the best in the area and competitive. One participant described workers in the mines, saying, "*Everybody was proud to work there, and ... trying to get into it was a big deal.*"

Participants were skeptical of the state plan to shut down coal mines and plants due to the perceived lack of a plan for what comes next. Participants had less attachment to coal itself and instead missed the benefits it brought, like good-paying, stable jobs, and an economic tax base that could support local services and infrastructure, as well as a more diverse array of complementary businesses and industries. One participant described the sting of the Nucla Station and New Horizon mine closure: *"It was a sad day when they shut that down, because so many people ... lost their jobs."* Another described recent closures in Delta County that led two formerly rival high schools to merge due to dwindling populations:

> *When the coal industry shut down there, it took away a bunch of jobs, a bunch of people left. They ended up combining the high schools. So it had a big enough impact to where the high schools combined, which [for] these proud rural towns, for something like that to happen, that's a blow to the head.*

Others talked about how such coal closures hit particularly hard in rural areas, with one saying: "*In rural communities, you take that away, and there's no other industry. They've got to move. And people don't want to.*" Even if former coal workers could find work locally, participants said that often it didn't pay like their former jobs in coal did. Moreover, many participants described the difficulty of finding a job in a new industry, when many coal miners had worked in coal for most of their professional lives. As a result, participants articulated different services needed to support workers in the transition, including job training, career pipeline programs, and financial and other support.

Expressing this ethos, a participant said, "*My opinion is, we have to move away from coal, but ... do it in a way that's really smart, that takes care of the communities and the people that ended up in the mines.*"

Ownership and governance

Participants distrusted state, local, and federal government, and were interested in opportunities to involve local, community actors, such as utility co-ops, in a potential DAC facility. Some participants were more trusting of private developers, especially if they could make firm, long-term commitments to the West End. Others were much more skeptical of private developers, feeling like their priorities were to turn a profit and benefit their shareholders, not to act in the best interest of the community.

Participants were more interested in cooperative ownership models, and felt that would mitigate the "worst" of DAC. One participant described the potential benefits of such an ownership model:

> *It would give the community more of a say if it was treated as a public utility ... Our power company, it's a cooperative, San Miguel Power. And we know who the representatives are that sit on the board, and we can talk to them about issues and concerns. Not that they always listen, but at least we have a way to affect what it is they're doing. If it's just a private company coming in, they're probably just going to be able to do whatever they want. And would the community enjoy the benefits, right? If there are economic benefits, would they get it trickled down the community somehow?*

As such, the co-op model was seen as potentially helpful in mitigating distrust in private companies and government.

Trade-offs

Participants generally felt like DAC may be "too good to be true." Some participants believed the economic advantages of DAC made it worth considering for local deployment, but many felt like DAC would create more problems than it would solve. In short, participants had a clear-eyed understanding of local economic needs, but DAC seemed like only a partial solution for the kind of sustained investment that would be required to economically revitalize the West End, while also being misaligned with local priorities around protecting pristine outdoor space that holds both cultural and economic value.

Craig

Community context

Participants expressed strong distrust of municipal and county governments, especially participants who were residents of Craig, due to the systemic disinvestment Craig has faced, especially when compared with nearby wealthy ski town Steamboat Springs. Participants felt like Craig has been overlooked, and expressed a strong desire to invest in the local community. If DAC were a way to do that, some participants were open to it.

Coal is still a major industry and presence in Craig, and participants described how coal provides some of the best jobs in town. Craig hasn't faced the full effects of coal closures yet, and participants were uncertain what those closures would mean for the quality of schools, affordability of housing, and accessibility of medical care. Participants highlighted the importance of tourism, outdoor recreation, and coal to the local economy, with one saying, "*Economically, I think it's two different sectors ... coal and then tourism.*"

However, several participants described the often unreliable, seasonal, and boom-and-bust nature of work in the tourism and outdoor recreation industries, and noted that many residents of Craig and the surrounding area were forced to commute long distances into Steamboat Springs for work.

In addition, participants described the lack of affordable housing in Craig and the surrounding area, as well as a need for local infrastructure investment. Many described how Steamboat Springs has become increasingly unaffordable, with ripple effects in Craig and other nearby communities as people are increasingly priced out of Steamboat. One participant said, "*Steamboat is no longer affordable for anyone unless you have millions of dollars in your bank account, millions. If I didn't move here 25 years ago and purchase my condo, I would not be able to move to Steamboat. Craig, I could move to.*"

As a result, any new industry in the area would need to offer reassurance that it could alleviate the pressures of a constrained supply of affordable housing and deliver overdue investments in roadways and other infrastructure — or, as one participant put it: "*Growth without affordable housing is unacceptable. We've already got a big problem.*"

Participants had a strong desire to protect nature and the surrounding landscapes, particularly due to the importance of the local outdoor recreation, hunting, agriculture, and tourism industries, and strong ties to nature. What's more, participants actively recognized changes to the local climate, like dwindling snowpack and increasing wildfires, and the impacts these changes were having on the local environment and outdoor recreation. To this end, one younger participant said:

> *I've not been alive that long and climate change is very obvious to me living in Steamboat. From when I was a little kid to now, there's a genuine change and difference in the amount of snowpack. Like the amount of the rivers being open in the summer, the amount of wildfires.*

Others shared similar experiences seeing the climate change and annual snowfall decrease in the area during their lifetimes.

Views of direct air capture

Participants had mixed views toward DAC, but generally expressed openness. Nearly universally, participants shared that they would need more information to form an opinion on developing a DAC facility nearby, with many wanting to see positive examples of DAC deployment elsewhere that could demonstrate its safety and economic impacts. Some thought DAC was worth trying in Craig, and felt the local economic and social benefits outweighed the costs of development. With industry already taking up such a notable physical footprint in Craig, many expressed that they would like DAC facilities to be built on existing industrial or brownfield land, like next to or in place of an existing coal plant. DAC was seen by younger participants as a potential cutting-edge industry they could be interested in working in.

Given local drought conditions and the scarcity of water, participants were wary of a DAC facility requiring large amounts of water. Many shared that local livelihoods and industries, like outdoor recreation, ranching, and farming, depend heavily on water and were concerned that DAC could take away water from local people and industries. However, some participants were more amenable to DAC, especially if a DAC facility would eventually replace and use less water than a local coal plant.

Though participants generally had positive views of their utility providers, many were concerned about the potential negative impacts of impending coal plant closures on the reliability and cost of electricity, especially if the local population grows and a DAC facility is developed. As a result, participants would want any potential DAC facility to build and use its own independent energy source, rather than connecting to the existing electrical grid. Participants were also curious to know what energy sources would power their local grid once the coal industry was phased out, with many not aware that the local Craig Station coal power plant doesn't actually provide electricity to Craig or greater Moffat County.

Many participants were concerned about carbon dioxide leaking from wells and pipelines and carbon dioxide contaminating groundwater. In particular, participants expressed low trust in underground storage safety and posed many questions about what would happen in the event of a leak, like: "*How long will it take the rescue team to come seal [a] leak? Are they based in Texas and [do] they have to get on an airplane? I mean, I doubt they're going to be living right here … Do we have the equipment to dig down and find the leak? How do you find the leak?*"

Some thought co-locating pipelines with other industrial infrastructure could help alleviate siting and land use concerns, while others were interested in using carbon dioxide to make materials or energy rather than storing it underground.

Community engagement

Participants stressed the need to engage early and locally in Craig, not in Steamboat Springs or the surrounding area. They stressed trying to reach people everywhere, including through newspapers, webinars, events at bars, and community spaces. Many participants also felt like nothing can get built in Craig, with many local development proposals perceived to have been shot down by the community. One participant said:

> *Here's the difference between Steamboat and Craig ... Steamboat ... They have a plan .... It gets done. They find a way to do it. They find the money. They get it done. There's a lot of people backing it. They just get the project done, whatever it might be. Craig is the city of can't, ... can't afford it, ain't paying the taxes, don't want it, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah. Craig is against anything that anybody wants to do around here to improve the community, in my opinion.*

Some participants felt that if a new developer brought local investment in infrastructure, schools, and housing, as well as good-paying, local jobs, their community may be more open to a DAC facility.

Participants desired technical education and information and wanted to see coal geologists and engineers involved in a potential project to explain and break down the technology for their community. Participants were especially interested in potential impacts of DAC on ranchers and wildlife. With trust in local government low, and trust in federal and state governments even lower, trusted local messengers and education on DAC were important. Participants also mentioned wanting to learn from other communities where DAC projects have been deployed, either internationally, or preferably, from a recently constructed project in the U.S.

Views of coal

Across all three communities visited, Craig participants felt the presence of coal the most. Participants expressed a deep uncertainty about the future of coal, and an appreciation for the economic opportunity and quality jobs that coal has brought. One participant described how coal jobs are "*really good-paying jobs*," saying that "*you can tell [who] that works in the mines, they have nice houses, they drive nice vehicles.*"

Participants were wary of what would happen once Colorado phased out coal, fearing that "*when people lose their jobs, there's not going to be anybody here,*" and that any economic or population losses would have ripple effects on schools and the availability of health care.

At the same time, participants understood and shared that coal is an often dangerous industry for workers, especially in subsurface mining. Many participants also recognized that coal was a dirty, pollutive industry that was contributing to a changing climate, but weren't convinced that shutting down local coal plants and mines was part of what some say is a necessary, broader plan to cut emissions through transitions to electric vehicles or alternative energy sources. Many

participants were also hesitant that DAC — which many saw as a new, largely unproven, technology — would be able to fill the economic void left by coal, let alone have a net positive, or even net neutral impact. One participant said: "*This seems to be like we'd be operating on faith with this new technology. We're doing this now to benefit the generations 50 to even a hundred years from now.*"

Participants also expressed a desire for a comprehensive plan for what comes next for Craig after coal closures. Many described feeling like Craig and the surrounding area was in a "wait-and-see" mode, unsure if the local coal plants and mines would actually shut down and what would come in their place — if anything. Most participants weren't aware of what was or may be planned for Craig once coal was phased out. Instead, many were uncertain and uneasy about what opportunities displaced workers would have to find quality, good-paying work.

Participants wanted to help coal workers transition to non-coal jobs that are high-paying and comparable or better than those in coal. As a result, participants were hopeful, but not confident, that work in DAC could be comparable to that in coal, with one saying, "*If it's a good-paying job, you get people,*" and another saying. "*Money talks*."

Overall, the economic benefits of the local coal industry, as well as its role in providing power to Colorado and the surrounding area, and the lack of awareness or understanding of what was planned to replace coal economically and as an energy source, led to skepticism around its phaseout, even despite widespread recognition among participants that extreme weather events and climate changes were happening locally.

Ownership and governance

Though participants were not interested in government or municipal ownership due to high distrust of government, some participants were interested in cooperative ownership and governance of DAC. Most participants had direct experience with a rural electric cooperative, which provided a ready framework for such an ownership model for DAC. However, many were skeptical that funds from the community and individuals would be sufficient on their own to fund such a cooperatively owned project, if community members had to pay or buy into a project to raise funds for it. When asked about a tax or fee levied on pollutive industries, like coal, to fund DAC, many were concerned that such a levy would just cause these industries to leave the area, resulting in job losses or negative economic impacts, or lead to higher prices of goods, like electricity. That said, if funding a project with such an ownership model was viable, participants would want a cooperatively owned DAC project to translate into real, tangible benefits for Craig, like reinvestment in the downtown area, in local educational institutions, and in pathways to trade jobs in DAC or other industries.

Others thought the perceived high upfront costs of building a DAC facility would make its development by a private company — or through some sort of public-private partnership — most likely, though many were wary that a private company would be first and foremost concerned with a turning a profit and could up and leave at any time, with one participant saying, "*My*

concern with [it] being a privately owned [facility] was, what if they run out of money halfway through and then we're stuck with this half-built thing and all these promises and nothing."

Trade-offs

Many participants still felt like they needed more information about the impact of DAC on water, wildlife, and the local economy, as well as examples of impacts and stories from existing DAC projects, to formulate a complete opinion on DAC. In this vein, one participant cautiously said, "*I think the trade-offs are worth it, but I would want more information*."

Many participants felt DAC deployment locally would have net benefits and be worth investing in, especially if a DAC facility was sited on industrial land or brownfields, like near the existing Craig Station coal plant. One participant said:

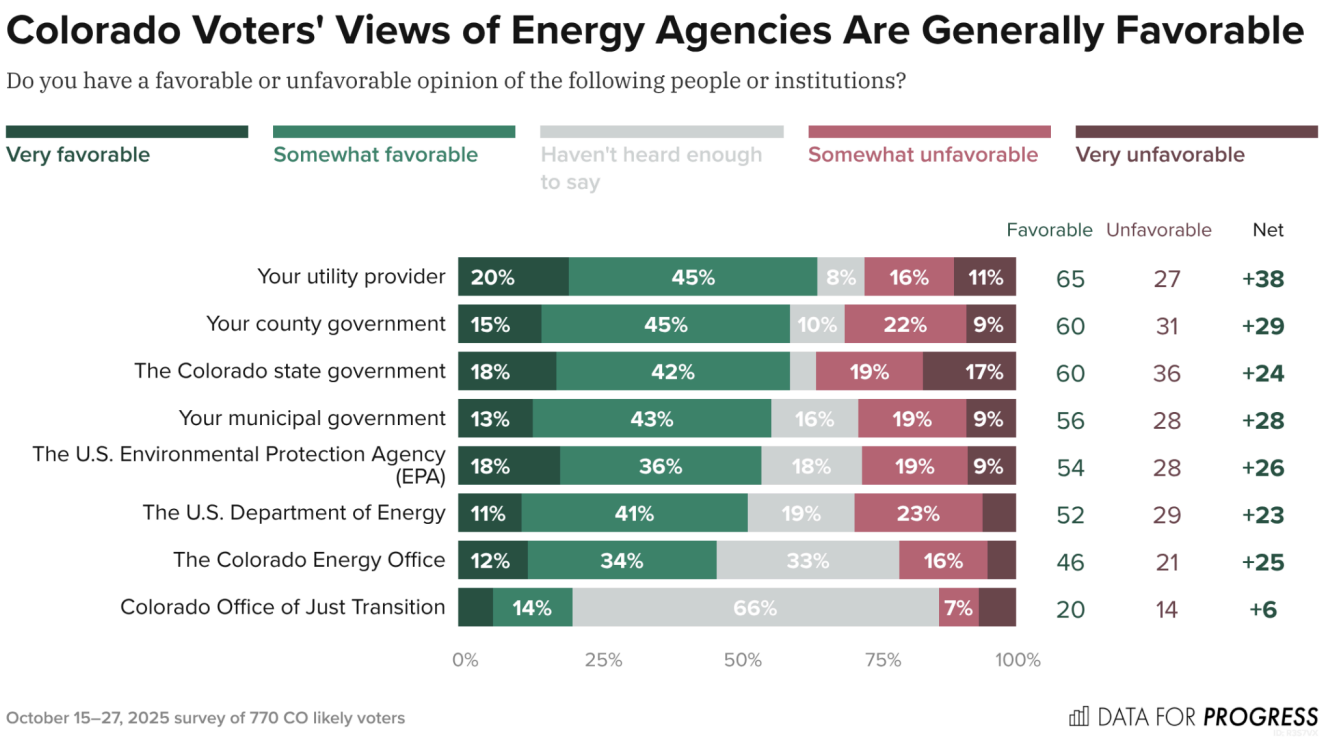
> *I think it'll outweigh the risks. I think the only risks would be, is [if] this technology [is] proven somewhat wrong, or a better technology comes along. And then the project is abandoned just after a few years of use or building and we're stuck with another hole in the ground, if you want to call it that or whatever, something else to have to pay to clean up. This technology's so new ... It seems like a good technology right now, but 10 years down the road it might be obsolete. It might be not even working or it might be three times better.*

Broadly, participants recognized the need for new industries to replace the economic role the coal industry has played for generations, and were open to DAC being part of the solution, though not completely sold, with one participant saying, "*I feel like that we need to look at something, some kind of industry, so that there's not a mass exodus.*" One younger participant saw the potential for DAC to be an industry of the future, something that could keep young people in the area: "*I'm graduating next year, but this is definitely something I could totally see myself doing in the future ... This is the future. This is what we learn about in class. This is like everything that scientists are trying to do to reverse climate change and this is like Step 1.*"

Survey Findings

To complement the workshops in Colorado coal transition communities, DFP also conducted a survey of Colorado likely voters, assessing views of energy infrastructure, carbon dioxide removal, and related topics, including trust in political institutions and perspectives on community engagement practices for infrastructure projects.

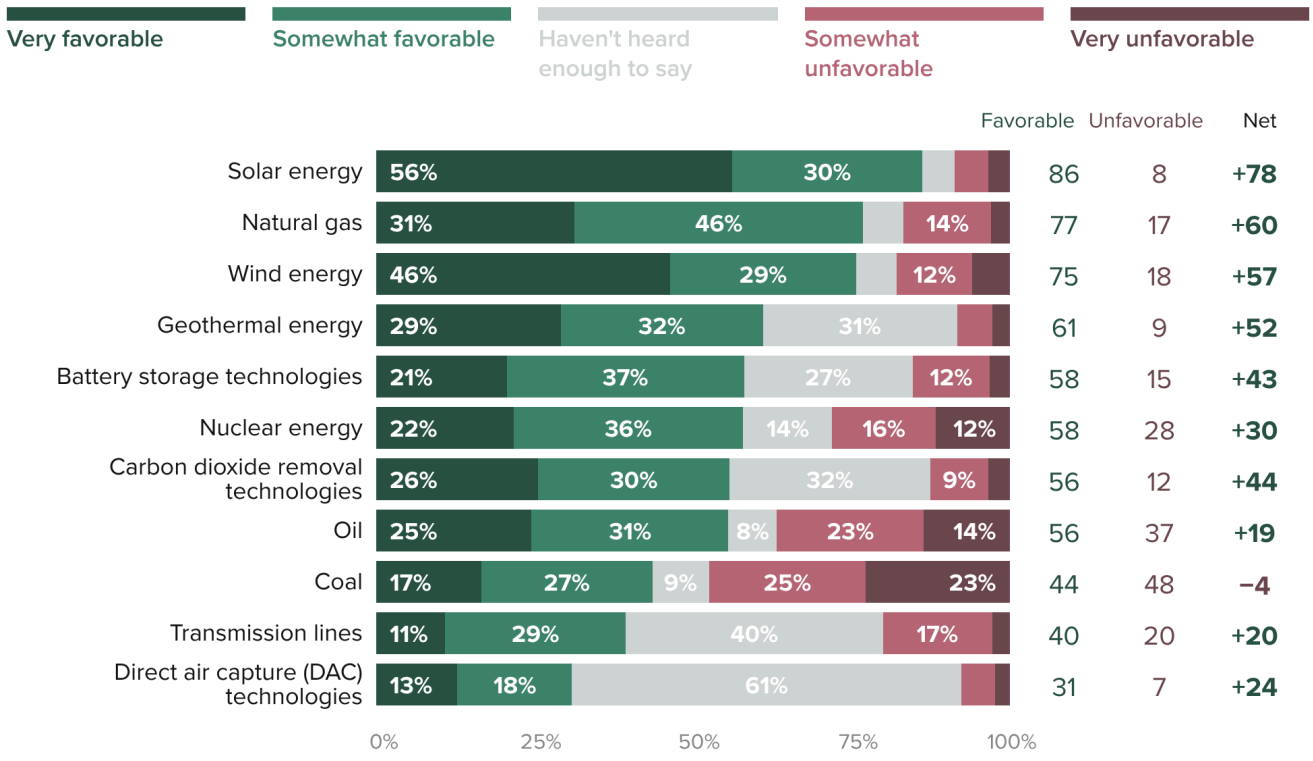
Colorado likely voters were first asked to evaluate federal, state, and local institutions involved in energy infrastructure. On the whole, voters have favorable views of these institutions, and see their personal utility providers most positively (65% favorable, a +38 margin) relative to all other institutions tested. Colorado voters view their county government (+29), their municipal government (+28), and the state government (+24) as similarly favorable. National energy agencies are also viewed favorably, along with the Colorado Energy Office (CEO) and the Colorado Office of Just Transition. Notably, Colorado's state offices are less familiar to voters than other institutions tested, with sizable proportions of respondents indicating uncertainty about how they view CEO (33%) and OJT (66%).



The survey also assessed Colorado voters' views of different types of energy and related technologies, like battery storage and carbon dioxide removal. Large majorities of Colorado voters view solar energy (86%), natural gas (77%), and wind energy (75%) favorably. Majorities also have favorable views of geothermal energy (61%), battery storage (58%), and nuclear energy (58%), though voters report knowing less about these technologies (particularly geothermal and battery storage). Of all energy sources and technologies tested, coal is the only one that is viewed more negatively than positively by Colorado voters (-4 margin), with 48% viewing it unfavorably and 44% favorably. Notably, a majority of respondents (61%) haven't heard enough to form an opinion on direct air capture, even as carbon dioxide removal technologies more broadly enjoy a +44 margin of support (with 32% of respondents saying they haven't heard enough to say).

Colorado Voters Have More Favorable Views Toward Clean Energy and Natural Gas

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the following types of energy and technologies?



October 15–27, 2025 survey of 770 CO likely voters

DATA FOR PROGRESS

Across both the community workshops and survey, Coloradans' experiences indicate variation in how well different communities' needs are met throughout the state, though survey respondents report that most community needs tested are generally being well addressed. Within the survey, the variation across communities is clearest between urban, suburban, and rural respondents: Fewer rural respondents say their communities' needs are being met well than suburban or urban respondents, particularly regarding health care facilities and public transportation. In contrast, urban communities see slight deficits in how well the electrical grid and public safety needs are being met relative to suburban and rural communities.

Colorado Voters Think Their Communities' Needs Are Generally Being Well Met

In the area where you live, how well or poorly do you think **your communities' needs are being met** for the following issues?

Survey respondents who selected: *Very well or Somewhat well*

	All likely voters	Democrat	Independent / Third party	Republican	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Grocery stores	81%	80%	79%	84%	82%	84%	76%
Municipal services, like trash collection	79%	80%	77%	81%	78%	82%	76%
Health care facilities	71%	69%	68%	75%	71%	81%	55%
The electrical grid	68%	65%	67%	72%	65%	67%	71%
Tourism	67%	69%	66%	67%	66%	72%	64%
Public safety	63%	63%	59%	68%	59%	65%	69%
Education	59%	64%	51%	61%	61%	59%	53%
Public transportation	54%	60%	43%	55%	62%	59%	28%
Infrastructure, like roads	51%	57%	42%	55%	50%	54%	50%
Housing	40%	41%	35%	46%	39%	44%	35%

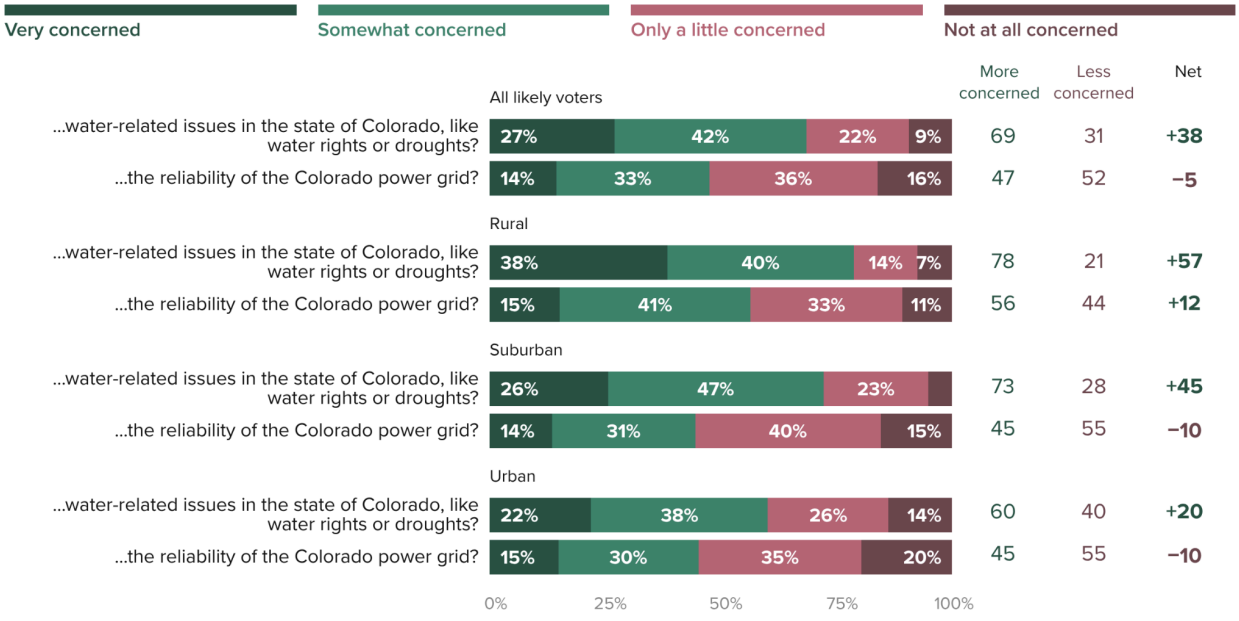
October 15–27, 2025 survey of 770 CO likely voters

DATA FOR PROGRESS

Colorado voters also report being more concerned (69% concerned) about water-related issues, like water rights and droughts, than they are about the reliability of the state's power grid (47% concerned). Among rural Colorado voters, more than three-quarters of respondents (78%) are concerned about water-related issues, while 56% report that they are concerned about grid reliability, emphasizing that these issues are more salient for rural communities than urban and suburban areas.

Colorado Voters Express More Concern About Water-Related Issues Than the Reliability of the Power Grid

How concerned, if at all, are you about...



October 15–27, 2025 survey of 770 CO likely voters

DATA FOR PROGRESS

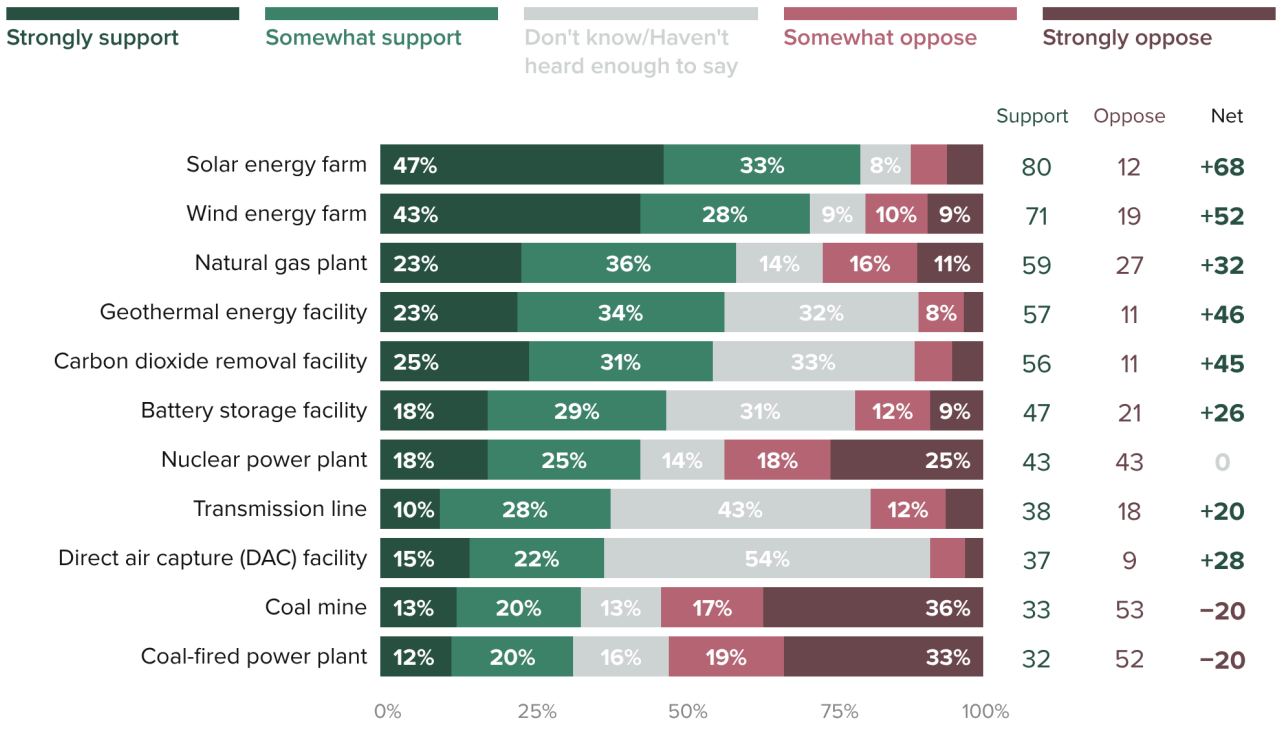
When Colorado voters are asked about their attitudes regarding the construction of different types of energy infrastructure, the pattern appears similar to overall favorability: Voters express higher levels of support for building new clean energy projects in their community, compared with other infrastructure projects. A strong majority of Colorado voters would support building a new solar energy farm (80%) or wind farm (71%) in their community. In contrast with favorable views of natural gas as an energy source, however, just 59% of Colorado voters would support building a new natural gas plant in their community.

Though majorities of Colorado voters would support a new geothermal energy (57%) and carbon removal (56%) facility in their community, around a third of respondents report that they are unsure about both, indicating that many voters may not know much or are still making up their minds about these technologies. Relatedly, even more respondents indicate uncertainty about their support or opposition toward transmission lines and DAC facilities, reflecting a considerable information gap on these technologies.

Of all energy technologies surveyed, nuclear energy is the most polarizing, with Colorado voters evenly split on whether they support or oppose a new nuclear energy facility being built in their community. Finally, when asked if they support building a new coal mine or plant in their community, a majority (53% and 52%, respectively) of Colorado voters *oppose* each.

Colorado Voters Are More Supportive of Constructing New Clean Energy Projects in Their Communities Than Other Infrastructure

For each of the following types of infrastructure projects, would **you** support or oppose a new one being built in your community?



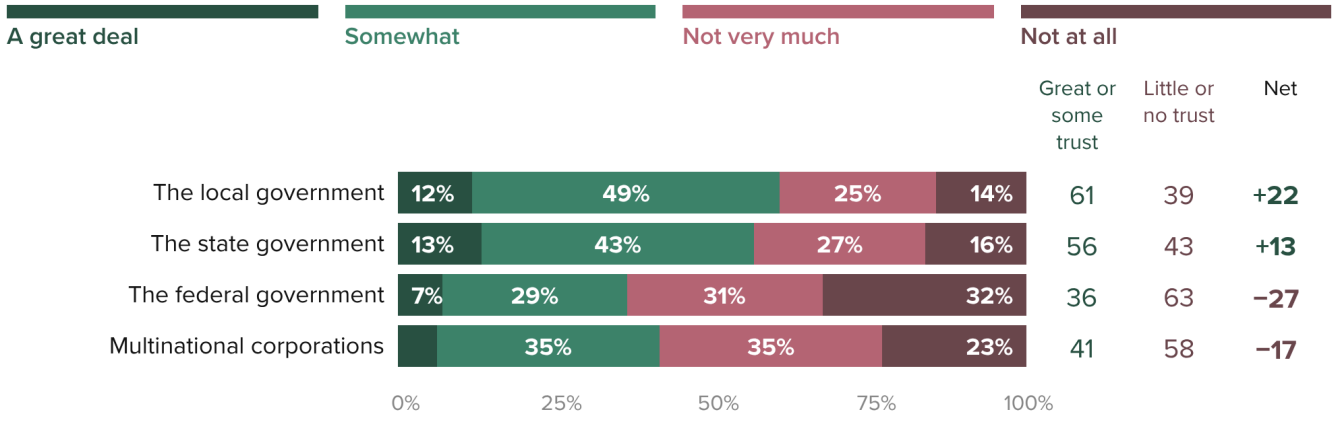
October 15–27, 2025 survey of 770 CO likely voters

DATA FOR PROGRESS

Often, announcements of proposed infrastructure projects are accompanied by elected officials or developers promising to deliver economic investment and local jobs. Coal transition community workshop participants felt ignored and left in the dark, both as a result of uncertainty around the coal phaseout and long-term disinvestment relative to wealthy nearby ski towns, and as a result, had little trust in companies or government to address their needs. Taking a broader view, the survey reveals that Colorado voters as a whole are somewhat more trusting in local government (61% say they somewhat trust or have a great deal of trust) and state government (56%) to deliver on promises to create new jobs and offer local benefits, relative to multinational corporations (41%) and the federal government (36%).

Colorado Voters Trust State and Local Government More to Deliver Jobs and Benefits Than the Federal Government or Corporations

How much do you trust each of the following institutions if at all, to deliver on a promise to create new jobs and offer benefits to your community?



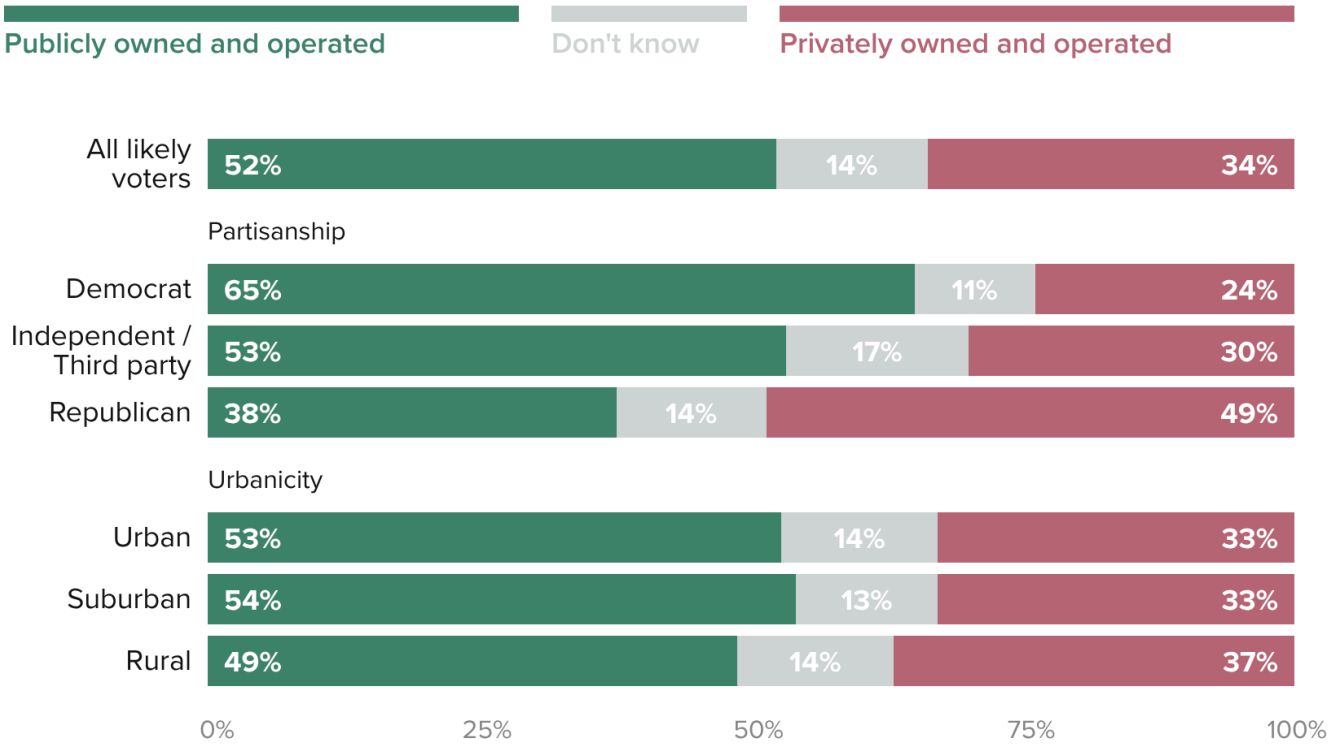
October 15–27, 2025 survey of 770 CO likely voters

DATA FOR PROGRESS

When asked to choose, Colorado voters prefer that new energy infrastructure projects, such as new clean energy sources or carbon dioxide removal projects, are publicly owned and operated, with 52% saying they prefer such a model, compared with 34% who prefer such projects be privately owned and operated.

Over Half of Colorado Voters Would Prefer That New Energy Infrastructure Projects Are Publicly Owned and Operated

Would you prefer that new energy infrastructure projects, such as new clean energy sources or carbon dioxide removal projects, are owned and operated by **private** companies or individuals, or by **public** institutions, such as a municipal co-op association or local government?



October 15–27, 2025 survey of 770 CO likely voters

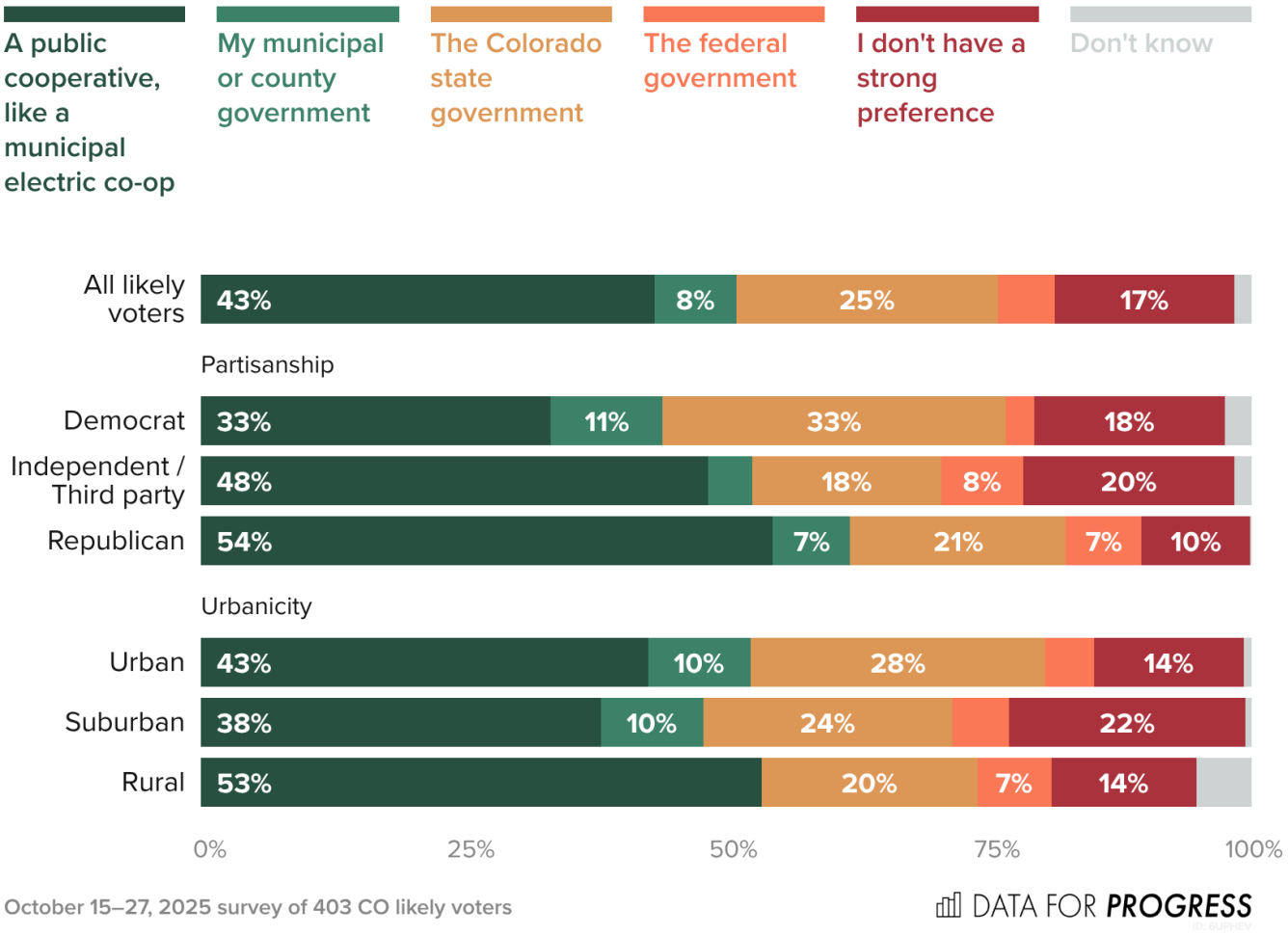
DATA FOR PROGRESS

Respondents who said they preferred such a project to be publicly owned were then asked which group they would want to be the main owner and operator of a new energy infrastructure project. A plurality (43%) say they would want a public cooperative, like a municipal electric co-op, to be the main owner and operator, with 53% of rural respondents — who are more likely to receive their electricity from a rural co-op — notably saying they prefer a public cooperative.

Colorado Voters Who Prefer Public Ownership Think Public Co-ops Should Own and Operate Infrastructure

You indicated that you would prefer that new energy infrastructure projects are publicly owned and operated.

Which of these groups would you want to be the **main owner and operator** of a new energy infrastructure project, if any?



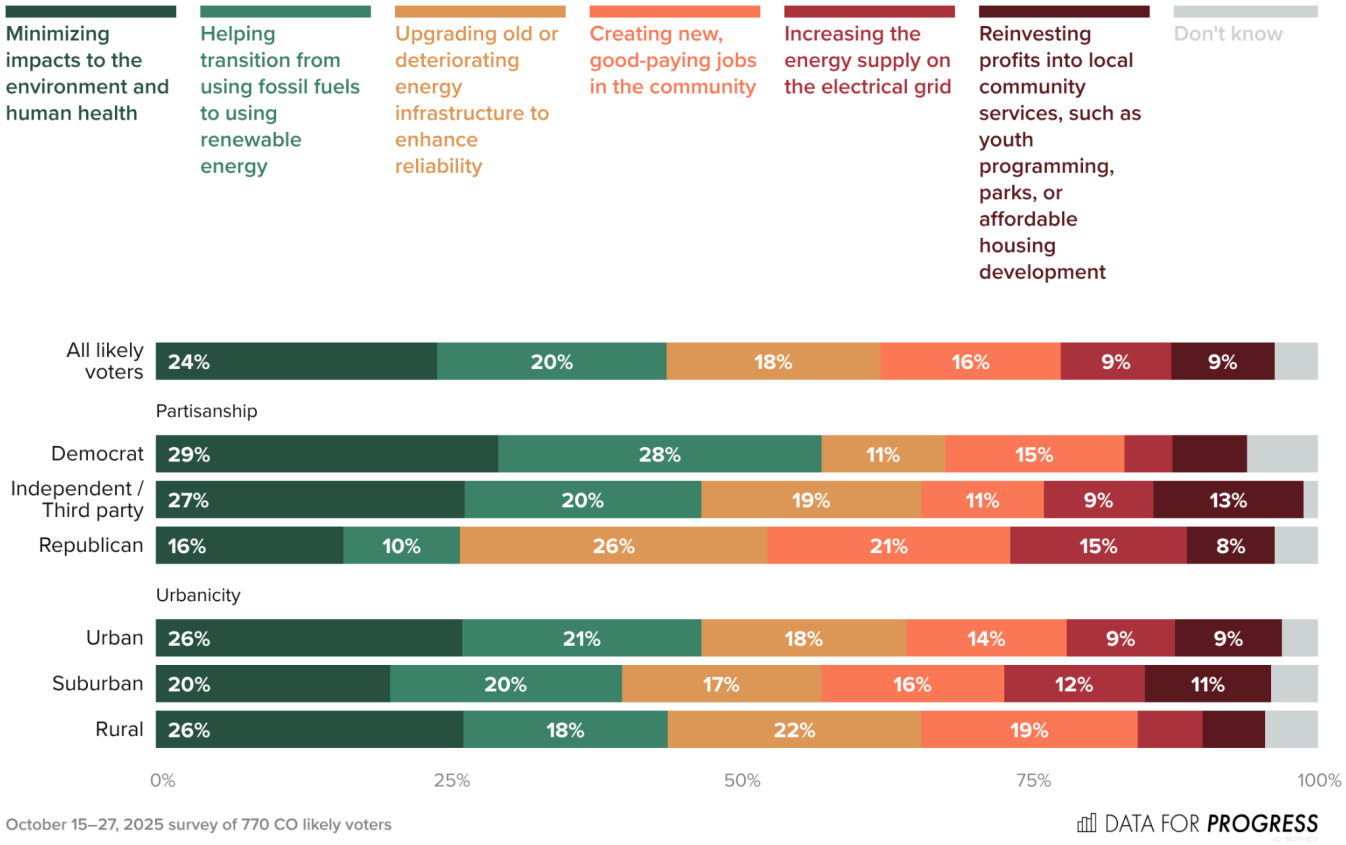
October 15–27, 2025 survey of 403 CO likely voters

DATA FOR PROGRESS

The survey also asked Colorado voters about their priorities for new energy infrastructure projects in their communities. Given a list of potential priorities, 24% of Colorado voters say that minimizing human and environmental health impacts is their top priority, followed by 20% who prioritize projects that help transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy, 18% who prioritize projects that upgrade energy infrastructure and enhance reliability, and 16% who prioritize job-creating projects. Only 9% most prioritize projects for their ability to increase overall energy supply, and another 9% most prioritize projects that would reinvest profits into local community services. Notably, reliability and upgrades are a higher priority for Republicans (26%), while protecting human and environmental health is the top priority for Independents (27%) and Democrats (29%).

Colorado Voters Prioritize Minimal Human and Environmental Impacts for New Energy Infrastructure Projects in Their Communities

Of the following, what do you think should be the **top priority** for new energy infrastructure projects proposed near where you live?



October 15–27, 2025 survey of 770 CO likely voters

DATA FOR PROGRESS

Colorado voters were also asked if they think new energy infrastructure projects in their area would have positive or negative impacts on different aspects of their community. A majority of Colorado voters (62%) think that such new projects would have positive impacts on the electrical grid, followed by health care facilities (48%), infrastructure like roads (48%), and housing (47%).

Colorado Voters Think New Energy Infrastructure Projects Are More Likely to Have Positive Community Impacts

Do you think a company developing a new energy infrastructure project **in the area where you live** would have positive or negative impacts on each of the following:

Survey respondents who selected: *It would have positive impacts*

	All likely voters	Democrat	Independent / Third party	Republican	Urban	Suburban	Rural
The electrical grid	62%	60%	65%	61%	60%	68%	58%
Health care facilities	48%	50%	47%	47%	41%	55%	50%
Infrastructure, like roads	48%	43%	50%	52%	46%	51%	48%
Housing	47%	46%	47%	49%	41%	54%	48%
Grocery stores	44%	40%	43%	49%	37%	47%	52%
Education	43%	41%	45%	41%	40%	44%	45%
Public transportation	41%	47%	36%	41%	41%	46%	36%
Public safety	39%	39%	35%	43%	36%	40%	43%
Municipal services, like trash collection	34%	34%	31%	38%	33%	34%	35%
Tourism	31%	31%	29%	34%	31%	29%	34%

October 15–27, 2025 survey of 770 CO likely voters

DATA FOR PROGRESS

After being presented with two arguments about pathways that Colorado can take to bolster the energy grid, voters prefer an argument in favor of building clean energy and new technologies in the state over an argument in favor of expanding fossil fuel production. Sixty-eight percent of voters overall — including majorities of Democrats (88%) and Independents (66%), and a plurality of Republicans (49%) — agree with an argument stating, "We should prioritize investing in clean energy and new technologies right here in Colorado, where we can create thousands of jobs and strengthen our economy." In contrast, just 27% of voters agree with an argument saying, "We should prioritize increasing coal, oil, and gas production to ensure we can keep the Colorado power grid running reliably with a steady supply of energy."

Survey respondents next read the following description about carbon dioxide emissions leading to warming temperatures and carbon dioxide removal:

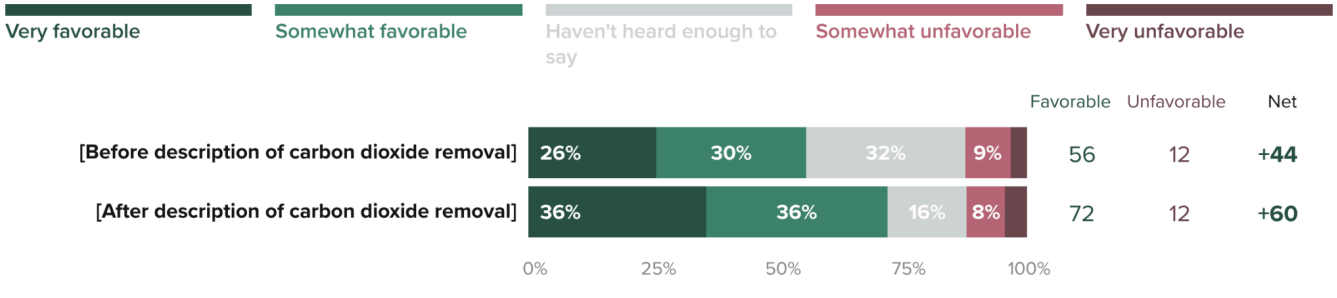
> *Humans have burned fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas for electricity, heat, and transportation since the mid-1800s. Burning these fuels has released a significant amount of carbon dioxide (CO2) pollution into the atmosphere. Carbon dioxide traps the sun's heat and warms the Earth like a blanket. As human activities have increased, so has the layer of carbon dioxide pollution, leading to overall warmer temperatures and changes in the atmosphere that increase the likelihood of extreme weather. The next series of questions will ask you about* ***carbon dioxide removal****, which is the process of removing carbon from the atmosphere using technologies (like large filters) or approaches that help store more CO2 in soils and trees.*

After reading this description, voters were again asked how they view this technology. A majority of Colorado voters (72%) say they have favorable views of CDR, including 77% of Democrats, 76% of Independents, and 63% of Republicans.

Colorado Voters Have More Favorable Views of Carbon Dioxide Removal After Reading About the Technology

[See crosstabs for full question text.]

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of carbon dioxide removal technologies?



October 15–27, 2025 survey of 770 CO likely voters

DATA FOR PROGRESS

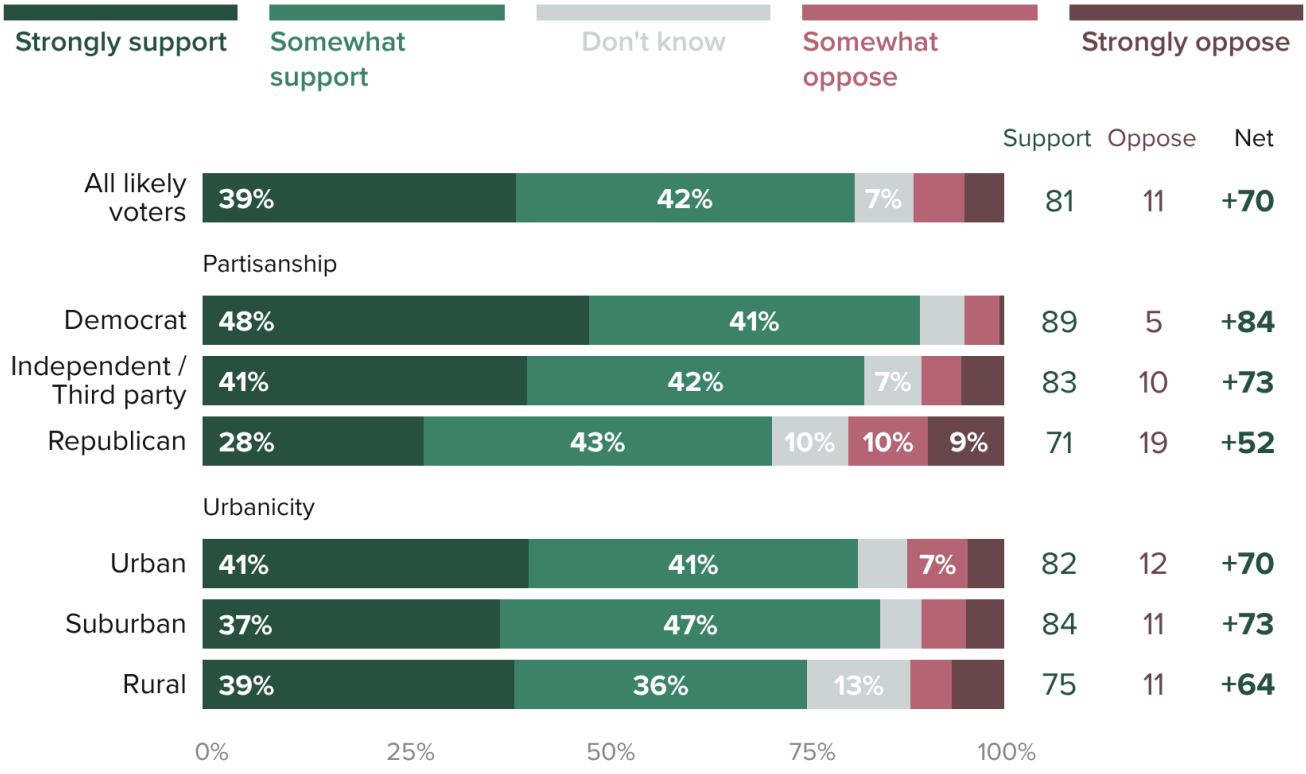
Colorado voters are widely supportive of building new CDR projects in the state after reading a description of the technology and motivation for their deployment. Around 4 in 5 (81%) say they would support these projects being built in the state, including strong majorities of Democrats (89%), Independents (83%), and Republicans (71%).

A Majority of Colorado Voters Say They Would Support Carbon Dioxide Removal Projects Being Built in the State

Carbon dioxide is a pollutant that contributes to climate change and is created during oil, gas, and coal production.

New technologies and practices are able to remove carbon dioxide emissions from the atmosphere.

Would you support or oppose Colorado allowing these carbon dioxide removal projects to be built in the state?



October 15–27, 2025 survey of 770 CO likely voters

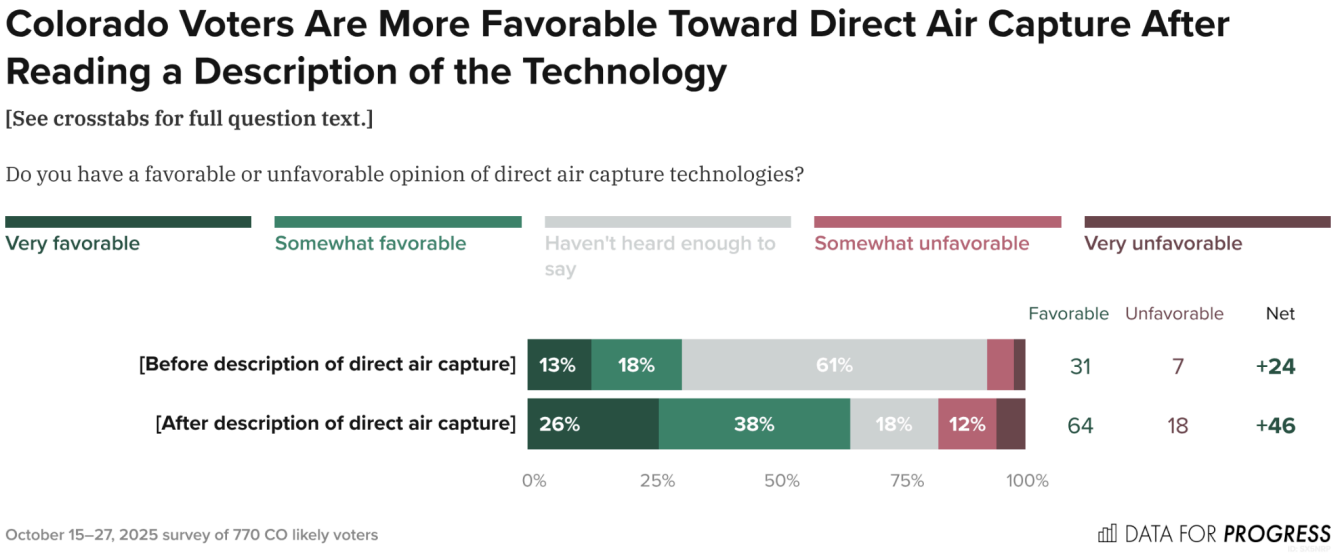
DATA FOR PROGRESS

Similar to the introduction for CDR, respondents also read the following description of DAC:

> *Direct air capture (DAC) is a type of carbon dioxide removal which uses large fans to push air through a filter that captures the carbon dioxide. When the filter is full, it is heated up to separate and collect the carbon dioxide, which is then transported and stored deep underground in rock formations. Below is a photo of a DAC facility in Tracy, California.*

Image 3. Heirloom DAC facility in Tracy, California (Heirloom Carbon)

After seeing this description and photo of an operational DAC facility (Image 3), a majority of respondents (64%) say they have a favorable opinion of DAC, with 18% saying they still haven't heard enough to say.

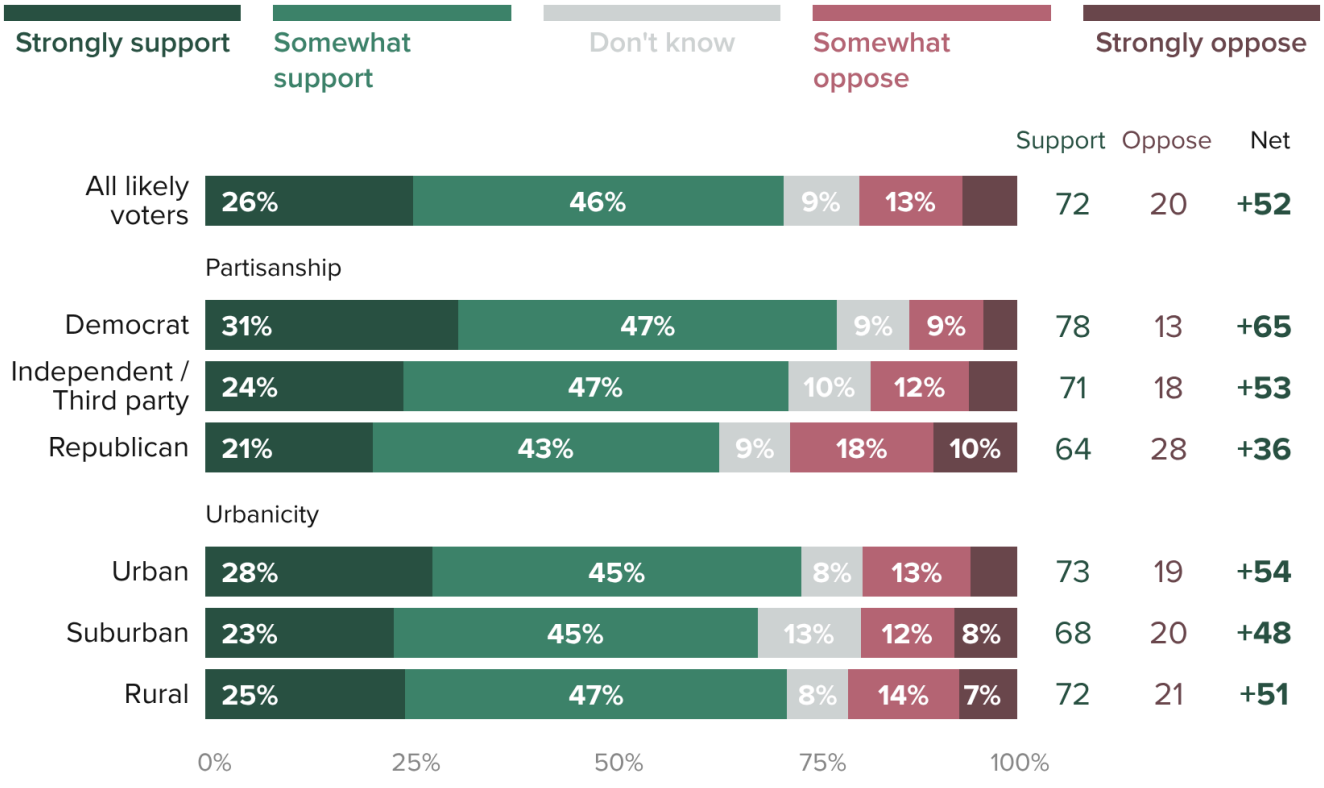


In contrast with the mixed sentiments toward DAC shared by workshop participants, a strong majority (72%) of survey respondents say they would support DAC facilities being built in the state, including majorities across partisanship. Survey respondents also strongly prefer (70%) that potential DAC facilities built in the state are powered by clean energy, like solar and wind, compared with just 12% who would prefer that facilities are powered by fossil energy.

Colorado Voters Say They Would Support Direct Air Capture Projects Being Built in the State

Direct air capture (DAC) is a type of carbon dioxide removal, which uses large fans to push air through a filter that captures the carbon dioxide. When the filter is full, it is heated up to separate and collect the carbon dioxide, which is then transported and stored deep underground in rock formations.

Having read this, do you support or oppose direct air capture facilities **being built in Colorado**?



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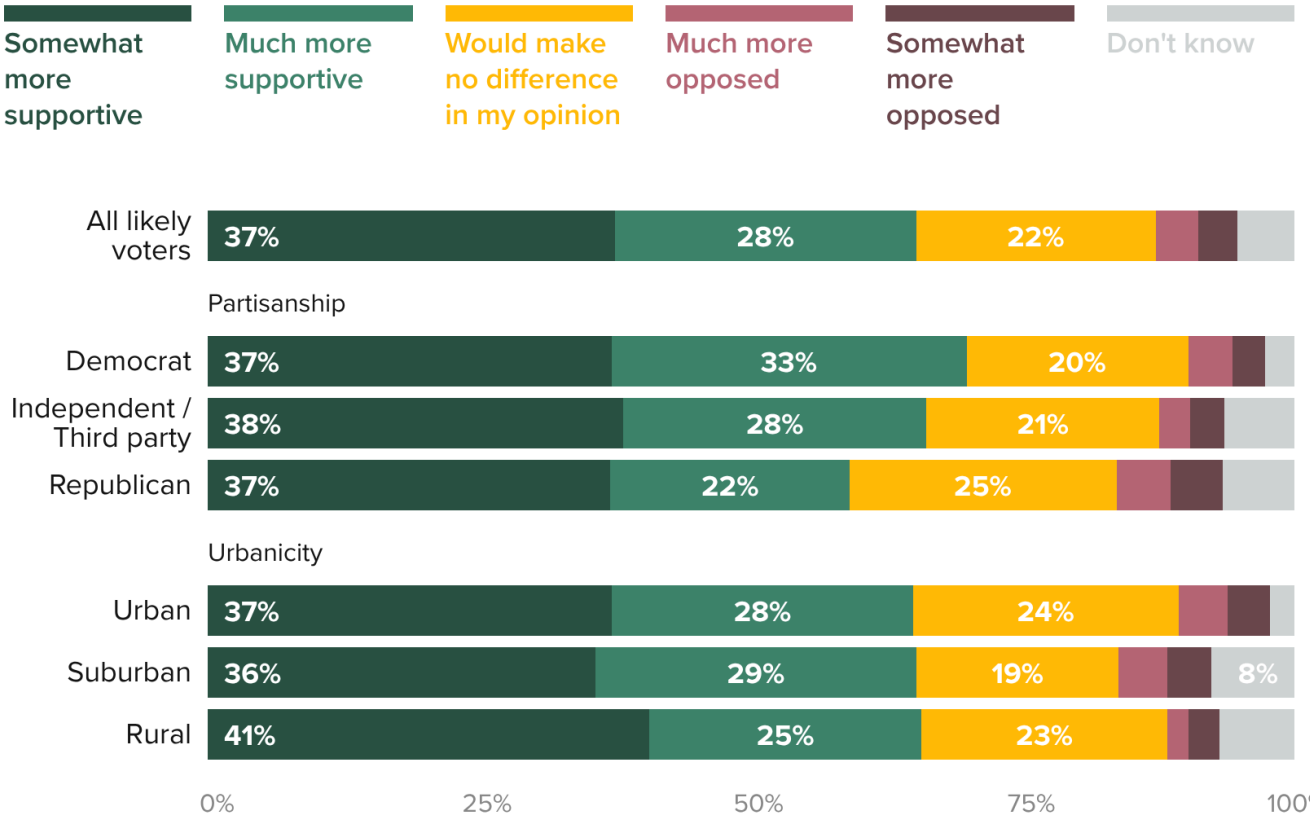
DATA FOR PROGRESS

One hope expressed by workshop participants in several coal transition communities was that DAC facilities could be sited on industrial land or brownfields, especially as coal power is phased out over the coming years. This holds with survey findings, where a majority of respondents (65%) say they would either be “much more supportive” (37%) or “somewhat more supportive” (28%) if DAC facilities were built on land that has previously been used for industrial purposes, like retired factories or closed coal power plants.

Colorado Voters Say They Would Be More Supportive of Direct Air Capture Facilities if They Were Built on Previous Industrial Property

Some groups have proposed building direct air capture (DAC) facilities on land that has previously been used for industrial purposes, like retired factories or closed coal power plants.

Would you be more supportive or more opposed to DAC facilities being built in Colorado if they were built on land that had previously been used for industrial purposes?



October 15–27, 2025 survey of 770 CO likely voters

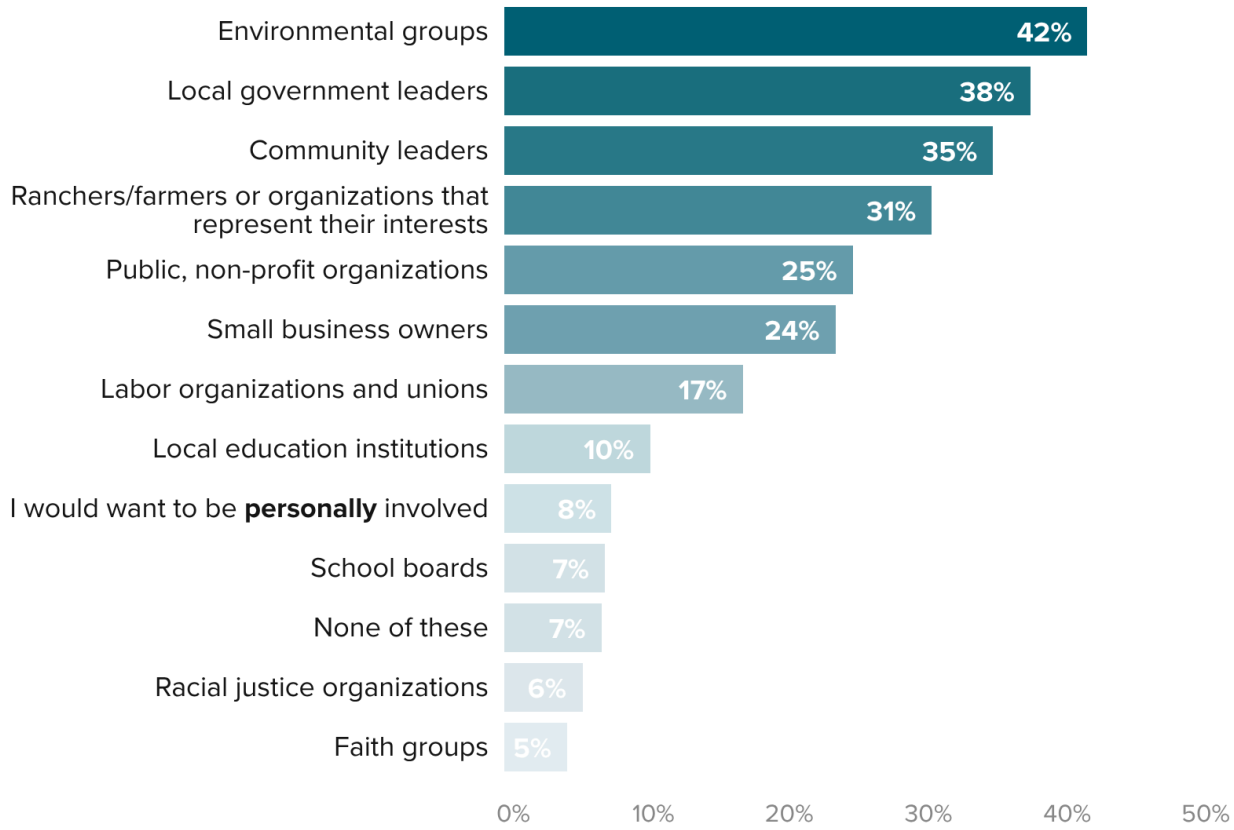
DATA FOR PROGRESS

Survey respondents strongly support (81%) the use of community benefits agreements (CBAs) on development projects, after reading a short description of them. This holds with workshop findings, where many participants expressed interest in CBAs as a means to ensure their community actually benefits from any potential DAC development. When asked which groups they'd want to negotiate with developers on behalf of their community, Colorado voters say they most trust environmental groups (42%), followed by local government leaders (38%), community leaders (35%), and ranchers/farmers (31%).

Colorado Voters Trust Environmental Organizations Most to Represent Their Interests When Negotiating With Infrastructure Developers

Some communities have negotiated agreements with developers of new infrastructure projects in order to increase community input over local development projects and receive community benefits from the project, like local hiring commitments or funding for community programs.

If a new infrastructure project was being considered in your community, which of the following groups would you want to negotiate with developers on behalf of your community? You may select **up to 3 options**.



October 15–27, 2025 survey of 770 CO likely voters

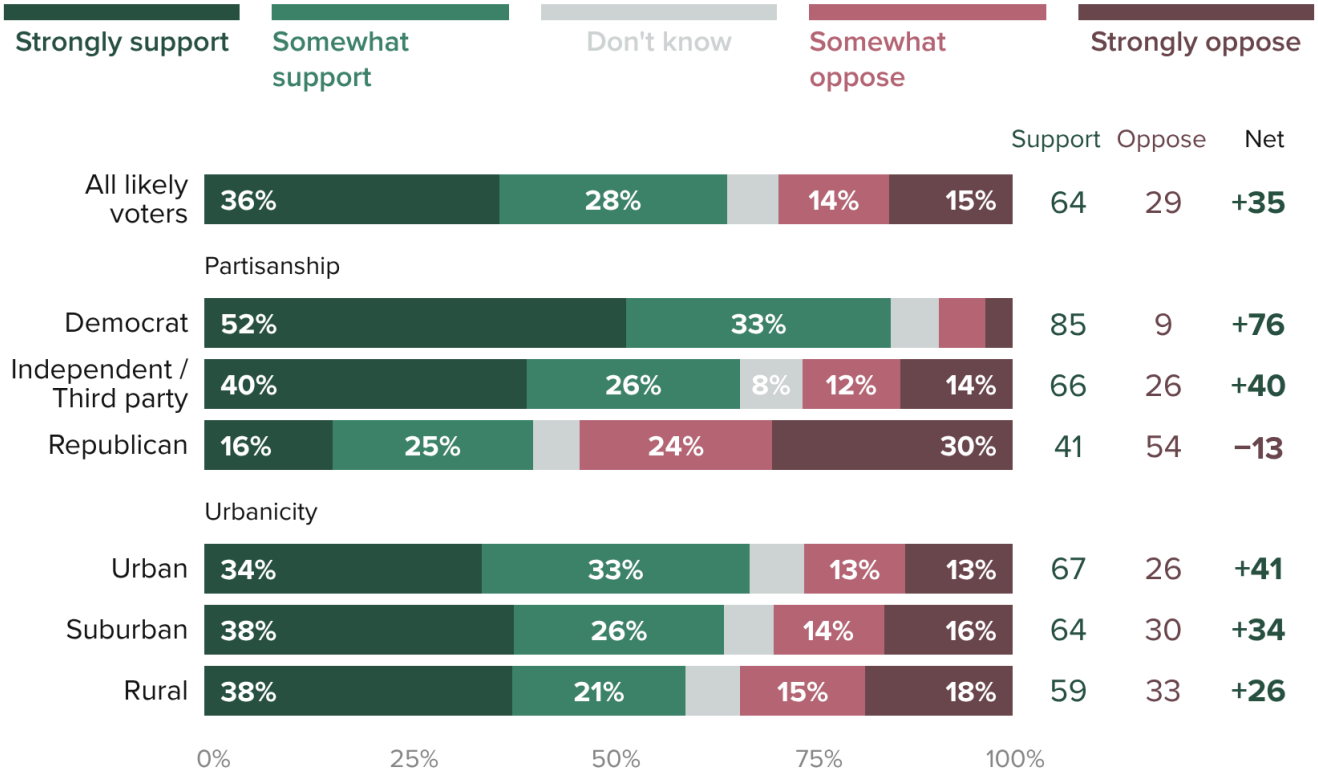
DATA FOR PROGRESS

Finally, the last major segment of the survey assessed views of Colorado's coal policies. Few Colorado voters report awareness of the state's planned coal phaseout, with just 12% saying they have heard a lot about the plan, 47% saying they've heard a little, and 41% saying they've heard nothing at all. After reading that the state plans to phase out the use of coal power, including closing the state's remaining coal-fired power plants and coal mines by 2031, 64% of Colorado voters say that they support the policy. Majorities of Colorado voters support the coal phaseout across all demographic groups tested, with the exception of Republicans (41% support, 54% oppose).

Most Colorado Voters Support the State's Plan to Phase Out Coal

As you may know, the state of Colorado is planning to phase out the use of coal power, with all of the state's remaining coal-fired power plants and mines planned to close by 2031.

Do you support or oppose the state's plan to phase out the use of coal power?



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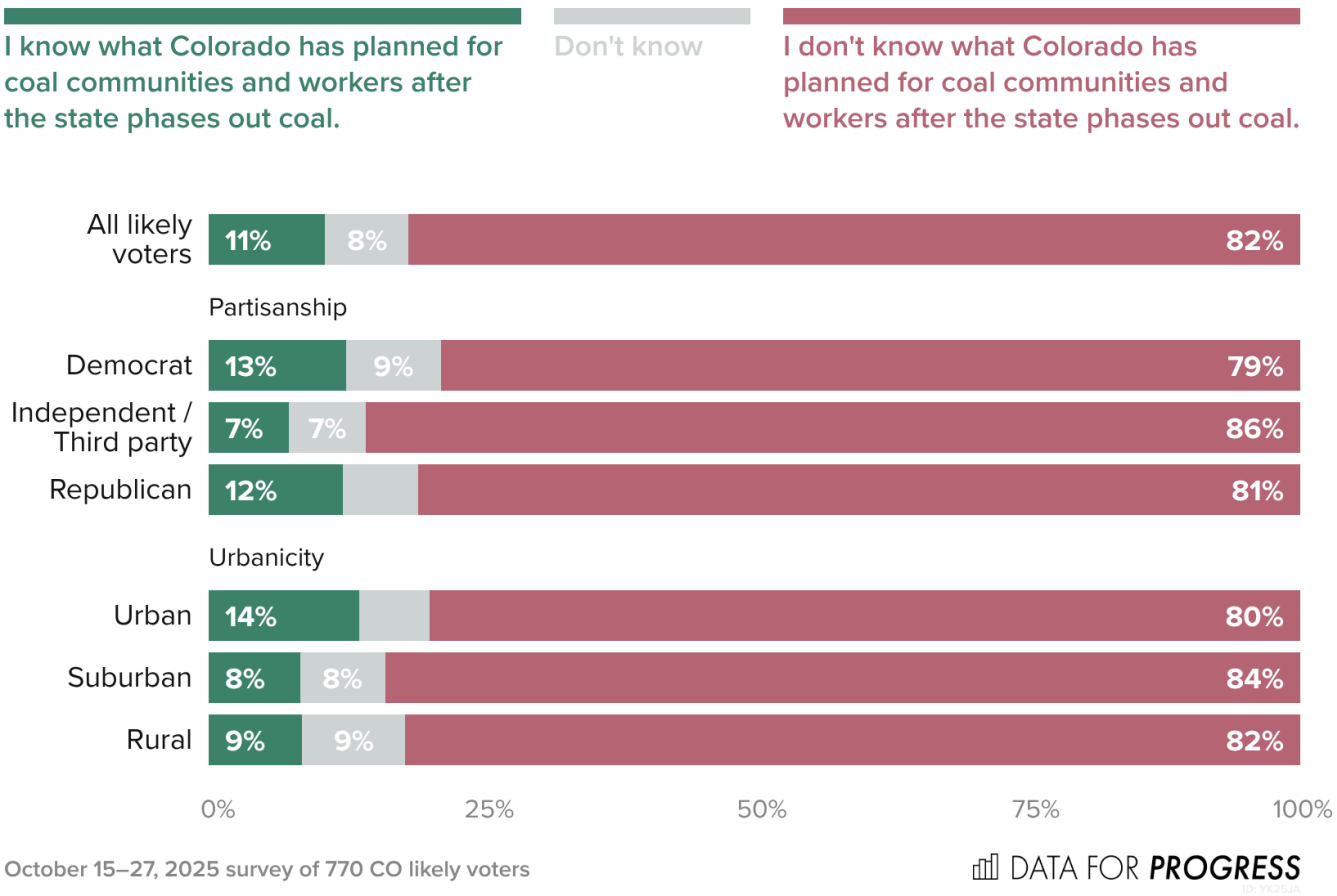
DATA FOR PROGRESS

However, the lack of reported familiarity with the plan also attests to uncertainty statewide about what coal phaseout will signify for Colorado's coal communities: More than 4 in 5 Colorado voters (82%) say they don't know what Colorado has planned for these communities and coal industry workers after the phaseout, with another 8% saying they are unsure, compared with only 11% who say they know what the state has planned.

Around 4 in 5 Colorado Voters Aren't Sure What the State Is Planning for Communities and Workers After Phasing Out Coal

Which of the following statements comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly correct?



October 15–27, 2025 survey of 770 CO likely voters

DATA FOR PROGRESS

Colorado's plan to phase out coal power will impact the state's coal communities and workers as employment opportunities shift and other energy sources and industries fill its place — and these types of impacts are indeed already being felt in these communities throughout the state, as expressed by the community workshop participants. When asked about different policies that aim to support Colorado workers and communities that are most impacted by the coal phaseout, Colorado voters strongly support these proposals:

Colorado Voters Widely Support Policies to Aid Coloradans Impacted by the Energy Transition

Phasing out the use of coal power to reduce the impacts of climate change may affect employment opportunities and income in the coal industry, while other types of energy sectors grow to address electricity needs.

Do you support or oppose Colorado lawmakers creating the following programs to address these potential employment and income impacts?

Survey respondents who selected: *Strongly support or Somewhat support*

	All likely voters	Democrat	Independent / Third party	Republican	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Training and skill development to support workers in accessing new employment opportunities	87%	88%	89%	83%	87%	86%	88%
Increased apprenticeships available for students in high schools, colleges, and trade schools	85%	86%	85%	84%	85%	88%	83%
Investments in the public education system to ensure students are adequately prepared for a changing workforce	82%	86%	84%	78%	84%	82%	80%
Temporary financial support for workers who become unemployed or are transitioning into a new industry	78%	84%	80%	69%	80%	82%	70%
A basic income grant that workers in the coal industry would receive each month	60%	70%	55%	54%	62%	60%	58%
A basic income grant that Coloradans living in coal communities would receive each month	55%	69%	53%	44%	59%	56%	49%

October 15–27, 2025 survey of 770 CO likely voters

DATA FOR PROGRESS

Synthesis and Recommendations

Colorado's OJT and ambitious climate policy and coal phaseout plans are some of the first of their kind in the nation, and, while the state already is making laudable and important strides, more can be done — both at the state and federal level — to ensure such a transition is indeed just. Scholar J. Mijin Cha offers a *Four+ Pillars* framework for evaluating just transition policies, which should be front of mind for policymakers in Colorado and beyond. Her *Four+ Pillars* include (see Appendix F for more detail):

1. Substantial governmental support;
2. Dedicated funding streams to support transition programs and efforts, including job training and creation;
3. Diversifying economic opportunity; and
4. Strong and diverse coalitions.

In examining Colorado's just transition policy environment through the lens of these pillars, it's clear that Colorado does well across all four — offering sizable government support directly to coal communities and workers via its STEP Initiative and grantmaking efforts; standing up funding streams to support job training programs; working to attract new industries in coal communities to diversify local communities; and setting up its Just Transition Advisory Committee to ensure broad representation in transition planning. Of course, there's still more Colorado can do on these pillars.

Beyond these pillars, Cha describes a just transition as a "world-shifting project," which requires more than just seeking a one-to-one replacement for fossil fuels, or, in this case, coal. Instead, it requires more systemic reforms, and in this vein Cha offers one final tenet for just transition policies: the exploration and implementation of non-reformist reforms, or reforms that "work within existing structures and institutions but with the goal of eventually moving toward different ways of existing" (p. 7). Such reforms focus on near-term reforms — like taxing fossil fuel companies for their historic emissions — that advance longer-term goals, like the phaseout of fossil fuels, as in this case.

With these pillars in mind, and a clear-eyed vision for a transition that both phases out fossil fuels and is just, Data for Progress makes the following recommendations based on its analysis of Colorado's current and past policy efforts, the three workshops, and survey data.

1. **Prioritize rapid decarbonization and fossil fuel phaseout.** Bold policies that commit to decarbonize Colorado's economy must serve as the precondition and foundation for the state's investments in carbon removal. Carbon removal should not come at the expense of decarbonization efforts, but is necessary to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change. Colorado has made significant strides to situate its carbon removal plans within its broader decarbonization agenda and coal phaseout plan, but the state can go even further by spelling out its strategy to phase out fossil fuels more broadly in the next iteration of its

greenhouse gas emissions reductions roadmap and in potential 2026 legislation to accelerate the state's 100% clean electricity target from 2050 to 2040.

2. **Build a public investment and policy model for carbon removal that can deliver negative emissions at gigaton-scale, establish durable pathways for large-scale deployment, and ensure high-quality, verifiable removals.** With humanity set to surpass Paris's 1.5 C target, the work of carbon removal is only more urgent in order to limit the amount of time that the planet is in overshoot and head off irreversible planetary tipping points.

   However, despite technological advances and significant investments by the state of Colorado and the Biden administration, today's carbon removal industry is still nascent, with few commercial-scale facilities in operation and no technology yet ready to deliver the necessary gigatons of carbon removal. These technologies will likely continue to make significant strides, however, and massive public investment and bold policy are part and parcel of a carbon removal industry that can deliver gigatons of removals and secure truly negative emissions — not just voluntary emissions offsets.

   With federal leadership on carbon removal likely out of reach in the coming years, Colorado and other states can start to build a better public model for carbon removal. In this vein, researchers have proposed that the U.S. should create a federal carbon removal authority. When carbon removal is back in favor federally, Colorado should support the creation of such an entity, which could enable public implementation of carbon removal, lead research on carbon removal, and carry out mandated annual removals of specific amounts of carbon with strong, publicly developed and transparent monitoring, reporting, and verifying mechanisms. In the interim, the state should consider establishing a carbon removal consortium with other states to model the potential role of a federal carbon removal authority at the regional level.

3. **Finance a centrally planned phaseout of fossil fuels that ensures dignity for fossil fuel communities and workers.** Colorado voters are overwhelmingly supportive of policies to support fossil fuel communities and workers, including job training and skill development programs, apprenticeship programs, direct financial support — like cash transfers — for coal workers and communities, and investments in the public education system to prepare students for new industries. Colorado's existing STEP Initiative is a critical first step in this regard, but the state could go further by expanding financial support and delivering on policy ideas recommended in its Just Transition Action Plan, including wage and health differential and replacement benefits. On wage differential and replacement benefits, the 2018 Green Growth Program for Colorado report (commissioned by Colorado unions) recommends pension guarantees for retired coal and fossil fuel workers who are covered by employer-financed pensions, 100% wage replacement for fossil fuel displaced workers during retraining and reskilling programs, and employment guarantees for displaced fossil fuel workers, with 100% wage insurance to match former wages.

Colorado's Just Transition Action Plan proposes using the state's appropriations process, soliciting funds directly from utility, coal, and mining companies, and developing innovative state-level funding mechanisms as strategies to help meet the financial needs of the transition. Colorado could also consider a one-time fee or a tax on historically pollutive industries, such as a climate superfund law like those passed in Vermont and New York, to raise funds. What's more, proposed reforms from Colorado's current regressive, flat-tax system to a graduated income tax system could help marshall much-needed funds to coal workers and communities.

Both state and federal resources will be essential to build a just future for coal communities and workers, and state resources alone won't be sufficient. Strong federal investments will be essential to bolster the social safety net and deliver a dignified transition for coal and fossil fuel communities and workers. In partnership with its congressional delegation, Colorado must continue to push for federal funding and support for coal communities and fossil fuel communities writ large.

4. **Explore and implement cooperative ownership models for direct air capture and carbon removal.** Throughout workshops, and in the statewide survey, Coloradans express strong interest in cooperative ownership models for DAC, particularly given many workshop participants' positive views of the rural electric cooperatives from which many receive their electricity.

   The state should work to establish such ownership models for DAC, including by collaborating with rural electric cooperatives (RECs) in the state, like Tri-State, San Isabel, and others that serve customers in the communities featured in this report. Research suggests that utilities could play a leading role in advancing carbon removal, and Colorado could leverage the favorability, expertise, and workforce of the state's RECs — like Tri-State, which is set to close its Craig Station coal-fired power plant — to implement publicly owned DAC on utility lands and soon-to-be coal brownfields.

5. **Invest in strong, diverse, just transition coalitions via comprehensive community engagement strategies.** Such strategies should be built upon two-way communication, with communities, workers, and other local stakeholders empowered as co-creators of energy generation, workforce, and economic coal transition plans. Despite robust engagement efforts made by the state and OJT, few Coloradans in coal communities know what the state and their local governments are planning for their economy and community after the retirement of coal. To be fair, just transition planning by state and local officials in communities is ongoing, with many transition plans and future investments still in the works. Thus, as this transition continues, multi-stakeholder engagement and comprehensive education efforts will be imperative.

6. **Require community benefits agreements (CBAs) where possible and make CBAs public, transparent, and enforceable.** Throughout the three workshops, as well as in the statewide survey, Coloradans expressed strong support for ensuring that local communities benefit

from DAC and infrastructure development. Particularly in coal communities that have faced long-term disinvestment and coal phaseout impacts, development projects that promise business as usual will fail to meet local needs. Instead, developers must work within these communities to build trust and determine how and if a development project should proceed in direct collaboration with these communities. CBAs can put communities on a more even playing field with developers, helping to build trust, address potential negative impacts of development, and formalize material benefits for communities and workers.

Colorado should consider embedding CBA requirements in bids for receiving state tax credits, permits, and other support, and incentivize municipalities to require these agreements as a precondition for local development projects to proceed. CBAs should follow best practices — including those laid out by Data for Progress and many other peer organizations — such as ensuring that a community benefits coalition is representative of the local community, setting binding and enforceable agreement terms, embedding transparency in the CBA negotiation process, and equipping communities with the tools to effectively negotiate.

Finally, as Climate and Community Institute has outlined, CBAs are no substitute for free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC). FPIC is a well-established principle of international law, which must guide interactions and relations between Indigenous peoples and companies or the state of Colorado potentially developing DAC or other infrastructure projects. Project developers and the state must respect and abide by FPIC for any DAC or infrastructure development.

7. **Build the unionized, local, and dignified workforce of the future.** Across the workshops, many participants expressed interest in the potential for DAC — as well as other new industries — to provide high-quality jobs for local people, especially displaced coal workers. Colorado can encourage project labor agreements (PLAs) – legally binding agreements between unions and developers — for DAC and other new development projects to guarantee the quantity, quality, and conditions of jobs, establish pathways or targets to hire displaced coal and local workers, and build Colorado's union workforce.

   What's more, organized labor played a critical role in establishing Colorado's OJT and subsequent policy goals in 2019. Moving forward, labor will be an essential member of the coalition advancing a truly just transition away from fossil fuels in the state — evidenced by the launch of Climate Jobs Colorado in January 2025 — and the state must work to build union density and strengthen worker rights.

   Unions offer workers a voice in the workplace, and unionized workers enjoy better wages and benefits. However, as the Climate Jobs Institute points out, Colorado's union density (6.7%) lags behind the national average (10.1%) and that of other non-right-to-work states, in part due to Colorado's restrictive labor laws, like Colorado's Labor Peace Act. SB 25-005, the Worker Protection Act, aimed to update the Labor Peace Act and expand workers' collective bargaining rights, but was vetoed by Gov. Polis after passing the state legislature

in 2025. The Colorado legislature and Polis should re-up and pass the Worker Protection Act in its next legislative session (or the successor to Polis — who is term-limited and will leave office in January 2027 — should champion the bill). Beyond state reforms to labor law to bolster Colorado's union workforce, the state's congressional delegation should support federal legislation, like the PRO Act, to benefit workers beyond state borders.

8. **Ensure DAC — and new infrastructure development — is responsive to local environmental and human health needs,** particularly those around water use. Water-intensive DAC was a strong redline for many workshop participants and a concern for Colorado voters in the statewide survey. As such, any potential DAC or infrastructure development must address local concerns about water use, as well as potential impacts to local landscapes that could hinder tourism and outdoor recreation.

9. **Set strong guardrails for the fossil fuel industry's role in DAC and carbon removal.** Carbon removal technologies can only deliver negative emissions if deployed in tandem with the phaseout of fossil fuels and scale-up of clean energy. Data for Progress has long argued that allowing fossil fuel companies to lead on carbon removal would be like letting a fox into a henhouse. There's a strong potential for the fossil fuel industry to capture and coopt carbon removal and DAC, given the inherent moral hazard: Allowing the fossil fuel sector to control the development pathway of CDR and dominate the market for its use would enable the continued extraction and burning of fossil fuels, and obstruct urgently necessary emissions reductions.

   Colorado must responsibly deploy carbon removal and DAC, by establishing strong guardrails around fossil fuel involvement, restricting the ability for fossil fuel companies to use DAC for enhanced oil recovery, and continuing on a path toward total fossil fuel phaseout.

10. **Invest in and expand social programs that complement just transition programs.** No industry or set of industries will be a perfect one-to-one replacement for coal, and ensure that all workers and their communities have access to quality jobs, housing, health care, and more. As such, plans to phase out coal and other fossil fuels must be accompanied by investments in programs that can strengthen the social safety net to support displaced workers and coal communities. This includes, but is not limited to, policies that expand Medicare and access to health care, invest in affordable housing, and bolster unemployment insurance programs.

    Though Colorado can make significant investments in the social safety net, the federal government must also step up to expand social programs and help smooth the transition away from coal.

Conclusion

Workshops in three Colorado coal communities and a statewide survey highlight differences in how Coloradans are experiencing the state's transition away from coal. Notably, these findings illuminate that — unsurprisingly — the three coal communities are experiencing the transition most acutely, with participants in each workshop voicing a perceived pattern of disinvestment in their community, personal experiences with the coal and other heavy industry, and trepidation about the coal transition and its economic impacts. While Colorado's coal transition was often front of mind for workshop participants, the survey reveals that most Colorado voters know little about the state's coal transition plan. What Colorado voters and coal community members share, however, is uncertainty about what will come next for Colorado after its coal phaseout. That said, there is strong statewide support for bold policies to support coal workers and communities in the transition, which the state of Colorado can leverage to go big in guaranteeing that coal communities are taken care of during the phaseout.

With this broad support for policies to ensure a dignified transition for coal communities and workers, as well as the recommendations and insights from Coloradans and coal communities themselves in this report, Colorado can continue the work of the "world-shifting project" that is a just transition away from coal. A strong, diverse coalition of Coloradans — including coal workers, union members, environmentalists, Indigenous groups, lawmakers and more — must ask and answer these tough questions, make ambitious policy choices for a stable climate, and build a more just, fossil-free future.

Survey respondents broadly reported that the number of renewable energy projects being approved and under construction in their area has increased in recent years. In cases where such increases were not observed, respondents generally indicated that the number of new projects has remained steady. Very few respondents reported a decline in renewable project approvals or construction. However, despite this reported upward trend in the number of projects, respondents noted that both the amount of time required to build renewable energy projects and the overall cost of these projects have increased.

When asked specifically about project *approval* timelines, respondent experiences were more mixed. About one-third of respondents reported that the amount of time it takes to approve renewable energy projects has increased, while approximately one-fifth said it has decreased. The remaining quarter of respondents who expressed an opinion indicated that approval timelines have stayed about the same.

Appendices

Appendix A. Methodology

Survey of Colorado Likely Voters

From October 15 to 27, 2025, Data for Progress conducted a survey of 770 likely voters in Colorado using web panel respondents. The sample was weighted to be representative of likely voters by age, gender, education, race, geography, and recalled presidential vote. The survey was conducted in English. The margin of error associated with the sample size is ±4 percentage points. Results for subgroups of the sample are subject to increased margins of error. Partisanship reflected in tabulations is based on self-identified party affiliation, not partisan registration. For more information please visit dataforprogress.org/our-methodology.

Workshop Methodology

Site selection for this project began with identifying Colorado's Tier I Coal Transition Communities. Further explanation for the final site determination is provided in the body of the report.

Workshops were held in local venues at central locations for each site. Venues were prioritized for their size, technological capabilities, and proximity to population centers. The workshops were held at a local community college, a library, and a community center. Data for Progress worked with a national vendor, Flying Horse, to recruit participants from the surrounding area for each site.

The participant screener was designed to recruit a demographically representative subset of each community across factors including race, gender, and employment status, to the extent possible. Participants were offered additional incentives for recruiting peers to attend focus groups, particularly to increase participation rates in the most rural workshop sites (the West End and Craig). The DFP team asked participants to separate from any individuals they personally recruited to join the community workshop in the second half of the workshop for the open-ended small group discussions.

Each workshop included between 20-22 participants. Workshop participants were compensated for their time and expertise, at $125 per hour, amounting to $375 per attendee. In addition to the labor and expertise contributed to the workshop, this compensation was intended to cover transportation, gas, child care, and parking. Participants were also provided with lunch or dinner and refreshments during each workshop.

The community workshops were three hours in length and consisted of the following format:

- **Section 1: Introductions and pre-workshop survey (15 minutes):** Participants each introduced themselves and completed a pre-workshop survey.
- **Section 2: Presentation about direct air capture (20 minutes):** The Data for Progress team played a publicly available video created by Grist, which offers an overview of direct air capture. Then, the team presented a series of slides slowing images of existing and proposed direct air capture facilities in Tracy, California; Shreveport, Louisiana; Iceland; and Ector County, Texas. Finally, the team provided additional background on direct air capture, including its required energy and water inputs, and its potential environmental, human health, and economic impacts. DFP also answered clarifying and technical questions at the end of the presentation.
- **Meal and transition to small group discussion (30 minutes):** Participants were provided with a meal and broken into smaller groups (5-6 participants) for the focus group discussions. The DFP team also asked participants to separate from any individuals they personally recruited to join the focus groups for the discussions taking place after the meal break.

- **Section 3: Group Discussions (1 hour, 25 minutes):** Participants were set up with microphones that were used to record and transcribe the discussions. Data for Progress moderators guided small groups through a semi-structured discussion based on the facilitation guide included as Appendix B.
- **Section 4: Post-Workshop Survey (5 minutes):** Workshop participants completed a post-workshop survey and returned their written materials to the DFP team. Participants were provided with contact information to follow up with additional questions and comments.

Workshop Demographic Table

		Count	Percentage*
Number of Participants		62	*Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding or respondents selected more than one option.
Number of Groups		12	
Number of Workshops		3	
Gender	Female	42	68
	Male	20	32
Age	18-29	12	20
	30-39	10	16
	40-49	9	15
	50-59	11	18
	60-69	14	23
	70+	5	8
Race/Ethnicity	White	53	87
	Black or African American	2	3
	Hispanic or Latino/a	6	10
	Asian or Asian American	1	2
	American Indian or Alaska Native	1	2
	Other race	0	0
Income	Less than $25,000	16	26
	$25,000 - $50,000	16	26
	$50,001 - $75,000	13	21
	$75,001 - $100,000	4	7
	$100,001 - $150,000	6	10
	More than $150,000	6	10
Employment Status	Employed, full time	28	46
	Employed, part time	10	16
	Unemployed, looking for work	3	5
	Unemployed, not looking for work	1	2
	Retired	11	18
	Homemaker	3	5
	Student	4	7
	Permanently disabled or unable to work	1	2
Partisanship	Democrat	17	28
	Independent / Third party	20	33
	Republican	19	31

	Something else	5	8
Education	No high school diploma	6	10
	High school diploma or equivalent	11	18
	Some college, but no degree	18	30
	Associate's degree	5	8
	Bachelor's degree	13	21
	Advanced degree (such as Master's, Professional, or Doctorate degree)	8	13
Coal Background: Have you or someone you know personally ever worked in the coal industry?	Yes	14	23
	No	44	71
	Don't know	4	6

Appendix B. Small Group Discussion Facilitation Guide

A copy of Data for Progress' facilitator guide for the small group discussions is available here.

Appendix C. Colorado's Just Transition Action Plan

Colorado's Just Transition Action Plan	
Overarching goal: To avert yet another boom-bust cycle in Colorado by helping coal communities and workers transition to prosperous futures.	
Goal 1:	We intend to help each community end up with more family-sustaining jobs, a broader property tax base, and measurably more economic diversity than when this process began in 2019.
Actions	1. *Align state and federal programs to assist local strategies* 2. *Target early successes in business start-ups, expansions, retention, and attraction* 3. *Empower communities with resources to drive their own economic transitions* 4. *Coordinate infrastructure investments to support local and regional transition strategies* 5. *Identify and support state, regional, and local institutions to facilitate needed investments* 6. *Attract grants and investments to power local economic growth*
Goal 2:	We intend to help workers who are laid off from the coal industry or related businesses secure good new jobs with family-sustaining incomes—and to help them do so without sacrificing their families' economic security. This includes achieving secure retirements for older workers who may not wish to stay in the workforce.
Actions	1. *Empower workers and their families to plan early for future success* 2. *Encourage the federal government to lead with a national strategy for energy transition workers* 3. *Prepare, for future consideration, a detailed state program to help displaced workers build skills, find good jobs or start businesses* 4. *Explore strategies to protect family economic security through the transition*
Goal 3:	Since some strategies recommended by the Just Transition Advisory Committee would likely entail significant costs, this plan also includes efforts to identify potential funding options from public, non-profit, and private sources should the state decide to move forward with any of these recommendations. This includes ways to help communities bridge gaps in property tax revenues and to pay for new programs to serve displaced workers.

Actions	*1. Develop realistic options for further state support of just transition strategies* *2. Work with utilities and mining companies to increase transition funding* *3. Ensure the OJT has adequate capacity to continue to develop and implement this Action Plan*

Adapted from the Colorado Just Transition Action Plan.

Appendix D. List of Operating Coal Mines and Power Plants in Colorado

Name	Type	Location	Employees * Employment as of Oct. 2022 ** Employment as of Nov. 2025	Production (2021, in million tons)	Planned Closure
Foidel Creek Mine (Twentymile Coal Co.)	Mine	Routt County	168*	1.74	
Trapper Mine (Trapper Mining Inc.)	Mine	Moffat County	105*	1.57	
Colowyo Coal Mine (Tri-State Generation and Transmission)	Mine	Moffat County	173*	2.2	
Deserado Mine (Blue Mountain Energy)	Mine	Rio Blanco County	153*	2.71	
West Elk Mine (Mountain Coal Co.)	Mine	Gunnison County	284*	3.28	
King II Mine (GCC Energy)	Mine	La Plata County	92*	0.47	
Hayden Station (Xcel Energy)	Power plant	Routt County	74**		Unit 1: 2028 Unit 2: 2027
Craig Station (Tri-State Generation and Transmission)	Power plant	Moffat County	153**		Unit 1: December 2025 Unit 2: September 2028 Unit 3: January 2028
Comanche Station (Xcel Energy)	Power plant	Pueblo County	150**		Unit 1: 2023 Unit 2: 2026 Unit 3: 2031
Ray Nixon Power Plant (Colorado Springs Utilities)	Power plant	El Paso County	166**		2030
Pawnee Station (Xcel Energy)	Power plant	Morgan County	79**		2026 (converting to natural gas)
Rawhide Energy Station (Platte River Power Authority)	Power plant	Larimer County	100**		2030

Adapted from the Colorado Energy Office.

Appendix E. Eligibility Requirements OJT Services for Coal Transition Workers

Eligibility Requirements OJT Services for Coal Transition Workers	
Core Services	**Enhanced Transition Services**
Be a Colorado resident; ***AND***	Meet eligibility criteria for core services; ***AND***
Worked at one of these power plants: Comanche; Craig; Hayden; Nucla; and Pawnee ***OR*** worked at one of these mines: Colowyo; Deserado; New Horizon North; Trapper; and Twentymile ***OR*** worked in a job that is or was directly connected to one of	Worked at a plant, mine, or supply chain-related company on or before January 1, 2020; ***AND*** Worked in the Colorado coal industry for 5 years or more, for at least 16 hours per week; ***AND***

these power plants or mines listed and is likely to be laid off as these facilities close.	Been laid off because of a facility closure on or after January 1, 2017, ***OR*** are likely to soon be laid off because of a facility closure.
***NOTE**: Colorado residents who are the spouse, domestic partner, or legal dependent of an eligible coal or supply-chain worker are also eligible for most of these services.*	

Adapted from the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment.

Appendix F. J. Mijin Cha's Four+ Pillars Framework

Table 3.1 Short-term and long-term needs for *Four Pillars*

	Key Elements	
Pillars of a Just Transition	**Short-Term**	**Long-Term**
1. Substantial governmental support	Policies that provide immediate support to communities and workers negatively impacted by plant and mine closures	Policies that restructure local economies and transform former fossil fuel sites
2. Dedicated funding streams	Addresses short-term needs, such as wage replacement or community support to replace tax revenue lost from plant shutdown	Invests in long-term needs, such as seeding new business development and funding long-term training and retraining programs
3. Economic diversification	Envisions local economies free of fossil fuel infrastructure	Implements community visioning with particular focus on moving away from reliance on a single industry
4. Strong, diverse coalitions	Diverse interests—particularly workers and communities—come together before facilities close to create a transition plan that addresses the needs of directly impacted stakeholders and protects all needs	Organizes and builds support for transition policies, engages in and oversees aspects of implementation, and holds decision makers and elected officials accountable

Screenshot of Four Pillars from p. 65 of A Just Transition for All