Dear Governor Polis,

We, the 76 undersigned organizations, community leaders, and elected officials in Colorado, respectfully ask you to **veto HB25-1040: Adding Nuclear Energy as a Clean Energy Resource**. The future of energy production is one of the most important and challenging issues we face as a state, a nation, and a global community. The need to rapidly decarbonize our economy and transition to a clean energy source is a deeply urgent matter, and nuclear energy is a false solution that will divert urgently needed funds from renewable energy solutions.

In recent years, there has been a rapid resurgence of pro-nuclear industry lobbying which touts nuclear energy as a "clean" and "carbon free" energy source that will transition our economy out of the era of fossil fuels. There are already proposals in Pueblo, Craig, and Hayden Colorado to transition coal plant infrastructure into nuclear energy infrastructure. While we agree with the need to transition away from fossil fuel-based energy as quickly as possible, we also believe that a transition to nuclear power would be a grave mistake with consequences that will echo for hundreds of future generations.

The idea that nuclear power is a clean energy source could not be further from the truth. Nuclear power is the only energy resource that generates dangerous waste that will remain radioactive for thousands of years. There is no known method or technology to process this waste effectively, and thus, it must be stored as long as it remains radioactive. There is a strong possibility the waste would need to be stored onsite, as transporting radioactive waste carries severe risks. Our state's ongoing challenges with the nuclear waste stored at the former Fort St. Vrain plant should be enough to dissuade Colorado Legislators from pursuing this radioactive energy option. Nuclear meltdowns such as Chernobyl or Fukushima, while exceedingly rare, should also dissuade Legislators from pursuing nuclear power. The unfortunate reality is that climate change will lead to an increase in natural disasters in our state, from floods to fires, which have the potential to create an exponentially more terrifying catastrophe if radioactive material is present.

Nuclear power is not "carbon-free." In reality, mining and enriching uranium, producing and transporting cement, constructing nuclear reactors, and processing and transporting waste all contribute to the upstream carbon costs of nuclear energy. The carbon footprint of nuclear energy development is significantly larger than the carbon costs associated with wind and solar energy production. By including nuclear energy under the legal definition of "clean energy," and thus grouping it alongside wind, solar, and other renewable energy sources, the Colorado Legislature risks diverting much-needed energy transition funds away from proven renewable energy technologies, and towards a risky, expensive, and unsustainable technology.

Nuclear power also relies on the exploitation of resources that our communities cannot afford, including water and uranium. Nuclear reactors are by far the most water-intensive way to produce energy. A single 300 megawatt small modular reactor operating at 90% capacity would withdraw between 160 million and 390 million gallons of water daily. Colorado is experiencing a water crisis, and our state cannot afford this level of fresh water usage.

Nuclear power plants also require uranium which must be mined and enriched. Marginalized communities bear a disproportionate burden of the environmental and health impacts of uranium mining and enriching. During the Cold War, over 500 uranium mines were established on Navajo land, and, due to lasting contamination in the land, air, and water from these mines, the communities that surround them still experience high rates of lung and bone cancer, kidney failure, birth defects, among other health impacts from uranium exposure.

The bottom line is that nuclear energy corporations and major utility companies would reap all the profits, while Colorado's frontline communities would absorb all the risks, health impacts, and environmental contamination. Given the rapidly diminishing costs in renewable technologies which have shown great promise in tackling the climate crisis, a transition to nuclear power would be a ludicrous waste of time, money, and energy for our state. **Please veto HB25-1040.**

Sincerely,

350 Colorado
Arvadans for Progressive Action
Brown and Black Parents United Foundation
Clean Energy Action
Colorado Coalition for a Livable Climate **(Representing 53 Colorado organizations)**
Colorado Renewable Energy Society
Conservation Colorado
Equinox Consultancy LLC
GreenFaith Boulder County
GreenLatinos
Mi Familia Vota
Naropa University and the Joanna Macy Center for Resilience and Regeneration
Our Sacred Earth
Physicians for Social Responsibility Colorado
Pueblo's Energy Future
Renée Millard Chacon, Commerce City Council Member
Renewable Energy Owners Coalition of America
Rocky Mountain NAACP CO-MT-WY State Conference
Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center
Roots to Resilience
Sierra Club Colorado
Snake River Alliance
Sunrise Movement COS
Womxn From The Mountain