MOUNTAIN TOWNS 2030

SV26 SESSION ONE-PAGER
CLIMATE SOLUTIONS SUMMIT · SUN VALLEY, IDAHO

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Advancing a Climate Agenda in Today's Political Landscape: A State Roundtable

Sonja Macys, Routt County Commissioner and President, Colorado Communities for Climate Action (moderator); Josh Slotnick, Missoula County Commissioner, Montana; Jacob Smith, Executive Director, Colorado Communities for Climate Action

With little help from Washington, and in some states none from the capitol, local governments are finding other ways to move climate work. Missoula County and Colorado Communities for Climate Action (CC4CA) shared how relationships, coalitions and careful framing win at legislatures and utility commissions.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. **Relationships come before asks.** In red Montana, Missoula County works through the state association of counties: show up again and again, talk about shared issues, and earn trust before raising priorities.
2. **Coalitions multiply local voice.** One county testifying moves few legislators. A coalition representing about a third of Colorado almost always has a member's legislator on the committee.
3. **Pooling resources opens the utility commission.** PUC cases take money, legal and technical skill. As a coalition, CC4CA helped beat back a big Xcel rate increase and much of a proposed gas buildout.
4. **Control what you can control.** Missoula County put solar on its detention center, its side of the meter. A local investor took the tax credit; the county buys power at a fixed rate and gets the system later.
5. **Grant help pays for itself.** CC4CA's grant concierge helped members land 168 grants worth $1.3 billion. Routt County is putting $500,000 into retrofitting old subdivisions for connectivity.

WHAT LOCAL OFFICIALS CAN DO

- ☐ **Work through your state counties association or municipal league.** Let colleagues from other regions carry messages your name would sink.
- ☐ **Be excellent on one shared issue.** Build credibility on property taxes, water, fire or infrastructure funding.
- ☐ **Partner with nearby cities on power deals.** Missoula County, Missoula and Bozeman pledged to buy power so NorthWestern Energy could finance new renewables.
- ☐ **Offer local impact stories to your attorney general.** Detailed examples from many communities strengthen legal challenges to federal actions.
- ☐ **Do the right thing, don't say the wrong thing.** Talk about saving money, adding capacity and spending tax dollars well.
- ☐ **Don't go first on controversial moves.** Let a politically aligned county lead, then follow.
- ☐ **Start an informal peer network.** An Oregon valley's mayors meet for brown-bag lunches; when needed, they signed a joint letter within 24 hours.

BY THE NUMBERS

~1/3
Of Colorado's population in CC4CA member jurisdictions

168
Grants won with help from CC4CA's grant concierge

$1.3B
Value of those grants

6.5 years
Missoula's work so far on its renewable power deal

WATCH OUT FOR

- ! Missoula's voter-approved local option gas tax was targeted by the legislature the next session after the county went first and testified alone.
- ! About 30% or fewer of state legislators have served in local government, so be ready to explain what counties and towns actually do.

RESOURCES

Colorado Communities for Climate Action
cc4ca.org

Montana Association of Counties
mtcounties.org

Urban Sustainability Directors Network
usdn.org

Colorado 1041 powers
County review of projects of statewide importance

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