MOUNTAIN TOWNS 2030

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

PANEL · TUE, OCT 13 · 8:45-9:20 AM

Mayors Leading Through the Headwinds

Lauren McLean, Mayor, City of Boise; Kate Wright, Executive Director, Climate Mayors

Boise Mayor Lauren McLean and Climate Mayors Executive Director Kate Wright on how cities keep making climate progress with little state or federal help. Boise frames climate work as affordability, health and love of place, and keeps building through preemption in a Dillon's rule state.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. **Climate action and economic growth go together.** Across the Climate Mayors network, cities grew GDP 11% while cutting fossil fuel use 3.5% coming out of COVID, even with population growth, and kept adding climate policies under every administration.
2. **Treat climate work as an affordability play.** Climate Mayors researchers found Boise's 2024 transportation fuel use was 34% lower than the rest of the U.S., saving residents an average of $838: money back for childcare and other household needs.
3. **Geothermal is a bipartisan opening.** Boise passed a state bill to use donated water rights, and a Bloomberg Mayors Challenge award extends geothermal heat to affordable housing, saving up to $1,000 a year in homes near parks and transit.
4. **Durable work is what's in the ground.** Goals and policies can change with an election, so don't let perfect get in the way of good, and celebrate small wins. Housing, parks, open space and restored habitat stay built.
5. **Mitigation is adaptation.** A clean power strategy hedges against rising costs. Boise's adaptation report predicted hotter, smokier summers, and every city department now works on both prevention and adaptation.

WHAT LOCAL OFFICIALS CAN DO

- ☐ **Set goals, even if you aren't sure you can meet them.** Then own it if you miss. It's hard for elected officials, but without aggressive goals Boise wouldn't be as close as it is.
- ☐ **Build coalitions of the willing.** Legislators on geothermal, foundations on housing, willing businesses, and nonprofits like the Treasure Valley Tree Canopy Network and its tree captains.
- ☐ **Build every new city building all-electric.** Boise's new fire and police stations are fully electric, and electrifying the fleet cuts fuel costs and ties the city to cleaner power.
- ☐ **Talk about people and place, not technical climate terms.** Hotter summers, higher bills, water running early, shared trails and rivers. Getting too technical makes it harder.
- ☐ **Ask residents what savings would mean.** Boise interviewed affordable housing residents about utility bills: $1,000 a year can mean weeks of groceries. Projected savings excited residents.
- ☐ **Give residents a way to take part.** Residents asked to help, so Boise built Keep Boise Cool, an online quiz that suggests personal steps toward city goals.
- ☐ **Link housing and climate in zoning.** Make it easier to build homes in people-scaled neighborhoods along transit, so workers live near jobs instead of driving in.

BY THE NUMBERS

11%
GDP growth in Climate Mayors cities coming out of COVID

3.5%
Drop in fossil fuel use over the same period

350+
Mayors in the network, in 47 states, 70M people

$838
Avg. 2024 savings per Boise resident, lower fuel use

Up to $1,000
Yearly heat savings per home, Boise geothermal housing

$570M
Clean water and climate bond, backed by 82% (2021)

WATCH OUT FOR

- ! In Dillon's rule Idaho, the legislature stripped Boise's energy codes and EV-ready rule for multifamily housing once adopted. Boise weighs when a lawsuit is worth it.
- ! Escalating costs forced Boise to pause water recycling, which residents strongly want, even after 82% of voters approved the $570M clean water and climate bond in 2021.

RESOURCES

Climate Mayors
Peer network of 350+ U.S. mayors in 47 states; its Climate Mayors Economy report tracks local savings, and it shares communication guidance for tough settings

City of Boise Climate Action
cityofboise.org/programs/climate-action

U.S. Climate Alliance
Coalition of 24 governors, now partnered with Climate Mayors; usclimatealliance.org

Bloomberg Mayors Challenge
Award funding Boise's geothermal extension to deeply affordable housing near Boise State, a U.S. first for multifamily housing

Watch this and every SV26 session recording
mt2030.org/sv26sessions · Use the attendee password.

Summarized from the session recording and presenter slides. Figures are as presented; confirm with presenters before citing.

CONTACTS

Lauren McLean
Mayor, City of Boise

Kate Wright
Executive Director, Climate Mayors