

# COLORADO NEWSLINE

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## Colorado mountain towns call on Biden, Haaland to tackle climate crisis

By **Chase Woodruff**  
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Oil and gas infrastructure is seen on the Roan Plateau in far western Colorado. (Courtesy of [EcoFlight](#))

As communities in Colorado’s high country continue to deal with a [worsening drought](#) and the lingering impacts of [2020’s historic wildfires](#), local leaders are calling on President-elect Joe Biden’s administration to take “bold action” to tackle the climate crisis and protect America’s public lands.

“The Biden administration and the new Congress should prioritize adopting reforms that will reverse the devastating impacts that the ‘energy dominance’ agenda has had on Western mountain communities over the past four years,” reads a [letter](#) sent Thursday to Biden and his Department of the Interior

secretary nominee, New Mexico Rep. Deb Haaland. The letter was sent by the Mountain Pact, a coalition of more than 100 elected officials from rural towns in Colorado and other Western states.

Singers include the mayors of Avon, Basalt, Carbondale, Frisco, Glenwood Springs, Longmont, Ophir, Ridgway, Salida, Silverton and Telluride.

Officials are urging Biden to follow through on a commitment to [halt new oil and gas leases](#) on public lands, reform the royalty system for existing projects and undo a slew of environmental rollbacks overseen by outgoing Interior Secretary and Colorado native David Bernhardt.

And with many tourism-dependent mountain towns suffering the one-two punch of COVID-19 and an unprecedented wildfire season in 2020, leaders called on Congress and the incoming administration to target relief for mountain communities in future COVID-19 relief legislation.

“2020 was a hard year for Glenwood Springs,” Mayor Jonathan Godes said in a statement. “Our community has been dramatically impacted by a warming planet and the extraction industry. Our Federal government should prioritize helping small communities and businesses across the country, and focus on the new renewable energy economy.”



**Chase Woodruff**

Reporter Chase Woodruff covers the environment, the economy and other stories for Colorado Newsline.