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Senator Joyce Foster on the Environment

1. What is your position on American's energy and climate situation?

-America is moving in the right direction with Obama's "New Energy Economy." Colorado is one of the foremost leaders in developing, encouraging, and building new energy technology. House Bill 1281, requires that our state use twenty percent renewable energy by the year 2020, Senate Bill 51 requires all new government buildings meet a high standard of energy efficiency, and this year's passing of strong oil and gas regulations to protect the environment are just a few examples of Colorado's efforts. We are making huge strides in Colorado towards more renewable energy and a cleaner environment. With that said, these are only initial steps that will require continued effort. It is important that we continue to raise public awareness and concern about climate change; mass support will provide the political as well as economic will to invest in green legislation and technology. I believe that Colorado as well as the nation must continue to pass legislation that promotes green technology/economy, recycling, reduction in energy usage, and reuse.

2. What do you think Colorado should do to address this situation and seize the opportunity it presents?

-With a new administration that has a strong focus on renewable energy and building a stronger economy around green technology there is a real opportunity to invest in this sector and to make huge strides in cost, efficiency, and climate change. Colorado is a leader in this area and must continue its leadership role for other states and the country to follow. We have to continue encouraging new alternative energy companies to move into our state for research and development purposes. We also need to continue building renewable energy like solar, geothermal, hydro, and wind power to show green progress. Colorado is known for its mountains and its outdoor beauty, with strong government, business, and science leaders we can not only protect our environment but we can also brand Colorado as the future of energy production.

3. What do you see as the roadblocks to Congress taking that action?

-Renewable Energy is a relatively young science and has several obstacles: price, infrastructure, and efficiency. Right now it is less expensive to continue using fossil fuels than buying and developing renewable energy. Fossil fuels are cheap to

extract compared to the costs behind research and building solar panels, windmills, and geothermal power plants. The power grid in America is also designed for fossil fuels and there will need to be a complete overhaul of transmission plants and lines to move renewable energy from the source to demand. Lastly, solar panels and windmills specifically are relatively inefficient in extracting energy from their renewable sources.

4. What can citizens do to support your effort to overcome those roadblocks?

-The simple but ultimately complicated solution to the roadblocks is continued investment: community investment, financial investment, and scientific investment. As long as people keep voicing their concern and desire to see more green action, government and business will continue to move in the right direction. Putting more money into building renewable energy and transmission infrastructure will lead to more and less expensive clean energy. Lastly, more research will lead to more efficient renewable energy technology and again cheaper and more widespread use of clean energy.