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America's energy and climate situation presents both challenges and opportunities. The challenges include limiting greenhouse gas emissions to minimize the problems associated with global warming. We also face the challenge of meeting our future energy needs, but we can succeed if we can manage our demand and develop new sources of energy. The opportunities are tremendous, if we can devise the climate and energy strategies at home and market them, instead of allowing other nations to do so and reap the benefits.

Colorado is uniquely poised to be a national leader in new energy efforts, and possibly to become a major player on the international stage. For starters, we rank sixth among the nation's states in solar resources, and 11th in wind energy resources. Gov. Ritter's New Energy Economy effort has helped us attract new clean energy businesses, as have our research institutions, devoted citizens and business communities. I think many state leaders are on the right track in 2009, but we must continue to make investments in clean energy infrastructure and education if we want to keep the momentum that we currently enjoy.

With President Obama in the White House and a Democratic-controlled Congress, I have high hopes for the government in Washington to make great progress on energy and climate. Still, I believe that citizens must use their powers of innovation and persuasion to make the changes happen, or to push the nation beyond attempting to achieve modest goals. Energy and climate are critical national and worldwide concerns, so we'll need all hands and minds on deck.