



## Climate activists eye ballot

### Fee proposed on home emissions

By Todd Hartman

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Colorado homeowners and businesses would pay a fee on global warming emissions - with the money set aside for renewable-energy projects - under a proposal that may go before voters in November.

Clean Energy Progress, an activist group, unveiled its proposed ballot language Wednesday. Under its plan, a Colorado household with average energy use would pay about \$2.50 more a month on its bill. A big-box retailer would pay roughly \$1,300 a month more.

The fee would raise an estimated \$180 million a year to be invested in various energy-efficiency and renewable projects, as well as those designed to capture and store carbon emissions, the group said.

"Colorado voters understand that renewable energy is key to our state's economic future and our energy security," said Tom McKinnon, a Colorado School of Mines professor with Clean Energy Progress, in a statement.

The program is similar to one approved by voters in Boulder in 2006. A tax on electricity, but not natural gas consumption, added roughly \$16 a year to a homeowner's power bill and \$46 for businesses.

At its Web site, CleanEnergyProgress.org, the group said the statewide program would result in a "net savings" of about \$600 million a year because of the cut in energy consumption from efficiency investments.

Homeowners could benefit by availing themselves of a home energy audit, subsidized or paid for in full by the program, McKinnon said. Such an audit would find easy savings of \$10 a month, far more than the \$2.50 fee, he added.

Republican Sen. Steve Johnson, of Fort Collins, predicted his constituents would be wary of paying any additional fees or taxes right now.

"I do think there's a lot of interest among citizens in doing these responsible environmental programs, but I think we have to be careful," Johnson said. "We've got to make sure whatever we do is going to pay off, and make sure we're not throwing money behind a popular, politically correct program . . . that doesn't help the environment."

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