

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

February 12, 2026

The Honorable Jared Polis  
Governor  
State of Colorado  
200 E. Colfax Avenue  
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Governor Polis and Members of the Public Utility Commission,

I write to express my increasing concerns regarding the recent power shutoffs across Colorado counties – including counties that I represent – amidst severe weather conditions. While I understand these Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS) are a last resort to reducing wildfire risks, and that providers make efforts to limit the scope and frequency of these events, the harm and disruption they inflict on Colorado residents is far too great a price to consistently pay. Therefore, I respectfully urge the State to collaborate with Xcel Energy, along with other providers, to ensure continued approval of robust Wildfire Mitigation Plans while also giving serious considerations to alternative proactive measures, including targeted undergrounding and monitoring technologies, to harden Colorado’s energy infrastructure against wildfire risk and avoid weather-related outages like this in the future.

The energy policies being promulgated by the Governor’s office and the PUC are directly affecting Coloradan families who cannot afford to keep up with self-inflicted rate hikes. A 2024 report from the Colorado Energy Office found that due to decarbonization mandates, the State was pursuing the most expensive energy mix possible – costing more than \$17 billion dollars above the already expensive \$43 billion “zero carbon” baseline. Not only does this result in higher costs for ratepayers, but it also diverts valuable resources away from infrastructure-hardening measures. Rather than burdening energy companies with excessive mandates that raise costs, the State should focus on working with utility providers to ensure they have the proper tools, resources, and permitting needed to improve the reliability of the electrical grid.

Since December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, Xcel Energy has initiated three PSPS that have impacted counties such as Boulder, Clear Creek, Jefferson, Weld, and Larimer counties. Each of these events impacted thousands of customers across wide swaths of the Front Range. As the representative for Weld, Adams, and Larimer counties in Congress, I can personally attest that many of my constituents in these areas are rural farmers, seniors, and businessowners who rely on their electric utilities for everything from drinking water to medical care. I’ve heard from countless residents in my community who are worried about the effects of continued blackouts on their daily lives and, ultimately, their survival. My constituents cannot afford to live with blackouts on a reoccurring basis. Municipal chambers of commerce have reported these shut offs result in local economies losing millions of dollars. Every second the blackouts are in place is another second that mom-and-pop shops lose out on revenue, seniors must scramble for medical care, and homeowners struggle to keep their families warm and safe.

PSPS events are not an inevitable fact of life. Across other Western states, utility providers have been able to significantly reduce the frequencies of these events through common-sense investments into hardening transmission lines and transformers. As a result, in many states these kinds of outages are activated only as a last resort, rather than repeatedly over just a few months. We could achieve this success here in Colorado if the Governor's Office and the PUC championed policies that incentivize and assist utilities in hardening their infrastructure while also cutting red tape for the permitting associated with these projects.

I strongly urge you to work with Xcel Energy and other providers to collaboratively assist them in strengthening their infrastructure. Coloradans deserve reliable energy infrastructure that safeguards communities from hazardous events and provides stability.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gabe Evans". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Congressman Gabe Evans  
Colorado's 8<sup>th</sup> Congressional District