

**House Education**

**04/04/2024 01:30 PM**

**SB24-014 Seal of Climate Literacy Diploma Endorsement**

**Typed Text of Testimony Submitted**

<b>Name, Position, Representing</b>	<b>Typed Text of Testimony</b>
Natalie Obleton For themselves	Written Testimony of Natalie Obleton Colorado House of Representatives Bill SB24-014  Good Afternoon to all members of the committee,  It is my honor to be able to testify for the Colorado State bill SB24-014. I have been the Director of Outreach for a local environmental club at my high school for the past year. Through this role, I have worked with people of all ages and have truly seen all sides of what environmentalism is and what it means to people in the community. Colorado is such a beautiful state and it has been such a privilege to have grown up here. Since I was raised here, I naturally grew a love for the environment. Hiking, gardening, eating local meat from local butchers, watching 4H competitions, and fishing. Many people in Colorado are similar to me and have grown a natural love and admiration for our environment. This bill could be revolutionary in the way that schools approach education. I believe it is so important for children to be able to explore what they admire and in turn, be able to use their education in that aspect to improve the world. The job field within environmentalism is growing so much. The field is so broad and under it lie so many opportunities for future generations. When applying the bill SB24-014 to schools it can allow children to expand fields such as agriculture and horticulture. This bill can help children learn how to continue to use the earth's resources while still respecting the earth for future generations. Most importantly this bill allows children autonomy in their education, the opportunity to explore their interests, and the ability to expand America's job market. America is the land of the free and giving our children and future children the opportunity to practice that freedom is truly inspiring.

<p>Miles Hoffman For Boulder Valley School District</p>	<p>Thank you, Representative McLachlan and members of the House Education Committee. My name is Miles Hoffman, I live in Superior, CO, and I'm the Sustainability and Energy Analyst for Boulder Valley School District. I wholeheartedly support Senate Bill 24-014.</p> <p>In late 2021, we experienced a devastating climate event as the Marshall wildfire ripped through our Town and broader community. This event displaced thousands of residents, many of whom are students across the District. While the subject of, and impacts stemming from Climate Change are nothing new to our students and families, this was the first time many of them had experienced such personal loss at this scale.</p> <p>Students have become increasingly more focused on solving the climate crisis. They understand that they will face the most dire impacts as they age, and will be responsible for protecting our planet now and in the future. They are facing mental health challenges due to the fear of climate events. Students representing the Fairview High School Net Zero Club have spoken at our school board meetings for a year now, demanding change, and ultimately succeeding in passing the Green New Deal resolution in late 2023. Part of this resolution and our sustainability planning is to create pathways to green jobs and embed climate education throughout our curriculum.</p> <p>On a personal note, my daughter will start Kindergarten this fall, 2024. By creating a Seal of Climate Literacy for the State, you're providing the incentive and structure to support her as she progresses through each year to apply critical thinking to climate solutions and civic action. When she graduates and receives this endorsement, it will help give her the confidence to bring this understanding to whatever career she chooses, to be a changemaker and improving the lives and wellbeing of those around her.</p> <p>It is for these, and many more reasons that I encourage you to vote in favor of Senate Bill 24-014. Thank the committee for the opportunity to provide this testimony.</p>
<p>Tiffany Boyd For themselves</p>	<p>Dear Education Committee,</p>

	<p>My name is Tiffany Boyd and I am writing to you today to strongly encourage you to support the Seal of Climate Literacy diploma endorsement.</p> <p>I taught in the public schools in Colorado for 27 years, and after retiring, I am back in the classrooms. Together with a cohort of retired teachers, we are supporting teachers and kids to connect with local climate action in their communities. As students learn about climate solutions, they are taking action on climate justice, flood mitigation, fire mitigation, decarbonization efforts, regenerative agricultural practices, soil health, and addressing urban heat by increasing our tree canopies.</p> <p>As our planet warms, students deserve to participate in building their hope and agency as they create climate resilience in our communities.</p> <p>At public testimony in January, some senators were concerned that climate literacy is a secondary skill that should wait until after reading, writing, and math scores are mastered. However, capable Colorado teachers build student skills with the CONTENT that students care about, and students care about the climate and their livable future. Also, the topics of climate literacy and climate justice intersect throughout Colorado's K-12 standards.</p> <p>In working with K-12 students, I have witnessed an unprecedented amount of motivation as students research, write, calculate, and act upon their learning about climate change. Also, in our post Covid world, school districts are spending thousands of dollars to address student mental health. Many students report that their despair and concerns about our ailing water, air, and eco-systems, are affecting their motivation to learn.</p> <p>Engaging in local climate solutions not only addresses their mental health, but creates a ripple effect of hope and agency throughout their communities as multi-generational groups work together on issues that impact us all.</p> <p>Additionally, this bill encourages districts to create programming that prepares students to meet the needs of shifting jobs as our state's economy transitions away from fossil fuels to clean renewable</p>
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	<p>energy. Districts can elevate workforce development for electricians, regenerative farmers, arborists, solar panel installers, sustainability managers, and more.</p> <p>I urge your enthusiastic YES vote today on the Seal of Climate Literacy as you also say YES to preparing students for their future.</p> <p>Thank you!</p>
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>> SENATE BILL 24-014

# Seal of Climate Literacy Diploma Endorsement

The environment in Colorado is changing and youth need tools and competencies to help their communities adapt and be resilient.

**SB 24-014 will create the Seal of Climate Literacy Diploma Endorsement to prepare high school students to lead in addressing the economic and social impacts of a changing climate.**

>> BILL SPONSORS

Sen. Chris Hansen & Rep. Barbara McLachlan

## Why a Seal of Climate Literacy?

Students, educators, schools, and school districts around the state recognize that Colorado is experiencing significant environmental changes. Colorado industry needs a workforce that is prepared to adapt to and address new challenges in energy, agriculture, forestry, outdoor recreation, and other fields that are transitioning in the face of a changing climate.

The Seal of Climate Literacy diploma endorsement is granted to students who have gained skills and knowledge on the impacts of climate change. This endorsement goes beyond the classroom; through a combination of coursework and experiential

learning, it's about equipping high school learners with the personal agency to comprehend and adapt to the impacts of climate change, benefitting both them and their communities.



## Requirements for the Seal

- 1 **Two (2) courses in the area of climate literacy** including:
  - >> A high school physical science, life science, or earth science course. The course may be an existing high school graduation requirement.
  - >> Concurrent enrollment, career and technical education courses, or relevant high school course with content on climate literacy principles
- 2 **A final experiential learning project** that is approved by the LEP. The project is supported, and facilitated by a climate literacy experiential learning provider

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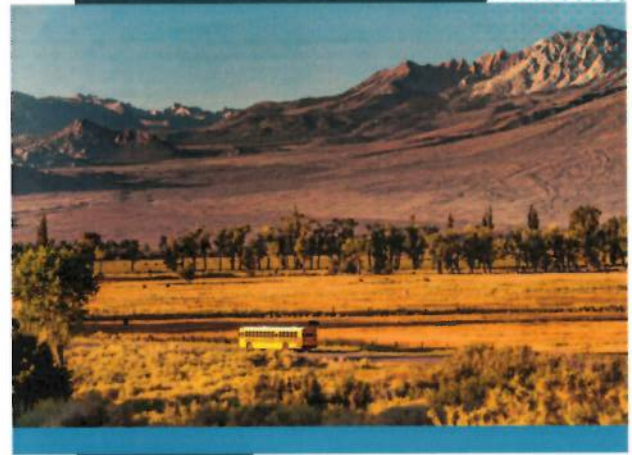
**PROJECTED GROWTH IN  
GREEN JOBS IN COLORADO  
OVER NEXT FIVE YEARS**

Source: Working Nation, 2021

## Inspired by Rural Colorado

The Seal is responsive to the needs of rural communities who are disproportionately impacted by the impacts of climate change. School districts, institutes of higher education, and industries throughout rural Colorado are partnering to create innovative educational opportunities that excite and challenge our state's youth. Their goal is to ensure that the next generation has access to well-paying jobs in their communities and the ability to be stewards of Colorado's natural resources.

For more information on innovative work by rural communities visit: [www.lyracolorado.org/climatarium](http://www.lyracolorado.org/climatarium).



## FAQs

### What is the benefit to students?

The Seal was developed as a way for students to signal their commitment to and understanding of how they play a role in addressing climate change in their communities and beyond. It helps channel the passions and interests of a student around the climate crisis into discrete learning opportunities culminating in an experiential learning project.

### Who confers the seal?

Local education providers (LEPs) are responsible for conferring the Seal, which could include a school district, board of cooperative services (BOCES), district charter high school, or institute charter high school. The LEPs may collaborate with local businesses, nonprofit organizations, industry leaders, and institutions of higher education to support students' climate literacy.

### Why experiential learning?

Studies show that the most impactful way to engage youth around climate issues is through hands-on learning in their own communities. Youth may feel overwhelmed by the scale and consequences of climate change. Completing a project relevant to their own life experience can not only expand academic and professional opportunities but it may also support a young person's mental health and wellbeing.

An LEP-approved experiential learning project could be a soil management experiment on a student's family farm, an apprenticeship installing solar panels, an internship measuring snowpack levels in a mountain community, or an analysis of the effects of carbon reduction from trees in a city park. A project could also be a painting, a short story, a digital film, a social media campaign, or however a student feels able to make an impact and difference.

*LEPs may approve nonprofits, local businesses, school clubs, and other community and education partners to work with students' on their experiential learning projects.*





## Key Definitions

**"Climate literacy"** means an understanding of the essential principles of the earth's climate system, assessing scientifically credible climate information, learning to communicate about the climate in a meaningful manner, and making informed and responsible decisions regarding actions that may affect the climate.

**"Green skills"** means the knowledge, abilities, values, and attitudes to live in, develop, and support a sustainable and resource-efficient society.

**"Technical green skills"** means skills that fulfill the requirements of green jobs and support the transition to a low-carbon sustainable economy.

**"Experiential learning project"** means a student project that focuses on the effects of climate change in the student's local community. The student shall present the final project to an individual or group identified and selected by the student and the climate literacy experiential learning provider or granting local education provider.

**"Experiential learning provider"** could be an LEP, school, school club, local nonprofit, or a business focused on green skills. The LEP may partner with organizations to support the student's experiential learning and fulfill the requirements of the Seal of Climate Literacy.

EXAMPLE OF A

## Student Journey



Jaime takes **earth science** freshman year as a part of district graduation requirements.

Jaime completes a **skilled trades CTE pathway** at their high school.

Jaime completes an **internship** with a local solar installation company.

Jaime's district confers the **Seal of Climate Literacy** to show mastery of green skills.





To Representative McLachlan and committee members, I am Andrew Atkinson and I am writing this testimonial representing Good Trouble. I urge you to vote yes on SB24-014, Seal of Climate Literacy Diploma Endorsement.

As of today there is currently a significant gap in climate change education across Colorado that declines to reflect the severity of the problem at hand and is failing to educate youth on the issues of the world they've been born into, and the issues they will be faced with solving in their own futures. It's crucial that students understand these issues and learn how their individual actions contribute to them, or can help support positive change. In my own experience my education on the topic that I've received through my schooling has been nearly nothing, and I've had to resort to educating myself outside of schools to begin to understand the topic of climate change. This is something which I've encouraged many of my peers to do as well, but without proper incentive the majority of students are unwilling to dedicate their own time outside of class to teach themselves the subject.

This bill will take important steps in providing a solution to these issues. By authorizing local education providers to grant this endorsement to graduating students who demonstrate mastery in climate literacy and attain green skills or technical green skills, the bill not only incentivizes students to engage with this vital subject matter but also ensures that they are equipped to become informed and responsible global citizens.

Furthermore, as the global economy shifts towards sustainability and renewable energy, there is a growing demand for workers with expertise in green technologies and practices. By incorporating green skills training into the high school curriculum, this bill helps prepare students for the jobs of the future and ensures that they are competitive in a rapidly evolving job market.

Additionally, by requiring students to complete a final experiential learning project, facilitated by a climate literacy experiential learning provider, the education students have received in the classroom is reinforced and students are given the opportunity to foster real-world problem solving abilities that will be crucial in their future careers.

The issue of the climate crisis is one that will continue to grow increasingly more worrying as we march into the future, which is why I urge you to support SB24-014 and take decisive action to advance climate literacy in our schools. By equipping our students with the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to understand and address climate change, we can empower them to build a more sustainable and resilient future for generations to come.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,  
Andrew Atkinson  
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