

January 28, 2022

Honorable Spencer J. Cox  
350 N. State Street, Suite 200  
P.O. Box 142220  
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-2220

Dear Governor Cox:

As members of Utah's business community, we are writing to thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the Utah Energy and Innovation Plan, and to emphasize our support for bold air quality and climate solutions. We appreciate your leadership and attention to vital energy issues, including economic development in rural Utah, and electric vehicle infrastructure. The Energy and Innovation Plan is an exciting opportunity to expand on these and other energy issues facing our community.

Energy is at the center of our economy and quality of life, and we as business leaders see immense opportunity to ensure Utah remains a leader in the new energy era. To that end, below we have included ideas for your consideration in the state's Energy and Innovation Plan.

**The Energy and Innovation Plan is an opportunity to plan for and address the need to decarbonize our energy supply:** Future-proofing our energy supply by addressing climate risks should be a central goal of the Energy and Innovation Plan. Energy resource decisions are long-term investments and must be considered with a full understanding of the costs and risks of climate change, including the risk of stranded investments. We urge you to make reducing emissions and preparing for climate impacts a high priority in the Energy and Innovation Plan.

**Energy efficiency, renewable energy, and energy storage are economic opportunities for Utah:** With a global energy transition underway, the Energy and Innovation Plan should prioritize the development of our abundant renewable energy and energy storage resources in tandem with energy efficiency upgrades to our homes and buildings. Utah is blessed with a variety of renewable resources, and we currently have over 30,000 Utahns employed in the energy efficiency field. Furthermore, plans to develop hydrogen resources in central Utah offer our state an opportunity to be a major energy storage and transportation hub in the American west. These demonstrate that Utah can and should continue to be an energy powerhouse this century.

**Leverage new national resources to make generational investments in energy infrastructure:** Utah has a unique opportunity to harness federal funds from the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to make generational investments in our energy and transportation infrastructure. These investments will improve local air quality, reduce congestion, and set Utah up to succeed in the new energy economy. We encourage the Energy and Innovation Plan to highlight how Utah can take advantage of these new federal funds to improve and renew our infrastructure in a way that deals with 21<sup>st</sup>-century challenges.

**Build a modern, resilient, and flexible electricity system:** More extreme weather and the rapid growth of distributed energy resources mean that it is time for Utah and our nation to modernize our electricity grid to keep pace with current climate challenges and new technologies. Our electricity grid can be significantly more flexible and resilient, which will ensure a reliable, low cost, and low emission energy supply. Achieving this means expanding our transmission system by embracing energy storage and distributed energy resources like rooftop solar, energy efficiency, and demand response, to create a modern, flexible energy system.

**Ensure that all Utah communities thrive in a low carbon economy:** As we decarbonize our economy and clean our air, it is critical that all Utah communities - *especially our rural communities* - can adapt and thrive. We encourage a collaborative effort with rural communities and communities of color so that all Utahns have an opportunity to shape our energy and environmental future. We applaud the Cox administration for being proactive in seeking to provide new opportunities to Utah's energy communities.

Thank you for your consideration of these ideas. Please consider us a resource as your administration works on innovative energy, air quality, and climate strategies.

Sincerely,

**Scott Anderson**  
President and CEO  
Zions Bank

**Luigi Resta**  
President and CEO  
rPlus Energies

**Pat Jones**  
CEO  
Women's Leadership Institute

**Davis Smith**  
Founder and CEO  
Cotopaxi

**Mark Miller**  
Trustee  
The Mark and Kathie Miller Foundation

**Sunny Washington**  
CEO  
Utah Tech Leads PAC

**Mark Pittman**  
CEO  
Blyncsy

**Chris Workman**  
Director  
Willdan

**Gaby Poirier**  
Managing Director  
Rio Tinto Kennecott

**Sarah Wright**  
Executive Director  
Utah Clean Energy

Cc: Jon Pierpont, Chief of Staff to Governor Spencer Cox  
Thom Carter, Energy Advisor to the Governor and Executive Director of the Office of Energy Development