

# Ensuring Colorado's Innovation Future

## **An Open Letter to Governor Polis, Senator and Governor Candidate Bennet, Senator Hickenlooper, Attorney General and Governor Candidate Weiser, and Denver Mayor Johnston —**

Colorado stands at an inflection point for its technology economy and business climate. We — a bipartisan coalition of Colorado tech and business leaders representing founders, investors, and operators across the state, who love the great state of Colorado, want to build our companies and lives here, and want nothing more than for Colorado to succeed — are deeply concerned that the direction we are heading threatens the long-term prosperity of the people who call Colorado home. We write to you today to express our concern as well as offer our help.

Over the past two decades, Colorado has built a nationally recognized technology and innovation ecosystem spanning software and AI, quantum, aerospace and defense, digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, advanced manufacturing, energy and climate innovation, content creation and creative tech, life sciences including biotech and medtech, agtech and regenerative agriculture, natural foods and natural products, and a globally respected outdoor industry. This ecosystem was built by entrepreneurs, risk-takers, research institutions, capital providers, and forward-looking public leadership. This thriving technology ecosystem became the central driver of sustained economic growth and high-quality job creation across our state.

Colorado also benefits from rare and compelling structural advantages: a globally connected international airport; world-class universities and national laboratories; major professional sports franchises; and an unmatched outdoor environment defined by mountains, skiing, climbing, biking, hiking, rivers, and open space — all embedded within a culture centered on health, wellness, and active living. These strengths have historically attracted extraordinarily talented people from across the country and around the world.

Despite the extraordinary progress of the past two decades — and despite these enduring structural advantages — the foundation of Colorado's technology and business leadership is deteriorating.

The highly visible relocation of Palantir's headquarters has brought renewed attention to this issue. But beyond that single headline, we are hearing directly and unequivocally in boardrooms, capital allocation discussions, and private conversations with founders, CEOs, and investors across the country that Colorado is increasingly viewed as a less predictable and less competitive environment for building and scaling technology companies, other growth-oriented businesses, and traditional corporations alike. Other states are actively and successfully courting and enticing Colorado companies and entrepreneurs to relocate, expand, or redirect investment elsewhere by offering clearer policy signals, faster regulatory pathways, and stronger alignment between government and growth.

When business leaders evaluate where to launch their next startup, relocate headquarters, expand manufacturing, or deploy significant capital, Colorado is categorized as carrying structural disadvantages that introduce unnecessary risk. The practical result is that capital, company formation, expansion, and high-quality jobs accrue to competing states instead of to Colorado communities.

We are entering a period of historic technological acceleration. Artificial intelligence is reshaping humanity — transforming how people work, live, learn, and relate to one another, while altering opportunity structures and redefining entire industries. It is accelerating both creation and disruption at a pace and scale unmatched in history. In moments like this, regions with strong, stable, and well-led innovation ecosystems pull decisively ahead. Regions that hesitate, fragment, or send conflicting signals do not simply slow, they lose ground in ways that compound over time and undermine their long-term economic trajectory for decades.

Quantum and space technologies represent similarly formative shifts. Colorado is exceptionally well positioned in both sectors with strengths that span research depth, development capability, private-sector momentum, and growing global leadership. Yet quantum and space tech remain early in their trajectory, and other regions are moving aggressively to secure enduring advantage. Without deliberate and cohesive action, industries Colorado is uniquely positioned to lead will drift from our state and mature elsewhere.

Technology and innovation ecosystems run on confidence and momentum. When momentum is positive, talent attracts talent, capital attracts capital, and company formation compounds. When confidence weakens, the shift begins gradually and then accelerates. The next company is founded elsewhere. Expansion occurs in another state. Leading-edge entrepreneurs and value-add investors choose to live, build, and deploy capital in competing regions. Once negative momentum compounds, reversing it becomes extraordinarily difficult.

Founders, investors, and corporate leaders are mobile; they can build and scale elsewhere.

Our concern is for the people of Colorado — for the teachers and nurses, for skilled tradespeople, restaurateurs and shopkeepers, hotel workers, fitness instructors, and service professionals; for the families who rely on strong schools and healthcare systems; for the students in our public schools and the children growing up in every neighborhood; and for the communities whose economic stability depends on sustained growth and opportunity. A vibrant innovation economy strengthens the systems that serve those most in need and expands the resources available to invest in Colorado's future. When competitiveness erodes, the pain is borne locally and it lingers long after capital has moved on.

This moment extends beyond technology, business, and economics.

The leadership Colorado now needs is the kind that unites people in consequential moments. We have the opportunity to demonstrate that we can hold different political viewpoints while still engaging in respectful, thoughtful, and honest dialogue. We can elevate human relationships above partisan escalation and prioritize long-term prosperity and unity over short-term political pressure and divisiveness.

Some of us identify as Democrats. Some identify as Republicans. Many, like the majority of registered voters in Colorado, identify as Unaffiliated. Regardless of party, we share a common stake in Colorado's future. That reality should inspire humility, not hostility. Colorado has the opportunity to lead differently — to show that strong economic stewardship and strong civic culture are not in tension, but mutually reinforcing.

In light of these realities, we respectfully ask for the following commitments from your leadership, and we stand ready to work in partnership with you to develop and implement them:

1. Articulate and affirm Colorado's intention to lead nationally in technology and innovation.
2. Develop and publicly commit to a bipartisan 20-year strategy to ensure Colorado earns, sustains, and extends its leadership as the premier technology and innovation ecosystem between the coasts.
3. Conduct a thorough and honest assessment of the structural, regulatory, legislative, and rhetorical factors contributing to Colorado being categorized by founders, investors, and business leaders as an environment losing ground to competing states — not only for technology investment and company formation, but also for company retention, headquarters relocation, and inclusion on shortlists for expansion and capital deployment.
4. Use the findings of that assessment to recalibrate public rhetoric in a manner that demonstrates authentic partnership with — and sustained commitment to — innovators, builders, and growth-oriented businesses, restoring confidence among those considering whether to invest, expand, remain, or relocate in Colorado.
5. Implement policy adjustments informed by that assessment to remove barriers and reestablish Colorado as a preferred geography for technology investment, company formation, business expansion, and long-term capital deployment.
6. Lead a candid public dialogue with Coloradans about the essential role of a thriving technology and business ecosystem in supporting schools, healthcare, small businesses, community stability, and long-term economic opportunity.
7. Modernize and streamline land-use, permitting, and development frameworks to significantly increase housing supply and improve affordability through market-driven growth.
8. Align state and municipal leadership to compete cohesively and aggressively for company formation, headquarters relocation, advanced manufacturing expansion, and sustained technology investment.
9. Demonstrate through word and action that Colorado's political leadership can prioritize unity among the people of Colorado, elevate civil discourse, and resist the pull of divisive national partisan narratives.

We are committed to working constructively with you — across parties and across sectors — to ensure that Colorado's technology and innovation ecosystem not only stabilizes and strengthens, but continues to serve the long-term prosperity and well-being of the people and communities of Colorado.

With respect and resolve,

A bipartisan coalition of Colorado technology, business, and civic leaders

**By signing below, I support and endorse the letter titled *Ensuring Colorado's Innovation Future*.**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name

Title, Company

Date: \_\_\_\_\_