

NEWS RELEASE  
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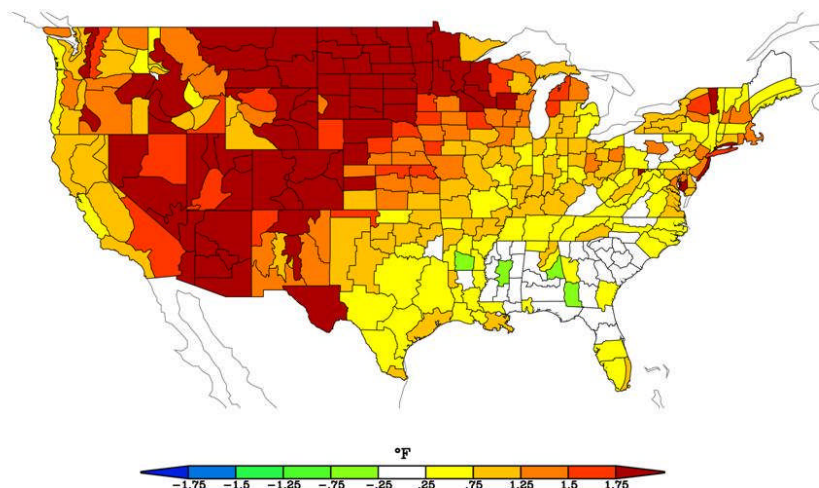
## Saunders Reacts to Assessment of Global Climate Disruption

Louisville, Colorado – Stephen Saunders, president of the Rocky Mountain Climate Organization (RMCO), responding today to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s (IPCC) [Summary for Policymakers](#) from its new assessment of global climate change, said, “The world’s scientists have done their job, and now it’s up to the rest of us. With the overwhelming evidence in today’s consensus statement, it’s time for the remaining holdouts to join those of us who want to solve this problem while we still can.”

Saunders continued, “The climate changes that the IPCC documents for the world are underway in the West, too. We’re getting more heat and less snow here, and that’s part of the pattern of how the climate is being disrupted around the world.”

**More heat** – The IPCC report documents that the warming that has occurred so far has been greater over land than over water, greater in the Northern Hemisphere than in the Southern, and comparable in North America to the warming in other northern continents. Within North America, the West has warmed more than most of the lower 48 states, as shown by the following graphic from a [presentation](#) by Dr. Martin Hoerling, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to RMCO’s Climate Action Panel in November 2006:

Observed Annual Temperature Anomaly 2000-2006



**Less snow** – The IPCC report relies on an observed decrease in snow cover in the Northern Hemisphere as one of its central pieces of evidence that long-term climate change is underway. In the American West, too, there has been an observed decrease in snowpacks, as documented by a September 2005 [report](#) by the Rocky Mountain Climate Organization and Clear the Air. According to an analysis by RMCO in that report, snowpacks in recent years in each of the West’s four major river basins averaged below historic norms:

- In the Columbia River basin, April 1 snowpack levels from 1990 to 2005 have averaged 15% below the historical norm. Thirteen of those 16 years have had below-average snowpacks.
- In the Colorado River basin, snowpack levels from 1990 to 2005 have averaged 11 percent below the historical norm, with 11 out of those 16 years being below average.
- In the Missouri River basin, snowpack levels from 1990 to 2005 have averaged 16 percent below the historical norm, with 14 out of those 16 years below average.
- In the Rio Grande basin, snowpack levels from 1990 to 2005 have averaged 11 percent below the historical norm, with 10 out of those 16 years below average.

This RMCO analysis of western snowpacks is very similar to the IPCC data on declining Northern Hemisphere snow cover, with each comparing spring snow levels to a baseline level of such data for the period 1961-1990.

RMCO is a two-year-old mainstream coalition with 31 partner organizations:

- The City and County of Denver, Colorado’s largest city, and ten other local governments: the City of Fort Collins, City of Boulder, Summit County, City of Aspen, Town of Frisco, Town of Breckenridge, Town of Silverthorne, Town of Dillon, and Town of Telluride.
- Denver Water, the state’s largest water provider.
- Qwest, the state’s largest business, and 10 other businesses: Aspen Skiing Company; Continuum Partners; Domani, LLC; Intrawest Colorado; New Belgium Brewing Company; RBI Strategic Research; Roche Colorado; Westcliffe Publishers; Wild Oats Natural Marketplace; Wright Water Engineers.
- Eight nonprofit organizations: Boulder Community Hospital, Colorado Association for Recycling, Colorado Association of Ski Towns, Colorado Conservation Trust, National Wildlife Federation, the Nature Conservancy of Colorado, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, and Western Resource Advocates.

RMCO has convened a blue-ribbon Climate Action Panel of 35 Colorado leaders that is working to develop recommendations on how to reduce the state’s contribution and vulnerability to climate change.

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