



ALAMEDA LABOR COUNCIL AFL-CIO

A Green New Deal Must Have Strong Labor and Community Provisions

WHEREAS, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has determined humanity has twelve years to act to avert the worst effects of a climate catastrophe; and

WHEREAS, climate change poses an immediate and long-term threat to all working people, our communities and our economic security; and

WHEREAS, workers, communities of color and low-income people suffer disproportionately from environmental degradation and climate change; and

WHEREAS, climate change is already harming working families and vulnerable populations through extreme hurricanes, wildfire, drought and flooding, increased stress on the agricultural sector, health impacts like heat stroke and the spread of infectious diseases; and

WHEREAS, the November 8, 2018, Camp Fires devastated the town of Paradise, caused at least 86 deaths, the most destructive wildfire in history, attributable in part to climate change; and

WHEREAS, all Alameda County communities and residents endured many days of hazardous and toxic smoke from that wildfire, emissions that closed construction work sites, schools, sporting events, and created hazardous health effects; and

WHEREAS, without taking concrete action now to address the climate crisis, the well-being and economic future of generations of people will be severely and irreversibly jeopardized; and

WHEREAS, young climate activists and some members of Congress have successfully put the Green New Deal at the center of national discussion about how to address both the climate crisis and our historic level of economic inequality; and

WHEREAS, if climate action is to address inequality, the labor movement must be at the center of shaping climate policies to include just transition for workers, expand collective bargaining rights and create green union careers, particularly in disadvantaged communities; and

WHEREAS, workers in existing jobs, including firefighters, nurses, construction workers, public transit workers, many in the public sector, and many more are already mitigating the health and environmental effects of climate change, preparing our infrastructure for sea level rise, and advancing California's clean energy economy through a variety of ways; and

WHEREAS, many union members work in sectors, such as construction, transportation, energy, agriculture, manufacturing and production, that will be directly impacted by transitioning to lower greenhouse gas emissions limits; and



ALAMEDA LABOR COUNCIL AFL-CIO

WHEREAS, with the support of the State Building and Construction Trades Council of California, AFL-CIO, California has adopted a goal of 100% renewable and zero-carbon electricity and has demonstrated that clean energy industries can create good, middle-class jobs when linked with collective bargaining agreements; and

WHEREAS, many labor unions, and organizations and community allies have passed resolutions and/or supported bold policies to address the climate crisis and other pressing environmental issues

WHEREAS, the Alameda Labor Council, AFL-CIO, Climate and Environmental Justice Caucus Mission statement affirms the council's "historical support of strong economic, environmental and health protections for working families and their communities, and the urgency to take action to transition to a sustainable, just and clean economy now",

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Alameda Labor Council, AFL-CIO, supports a Green New Deal that expands collective bargaining and ensures the creation of union jobs through card check neutrality agreements, prevailing wages, project labor agreements, enacting the provisions of the Employee Free Choice Act and requiring direct partnerships with joint labor-management apprenticeship programs; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Alameda Labor Council, AFL-CIO, supports a Green New Deal prioritizing projects, union career opportunities and investments in working-class, low-income and communities of color historically and disproportionality impacted by pollution, high unemployment, poverty and environmental injustice; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Alameda Labor Council, AFL-CIO, supports a Green New Deal that includes a strong and binding commitment on all Just Transition issues for workers and communities impacted by the transitioning economy; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Alameda Labor Council, AFL-CIO, supports a Green New Deal that includes Buy America provisions.

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, the Alameda Labor Council, AFL-CIO, will advocate for a Green New Deal in concert with environmental and community partners that support the above provisions.

Adopted by the Alameda Labor Council Executive Committee 03/01/19 & Delegates 03/04/19.

In Solidarity!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Elizabeth Ortega".

Elizabeth Ortega-Toro
Executive Secretary-Treasurer

San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council Resolution in Support of a Green New Deal with Strong Labor Provisions

WHEREAS, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has determined humanity has twelve years to act to avert the worst effects of a climate catastrophe; and

WHEREAS, climate change poses an immediate and long-term threat to all working people, our communities and our economic security; and

WHEREAS, workers, communities of color and low-income people suffer disproportionately from environmental degradation and climate change; and

WHEREAS, climate change is already harming working families and vulnerable populations through extreme hurricanes, wildfire, drought and flooding, increased stress on the agricultural sector, health impacts like heat stroke and the spread of infectious diseases; and

WHEREAS, without taking concrete action now to address the climate crisis, the well-being and economic future of generations of people will be severely and irreversibly jeopardized; and

WHEREAS, young climate activists and some members of Congress have successfully put the Green New Deal at the center of national discussion about how to address both the climate crisis and our historic level of economic inequality; and

WHEREAS, if climate action is to address inequality, the labor movement must be at the center of shaping climate policies to include just transition for workers, expand collective bargaining rights and create green union careers, particularly in disadvantaged communities; and

WHEREAS, workers in existing jobs, including firefighters, nurses, construction workers, public transit workers, many in the public sector, and many more are already mitigating the health and environmental effects of climate change, preparing our infrastructure for sea level rise, and advancing California's clean energy economy through a variety of ways; and

WHEREAS, with the support of the State Building and Construction Trades Council of California, AFL-CIO, California has adopted a goal of 100% renewable and zero-carbon electricity and has demonstrated that clean energy industries can create good, middle-class jobs when linked with collective bargaining agreements; and

WHEREAS, the American Federation of Teachers, the Service Employees International Union, the California Nurses Association, the Labor Network for Sustainability, the Blue Green Alliance, and other labor organizations and their community allies have passed resolutions and/or supported bold policies to address the climate crisis and other pressing environmental issues

WHEREAS, the Environmental Caucus of the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council Environmental Caucus Mission Statement, unanimously approved by the Labor Council Delegates commits the Labor Council to "Pushing for bold new political and policy initiatives that move beyond lip service to effectively address the two great issues of our age—historic economic inequality and climate change."

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council, AFL-CIO supports a Green New Deal that expands collective bargaining and ensures the creation of union jobs through card check neutrality agreements, prevailing wages, project labor agreements, enacting the provisions of the Employee Free Choice Act and requiring direct partnerships with joint labor-management apprenticeship programs; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council, AFL-CIO supports a Green New Deal prioritizing projects, union career opportunities and investments in working-class, low-income and communities of color historically and disproportionality impacted by pollution, high unemployment, poverty and environmental injustice; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council, AFL-CIO supports a Green New Deal that includes a fair and equitable Just Transition for workers impacted by a transitioning economy including a fund to provide severance packages, lifetime income, free education and family healthcare; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council, AFL-CIO supports a Green New Deal that includes Buy America provisions.

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council, AFL-CIO will advocate for a Green New Deal with strong labor provisions in concert with our environmental and community partners. Adopted January 23, 2019

CWA Climate Change /Green Jobs Resolutions CWA Res. Building Sustainable Communities

Resolution: 72A-10-2 Adopted: July 27, 2010(*)

Good jobs and a green economy lay the foundation for sustainable communities and good living standards. We must transition from the U.S. economy's dangerous dependence on oil, domestic and foreign, consistent with policies that assist impacted workers. (*)

The BP oil spill and resulting environmental damage in the Gulf of Mexico have claimed the lives of 11 workers, threatened the livelihoods of whole communities, and inflicted terrible damage on life-sustaining ecosystems. Less visible are other environmental and economic crises which threaten our ability to sustain our communities. For example, in Montana, climate change has led to entire communities losing their water supply and disappearing. (*)

Even less visible are our communities without broadband. In our new economy, broadband is as essential as water. Yet today, the ability to connect to the world-wide web at world-class speeds is still out of reach to 100 million Americans. The U.S. has fallen to 15th in the world in high-speed Internet penetration and 28th in global speed comparisons. That means it is harder for communities to sustain themselves, spur economic growth, create jobs, and bridge the digital divide. Without this basic resource, many other communities will vanish like those waterless towns out west. (*)

The United States is 5 percent of the global population, yet is responsible for around 30 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions already in our atmosphere. Not only do we consume too much fossil fuel, we have accelerated global climate change and lowered living standards through our trade policies and corporate-driven globalization model. As much as 25 percent of CO2 emissions are thought to be trade-related. Meanwhile, U.S. and World Trade Organization (WTO) policies have destroyed local manufacturing, and accelerated the export of jobs to countries that pay workers less than a living wage, deny workers' organizational rights, and exploit child and slave labor in violation of the International Labor Organization's Core Labor Standards. WTO policy also undercuts public services in the name of cut-throat competition and private profit. (*)

We should adopt U.S. climate change legislation that reduces emissions without causing energy-intensive industries to close their U.S. facilities and relocate them to countries that do not take effective action to curb emissions for products shipped to U.S. markets. Mechanisms available to resolve this problem include allowance allocations for energy-intensive industries, border adjustment mechanisms, and globally measurable and enforceable sectoral agreements. We also must adopt sensible technology transfer policies that assist truly developing countries without giving a free ride on new technologies to economic competitors. (*)

We have begun this transition with IUE-CWA leading the way. New work and new jobs have flowed into U.S. manufacturing plants represented by IUE-CWA. IUE-CWA represented workers are making energy-efficient appliances, hybrid car batteries, new diesel engines that meet strict California pollution standards, hybrid buses, and solar and windmill components. Our union lean program identifies energy-saving production techniques that make U.S. employers more efficient and create green U.S. jobs. Our manufacturing certification and Green Job training programs are propelling graduates to be first in line for new work. (*)

Labor and two key partners, the Sierra Club and Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), have joined to form the Blue Green Alliance to push for union jobs in a sustainable environment. The Coalition has adopted our Speed Matters campaign to bring affordable high-speed Internet to every community. We are piloting a program with the Sierra Club to build a movement to bring 1 gigabyte of Internet capacity to anchor institutions. With success, the extension of truly high-speed Internet will play an important role in reducing emissions and improving our environment. (*)

A broad Blue Green coalition, led by the Sierra Club, supported passage in the House of Representatives of the American Clean Energy Security Act (ACES) in June, 2009. This is a major piece of clean energy and climate protection that will help create new industries and new clean energy jobs while protecting the climate from the carbon pollution that causes global warming. The legislation is stalled in the Senate due to archaic rules and opposed by the same corporations that opposed the Employee Free Choice Act. (*)

Now is the time to take decisive and swift action to improve our environment and our economy to create prosperity and opportunity for generations to come. (*)

Resolved: CWA will work with the Sierra Club and others to strengthen and pass comprehensive climate and clean energy legislation that can create jobs, strengthen communities, reduce emissions, and protect our environment. (*)

Resolved: CWA will partner with Sierra Club and other community allies to bring 1 gigabyte Internet service to anchor institutions such as schools, libraries, hospitals and government buildings to sustain economic development in rural and urban communities. (*)

Resolved: CWA will work in coalition to reform international financial institutions (like the WTO, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund) and to ensure trade agreements and global climate agreements serve sustainable development and are consistent with improved labor standards worldwide.

Resolution in Support of the Green New Deal

Whereas: climate change threatens all people with its dangerous effects: huge wild fires, drought, killer heat waves, freezing polar cold fronts, monster storms, and

Whereas: the U.N. commissioned Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concludes that humanity has twelve years to cut greenhouse gas emissions enough to hold global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius—and avoid civilization-threatening consequences of climate change - “requiring rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society”, and

Whereas: despite a 2017 resolution stating that the AFL-CIO believes that the United States Congress should enact comprehensive energy and climate legislation that creates good jobs and addresses the threat of climate change, the Energy Committee of the AFL-CIO recently sent a letter (March 8, 2019) to congressional sponsors opposing the Green New Deal (“We will not accept proposals that could cause ... threats to our members jobs...”), and

Whereas: the Green New Deal, a resolution sponsored by over one hundred members of the U.S. Congress is a 10-year plan to mobilize every aspect of American society, at a scale not seen since World War II, to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions and create economic prosperity for all and

Whereas: the Green New Deal is an effort to:

- Move America to 100% clean and renewable energy
- Create millions of union jobs with family-supporting living wages,
- Ensure a just transition for all communities and workers to ensure economic security for people and communities that have historically relied on fossil fuel industries
- Ensure justice and equity for frontline communities by prioritizing investment, training, climate and community resiliency, economic and environmental benefits in these communities.
- Build on FDR’s second bill of rights by guaranteeing a job with dignity, to support a family with living wages, family and medical leave, vacations, and retirement security; high-quality education, including college and trade schools; clean air and water and access to nature; healthy food; high-quality health care; and safe, affordable housing, therefore be it:

Resolved: that Washington APWU go on record in support of the Green New Deal and be it further

Resolved: that Washington APWU national APWU and local, state and national AFL-CIO bodies to support the Green New Deal.

In These Times · <http://www.inthesetimes.com>

Working » March 12, 2019

Why Unions Must Bargain Over Climate Change

BY Nato Green

Union contract negotiations include mandatory and permissive subjects of bargaining. Employers are required by law to negotiate over mandatory subjects—wages, benefits and working conditions. Permissive subjects, such as decisions about which public services will be provided and how, have historically been the purview of management. We only negotiate over how managerial decisions affect members' jobs. Employers may voluntarily agree to negotiate permissive subjects, but unions can't legally strike over them.

In recent years, some unions have embraced “bargaining for the common good,” which use the union campaign to win broad, righteous public benefits. The best current example of this is the Los Angeles teachers' strike, which opposed the underfunding, privatization and overcrowding of schools—all of which hurt students. Common good goals often bump against the constraints of what is legally bargainable. For instance, does a demand from teachers' unions that school districts use district-owned property to fund and build affordable housing for teachers affect working conditions? While shortages of affordable housing affect teachers very directly, how school districts use their land and invest their money is normally considered a managerial prerogative.

But last fall's report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is a game-changer. It concludes that humanity has 12 years to cut greenhouse gas emissions enough to hold global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius—and avoid civilization-threatening consequences of climate change. There is a lot of space between projected best- and worst-case future scenarios. It's the difference between bad and apocalyptic. That space represents hundreds of millions of people dying. Avoiding worst-case scenarios, in strictly scientific terms, requires everyone to do everything, immediately.

The looming timeline of the IPCC report means unions must have a right to bargain over climate change, especially in the public sector. What good is it to negotiate the assignment of overtime when the sky is on fire? Does a public employer really want to claim that its direct complicity in the potential collapse of civilization has no bearing on working conditions? Can government claim that abandoning its workforce to die or flee their homes doesn't affect working conditions? If employers don't accept that every choice made today affects the near future, they're denying science. Local and state governments in Democratic strongholds may find it politically challenging to posture about resisting Republicanism nationally while denying the local implications of that stance.

Thanks to the Sunrise Movement and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.), the Green New Deal provides a framework for us to declare our part in everyone doing everything immediately. The Green New Deal calls for a government-funded jobs program to carry out a just transition to a carbon-free economy at the rates called for by the IPCC report. This is a perfect common good framework for unions to respond to the most urgent challenge of our time, while simultaneously promoting a high-functioning public sector as antidote to neoliberalism's degradation of public services.

Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1021, the union where I work, supported the campaign to divest the San Francisco pension plan from fossil fuels and to stop a new coal shipping terminal at the Port of Oakland. In my union, we advance our goals on parallel tracks via collective bargaining and public policy, using each to reinforce the other. The nexus between the functions of local government, climate change and jobs goes even further. San Francisco has already made significant commitments on many of these initiatives, and plans to do more. A local

government Green New Deal collective bargaining platform would include climate mitigation strategies to reduce emissions:

- Divest pensions from the fossil fuel industry.
- Convert to 100 percent renewables for utilities.
- Retrofit public buildings for energy efficiency and disaster resilience.
- Immediately transition to renewable energy vehicles for public buses, transit and car fleets, which could achieve that critical 1.5 degrees Celsius target.
- Plant trees and expand parks and bike infrastructure.
- Fund and expand public transit.
- Reduce carbon emissions in food procurement by public agencies by encouraging local, real food, and reducing meat.

It would also include climate adaptation strategies to prepare vulnerable communities to survive coming floods, fires, droughts and diseases:

- Mandate inclusion of climate change in land use and planning.
- Build climate-adaptive infrastructure.
- Develop procedures and train personnel on emergency response, especially to care for our unhoused neighbors.

Perhaps the best climate policy is transit-oriented, high-density affordable housing. It reduces commute times, and helps public workers and the people who depend on their services. In San Francisco, public services suffer from housing costs as workers move away and commute further distances. Housing drives teacher turnover, makes buses late because the Municipal Transportation Authority can't hire drivers, and compromises emergency response when many first responders live far away.

For unions dealing with State governments, a Green New Deal platform might also include:

- Funds for wildfire response and prevention, including forestry, strengthening oversight of utility regulators, and firefighters, all of which are carried out by public workers. Since wildfires are both the consequences of climate change and the cause of more accelerating carbon emissions, state government needs greater investments in rapid response.
- Funds to support indigenous people to do forest management.
- The transformation of private utilities into public agencies.
- Funds for climate research at public universities.
- The promotion of unionization in green jobs like electric car manufacturing and solar.

One obstacle to bargaining the Green New Deal is buy-in from members. Union members, like a lot of us, worry about climate change but are demoralized that it is too vast for them to do anything about. They've taken it on the chin from neoliberalism for a long time, so have urgent goals about fighting to protect public services from privatization and their jobs from being dragged yet further down in a race to the bottom. Tackling the Green New Deal can understandably feel like one more burden added to an already stuffed agenda.

Unions have long been waging defensive fights to maintain basic workplace protections in an era of austerity, but we're changing. Where common good strategies succeed, most recently showcased with the Los Angeles teacher strikes, the membership's readiness to strike for the community resulted from lengthy deep internal education, organizing and coalition-building. Union leadership would need to see the Green New Deal as a tool against austerity politics. We'd need to educate members about their collective power to make a difference on the most fundamental crises of our time—and raise expectations of what an expanded public sector could do.

The Green New Deal is basically the reverse of Naomi Klein's concept of the "shock doctrine," which refers to the process whereby capitalists take advantage of crises to reorder policies in their interests. Civilization is menaced by the Two Horsemen of the Apocalypse: climate change and inequality. Inequality is so bad that the richest 400 Americans own more wealth than the poorest 60 percent. The percentage of young people who will earn more than their parents is plunging. Public workers and their unions belong at the center of the solution to both. The policies of a Green New Deal require a robust and well-funded public sector with good union jobs. Because of the nature of public sector work, an expanded public sector as part of a Green New Deal disproportionately benefits women and people of color.

On Friday, the AFL-CIO issued a letter criticizing the Green New Deal, apparently on behalf of building trades unions who work in the fossil fuel business. Those unions are inexplicably concerned that the Green New Deal's expressed goals of meeting the challenge of climate change

with a job guarantee to protect affected workers doesn't include them. Contrary to labor skeptics who think the labor movement is hopeless, labor critics of the Green New Deal are optimists, believing that there are in fact jobs on a dead planet.

Any seasoned union campaigner worth her salt loves a contract fight because it has a hard deadline that focuses everyone's attention—expiration and a strike threat. We already know that the ruling class' answer to climate change is doomsday bunkers for billionaires, while the vast majority become climate refugees. For the rest of us, every labor victory in recent years has involved worker militancy and broad demands that link workers with their communities. Similarly, throughout history, every significant social movement has found an expression in labor struggles. The climate crisis will be no different. Climate science gives us a new deadline and an opportunity to show that we're up to the task. We have 12 years.

ABOUT THIS AUTHOR

Nato Green is a standup comedian, writer, and Campaign Coordinator for SEIU Local 1021 in San Francisco.

[More information about Nato Green](#)



American Federation
of Labor and
Congress of Industrial
Organizations

815 15th St., NW
Washington, DC 20006

202-637-5000

aflcio.org

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

RICHARD L. TRUMKA
PRESIDENT

ELIZABETH H. SHULER
SECRETARY-TREASURER

TERESA A. GERRE
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Michael Sacco

Robert A. Scardelletti

Harold Schallberger

Clyde Rivers

Cecil Roberts

Leo W. Gerard

Fred Richmond

Matthew Lorch

Randi Weintraub

Fredric V. Rolando

D. Michael Langford

Baldemar Velazquez

James Boland

Bruce R. Smith

Lee A. Saunders

Tony O'Sullivan

Lawrence J. Hanley

Loretta Johnston

James Callahan

Doris Garcia Smith

Sean McGarvey

J. David Cox Jr.

Dwight Carlisle

B. Taylor

Kenneth Ryngaert

Stuart Appelbaum

Harold Daggett

Bhaskar Dasai

Paul Rinaldi

Mark Diamondstein

Cindy Estrada

Sara Nelson

Mark Perrone

Eric Dean

Joseph Sellers Jr.

Christopher Shelton

Laetia R. Stephenson

Richard Langan

Robert Martinez

Gabrielle Carteris

Mark McManus

Ellen McBride

John Samuelsen

George E. McCubbin III

Vonda McDaniel

Queen Mills

Charles Workman

Bonnie Castillo

Gary Jones

Paul Shearon

Warren Feltley

Ernest A. Logan

AFL-CIO

AMERICA'S UNIONS

March 8, 2019

The Honorable Edward Markey
U.S. Senator
255 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
U.S. Representative
229 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Markey and Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez:

As Congress considers a variety of potential actions to address climate change, it is critical that the voices of American workers be included in the discussion, especially those who are most at risk of job disruptions and economic dislocation as a result of those actions. All policy makers must fully engage labor in the deep discussion needed to understand our views on these critical sectors and the jobs of our members.

America's labor unions agree that climate change must be addressed, and we agree on the need to invest in the development and deployment of technologies like solar, wind, nuclear, hydro-electric, carbon capture and utilization, battery storage, and high-speed rail that limit or eliminate carbon emissions. We know that the increase in natural gas production has lowered emissions in the power sector and provided a new source of construction and manufacturing jobs. We must invest in energy efficiency in the industrial and commercial sectors, retrofits and upgrades to schools and public buildings, and to make our communities safe and resilient. All of these investments must be paired with strong labor and procurement standards to grow family-sustaining, middle-class union jobs.

The fact is that the labor movement has been working on these very issues for decades, and have advanced several potential solutions over that time that could provide a basis for solid, realistic action.

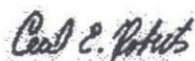
We welcome the call for labor rights and dialogue with labor, but the Green New Deal resolution is far too short on specific solutions that speak to the jobs of our members and the critical sectors of our economy. It is not rooted in an engineering-based approach and makes promises that are not achievable or realistic.

The Honorable Edward Markey and The Honorable Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
March 8, 2019
Page Two

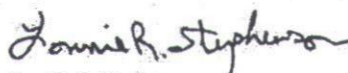
We will not accept proposals that could cause immediate harm to millions of our members and their families. We will not stand by and allow threats to our members' jobs and their families' standard of living go unanswered.

We are ready to discuss these issues in a responsible way, for we all recognize that doing nothing is not an option. We want to engage on climate issues in a manner that does not impinge on enacting other labor priorities, especially much needed infrastructure legislation. As key specialists in jobs touching every facet of the energy and industrial sectors, we have much to add to this discussion and look forward to working with lawmakers from both parties to address this critical issue.

On behalf of the AFL-CIO Energy Committee,



Cecil E. Roberts
International President
United Mine Workers of America (UMWA)



Lonnie R. Stephenson
International President
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)

Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA)
United Association (UA)
United Steelworkers (USW)
International Brotherhood of Boilermakers (IBB)
Ironworkers (IW)
Utility Workers Union of America (UWUA)
International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE)
North America's Building Trades Unions (NABTU)

CC: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Charles E. Schumer, Minority Leader, U.S. Senate

RESOLUTION 55

CLIMATE CHANGE, ENERGY AND UNION JOBS

WHEREAS, the overwhelming scientific consensus is that climate warming trends over the past century are due to human activities, and the world's leading science organizations have issued public statements endorsing these findings; and

WHEREAS, we are already experiencing the highest average global temperatures in recorded history, and current global emissions trends will dramatically increase atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gasses and accelerate changes in our climate; and

WHEREAS, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has concluded with a high degree of certainty that higher global temperatures will trigger irreversible changes in our climate, causing a rise in sea levels and storm surges, an increase in droughts and extreme weather events, a substantial threat of increased extinctions, decreased food security in some regions, and an increase in heat-induced health problems; and

WHEREAS, workers, communities of color and low-income Americans suffer disproportionately from environmental degradation and climate change through polluted air, water and land, and from drought and extreme weather events; and

WHEREAS, religious leaders, including Pope Francis in the encyclical "Laudato Si," have stated the moral imperative to address both climate change and poverty; and

WHEREAS, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has modeled technology pathways that can prevent the most catastrophic levels of global warming, and determined that the least expensive pathways with the highest probability of success require increased deployment of renewable energy, carbon capture and storage, and nuclear power, as well as significant efficiency increases in transportation, buildings and industry; and

WHEREAS, millions of good jobs can be created by raising labor standards and organizing in the energy efficiency and renewable energy sectors, which often fail to provide family-supporting employment, by domestic production and commercial application of advanced energy systems and decreasing our reliance on imported clean-energy goods, and by understanding that the battle to combat climate change cannot be waged on a project-by-project basis; and

WHEREAS, tens of thousands of members of affiliate unions are employed in industries that rely on the production, transportation or use of fossil fuels, or live in regions of the nation where fossil fuel production, transportation or use is the primary economic driver in their communities; and

WHEREAS, just as every other worker, those workers and their communities have a right to a strong, viable economic future, which includes good jobs at union wages and benefits; and

WHEREAS, the Paris Agreement is a historic achievement of international cooperation, which binds nations together to fight climate change while respecting national sovereignty and self-determination, and commits wealthy nations to assist less-developed nations in reducing emissions and adapting to climate change; and

WHEREAS, the Paris Agreement commits parties to take into account the imperative of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs when addressing climate change; and

WHEREAS, the fastest and most equitable way to address climate change is for labor to be at the center of creating solutions that reduce emissions while investing in our communities, maintaining and creating high-wage union jobs, and reducing poverty;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO will fight politically and legislatively to secure and maintain employment, pensions and health care for workers affected by changes in the energy market; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO supports incentives and robust funding for research programs to bring new energy technologies to market, including renewables, carbon capture and advanced nuclear technologies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO will support the passage of key energy and environmental policies with a focus on ensuring high labor standards, the creation of union jobs and environmental sustainability; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO will continue to urge the United States to remain in the Paris Agreement and to work to ensure that all nations make progress on emissions reductions; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO believes that the United States Congress should enact comprehensive energy and climate legislation that creates good jobs and addresses the threat of climate change.

Union Locals Build Support for the Green New Deal's "Just Transition"

What would a just transition actually mean for fossil fuel workers, and what must proponents do to win labor's support?

AURORA SAMPERIO / NURPHOTO VIA GETTY IMAGES

BY Candice Bernd, Truthout PUBLISHED April 6, 2019

Undeterred by the Senate's recent dismissal of the Green New Deal, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-New York) recently accepted Congressional Coal Caucus member Rep. Andy Barr's (R-Kentucky) invitation to tour a coal mine in his district and meet with mine workers and voters in Appalachia to talk about how they could benefit from the resolution's "just transition."

That transition, as laid out in Representative Ocasio-Cortez's plan, would include a federal jobs guarantee for U.S. workers. This includes former fossil fuel sector workers as they transition to build the infrastructure needed to shift the country to 100 percent renewable energy within 10 years.

Even as many of the resolution's proponents are now turning their focus away from passing the Green New Deal on the heels of March's procedural vote in the Senate, climate change legislation remains a priority for the Democratic Party. The resolution's supporters are now looking at multiple bills in hopes of advancing standalone elements of the broader initiative as grassroots groups like the Sunrise Movement continue efforts to build support for the plan.

But what exactly would a Green New Deal or another piece of climate change legislation focused on transitioning to renewables mean for the Kentucky coal workers Ocasio-Cortez is set to meet?

The plan backs union jobs and outlines commitments to "wage and benefit parity for workers" affected by the energy transition. The resolution also supports collective bargaining rights for workers while calling for "trade rules, procurement standards, and border adjustments" with strong labor protections.

Still, labor leaders like those on the AFL-CIO's Energy Committee remain skeptical of the resolution's call for a just transition. The Energy Committee sent an open letter to the resolution's authors, Sen. Edward Markey (D-Massachusetts) and Ocasio-Cortez, blasting the resolution last month. "We will not stand by and allow threats to our members' jobs and their families' standard of living go unanswered," wrote Cecil Roberts, president of the United Mine Workers of America, and Lonnie Stephenson, president of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW).

The March 8 letter comes on the heels of a February letter sent to the chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, Rep. Frank Pallone (D-New Jersey), and its ranking member, Rep. Greg Walden (R-Oregon), outlining the "grave concerns about unrealistic solutions such as those advocated in the 'Green New Deal,'" by seven unions representing workers in the building industry.

The strongest support for the plan has come from the joint executive board of the 163,000-member East Coast property service union, 32BJ SEIU, which passed its own resolution in February in support of the Green New Deal. Union President Héctor Figueroa recently condemned the Senate's procedural vote to reject the plan, saying in a statement that, "Creating good jobs in this exciting new industry is as doable as it is necessary, but only if we work together in unity rather than giving into Washington's divisive tactics."

Rank-and-File Support Is Key

But even while national leadership among unions like the IBEW and others have shown an early reluctance toward such legislation, leaders at the local level are working to build support for the plan among their membership in hopes of pushing their unions in the right direction.

"The thought of losing their jobs is so horrifying to them that they can't even wrap their head around it."

Dave Campbell, treasurer-secretary of United Steelworkers (USW) Local 675 in Los Angeles, whose membership largely works in oil production and refining, told *Truthout* he is working through legitimate critiques that have been raised by the local's members whose livelihoods would be impacted by a transition to green jobs. "The thought of losing their jobs is so horrifying to them that they can't even wrap their head around it," he said.

While USW has not taken a position on the Green New Deal at the national level, Campbell, who is on union leave from Chevron, has worked to build support among his local's membership by engaging with leaders of the union's NextGen program, which works to educate the union's youth members. In fact, his local's executive board even recently passed a resolution in support of the Green New Deal that was adopted last month by the second-largest Central Labor Council in the country, the AFL-CIO's LA County Federation of Labor.

How environmentalists and Green New Deal proponents respond to workers' concerns, Campbell says, is paramount in building the critical mass of support from labor needed to move forward on any comprehensive climate legislation.

Among those concerns is whether such workers will continue to be paid what they're currently earning and maintain comparable benefits. Further, some workers have expressed skepticism about renewable jobs, saying renewable energy firms have been less gracious than the oil and gas sector on wages. Their criticism "is right on the money," Campbell says, "But that doesn't mean that we shouldn't try to enact a Green New Deal that holds up the concepts of just transition for workers and the community."

Campbell invited members of the local's NextGen committee to attend a convergence in LA being put on by the Labor Network for Sustainability (LNS), which trains environmentalists in how to effectively engage with the labor movement. LNS is currently in dialogue with some of the AFL-CIO Energy Committee unions like the IBEW that authored last month's letter.

LNS Founding President Joe Uehlein tells *Truthout* that these unions can't be "pushed" on this issue. Instead, he says, it's much more crucial that rank-and-file members engage with leadership in such a way as to make clear that a just transition is in their own self-interest. The real job killer, according to Uehlein, isn't the Green New Deal — it's climate change itself.

A federal jobs guarantee "is the best way to tighten labor markets, which then forces wages and benefits up because companies are competing to get the best workers."

Further, he adds that, "all these good fossil fuel jobs did not start as 'good' jobs. No job does. So there's a certain level of

disingenuousness to say, 'Well, those renewable energy jobs don't pay as much.'" The Green New Deal's federal jobs guarantee, he says, "is the best way to tighten labor markets, which then forces wages and benefits up because companies are competing to get the best workers. That allows unions then to do their core function the best, which is negotiate good contracts that ripple through the economy."

LNS Executive Director Michael Guerrero also stresses that the IBEW is a good example of a nationally reticent union that, at the local level, has gotten out in front of the issue in places like California, where some locals have developed apprenticeship and training programs "that have shown that it's possible to actually do this work" with prevailing wages and benefits.

"So models are already there, where unions are taking the lead on a transition that works for workers in these industries," Guerrero says. "That's what it's going to take: It's going to take the unions stepping up and organizing in these industries to strengthen them, and if the Green New Deal can create the political space for that to happen, than I think it helps everybody."

But if labor doesn't get on board and play a leadership role soon, he says, then some unions are going to be left behind as policies are shaped without them. "This is an all-in moment," he stresses.

"Models are already there, where unions are taking the lead on a transition that works for workers in these industries."

Likewise, Uehlein adds that it's workers who must make sure that the resolution recognizes collective and non-collective bargaining forms of worker representation. "It needs to have things in it that unions would look at and see that as a path to the future for them," he says.

A Green New Rural Electrification Administration?

The New York City-based Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED) is another organization currently in dialogue with a number of unions about the Green New Deal's objectives. TUED Director Sean Sweeney says it's just a matter of separating the good-faith criticisms of progressive labor unions from those of energy-sector unions looking to position themselves to benefit from the Trump administration's energy export agenda.

These unions — such as the Laborers' International Union of North America, which support the Keystone XL and Dakota Access pipelines, for instance — can't be won over. Meanwhile, progressive unions with earnest concerns are looking dig in to the resolution's promises a bit more programmatically to determine what's actually possible at this stage. "Those unions tend to like what AOC is saying; they like the new Democrats coming through, and they're in constructive conversations with them," Sweeney says.

For him, the more important question is whether the renewable energy sector and, potentially, emerging carbon-capture technology, will come under public control. He points to the original New Deal's Rural Electrification Administration (REA), which Congress backed in 1936 by passing legislation that provided federal loans to member-owned cooperative electric companies to power the country's rural areas.

"If we're trying to find some way to make money out of it then it's a neoliberal approach that can't solve the problem."

The privatized renewable energy sector, Sweeney says, has completely failed to survive without subsidies, and has only recently become cost effective, in part, because of cheap imports of materials from China and a reliance on non-union labor. "Emissions reductions are a public good. That means everybody should contribute to it because everybody will benefit, and if

we're trying to find some way to make money out of it then it's a neoliberal approach that can't solve the problem."

Sweeney says Franklin Delano Roosevelt's 1935 REA represents the type of "means of implementation" that public transport, construction and electricity unions working in the energy sector would understand. Instead of heading in this direction, he says, "too many people in the environmental movement believe that carbon pricing is a good idea," even though it does not reduce emissions or change investment practices, and passes carbon prices "downstream to consumers."

Indeed, organizations like the BlueGreen Alliance — which partners unions like USW with environmental groups — backed a 2009 cap-and-trade bill, but still has not taken a position on the Green New Deal, recently denying *Truthout's* request for comment. The organization's hesitancy comes after the Laborer's International Union quit the alliance in 2012 amid clashes over the Keystone XL pipeline.

"The environmental narrative has filled a gap for labor so the progressive unions have tended to support the environmental narrative, including the progressive-sounding 'polluter-pays' principle, but in fact it's the 'worker-pays' principle," Sweeney told *Truthout*.

Uehlein cautions, however, that bringing newly created jobs into the public sector could drive private-sector unions farther away. "I think it would create a different kind of a fight within organized labor than what we already have over what a Green New Deal is."

Further, publicly reticent energy-sector unions are backing emerging technologies for capturing carbon from the atmosphere, which the Green New Deal resolution doesn't explicitly rule out of its 10-year plan.

While the fossil fuel industry and its energy-sector unions may be eyeing carbon capture as critical to their ability to continue polluting in the future, scientific evidence is mounting that large-scale implementation of such technology may be necessary for reducing emissions globally.

"Unions can call for carbon capture, but I think it's a ritualistic call."

"Unions can call for carbon capture, but I think it's a ritualistic call, because unless the economic problems and the problems of storage are solved, it's a non-starter," Sweeney says. "It becomes an environmental policy [for unions] because they don't have one. They can't just say, 'Well, carry on burning coal.'"

Still, such technology, developed to scale, would necessitate publicly controlled infrastructure in any case, argues Uehlein, because it's not likely that it could become cost competitive so quickly. "It's kind of like when the unions say, 'the Green New Deal is unrealistic,' I would say carbon capture and sequestration is equally unrealistic, so if we're going to choose our 'unrealistic' paths, I'd go with the Green New Deal," Uehlein says.

"The labor movement, unless it changes, dramatically, quickly, is going to alienate an entire generation of young people."

The Sunrise Movement — which largely touched off support for the resolution after young members occupied House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office in November — is continuing to build support for the resolution with its #road2GND tour. Beginning this month, activists will hold more than 100 town halls across the U.S. ahead of the 2020 election.

"The labor movement, unless it changes, dramatically, quickly, is going to alienate an entire generation of young people who will be going to work someday. That's I think just a tragic mistake for organized labor to make," Uehlein says.

Newsmax

AFL-CIO Leads Unions in Rejecting Green New Deal

Tuesday, March 12, 2019 05:41 PM

By: Theodore Bunker

The AFL-CIO Energy Committee has issued a letter to the Democrats pushing for a Green New Deal, rejecting the proposal as "not achievable or realistic," according to the Washington Examiner.

The AFL-CIO's letter was written on behalf of eight other unions, including North America's Building Trades Unions and United Steelworkers, and sent to Sen. Ed Markey, D-Mass., and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., who introduced the Green New Deal resolution last month.

"We welcome the call for labor rights and dialogue with labor, but the Green New Deal resolution is far too short on specific solutions the speak to the jobs our members and the critical sectors of the economy," the AFL-CIO said in the letter. "We will not accept proposals that could cause immediate harm to millions of our members and their families. We will not stand by and allow threats to our members' jobs and their families' standard of living go unanswered."

Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyo., tweeted Monday night he agrees with the AFL-CIO.

"The [AFLCIO], which represents 12.5 million workers & includes 55 labor unions, slams the [Green New Deal] in a letter to [Markey and Ocasio-Cortez]:

"We will not accept proposals that could cause immediate harm to millions of our members and their families."

"I agree with the AFL-CIO."

Markey responded to the letter, and to Sen. Barrasso, on Twitter on Tuesday morning:

"We will continue to work and partner [with the AFL-CIO], who is right to say that 'doing nothing is not an option.' But until Republicans say that climate change is real, caused by humans, and demands action now, the only people they are in agreement with are Big Oil and the Koch brothers."

Related Stories:

- **Stockton U's Busler: Free Market Alternative to Green New Deal**
- **AOC: Those Without Jobs 'Are Left to Die' in U.S.**

© 2019 Newsmax. All rights reserved.

A Green New Deal Must Have Strong Labor and Community Provisions

This resolution was adopted unanimously by the San Francisco Labor Council on April 8, 2019.



Educate. Empower.

Executive Director
Rudy Gonzalez

President
Mike Conroy
Unit 100

Secretary Treasurer
Olga Miranda
SEIU 87

Trustees
Ron Lewis, IBEW 4
David Williams, SEIU 102
Claire Zvanets, FORUM

VP for Affiliate Support
Larry Mazzola, Jr.
Plumbers 381

VP for Community Activities
Conny Ford
CF 210.23

VP for Political Activities
Alicia Meyer
AFL 1121

Sergeant at Arms
Marie Kelly
CIPA

A Green New Deal Must Have Strong Labor and Community Provisions

WHEREAS, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has determined humanity has twelve years to act to avert the worst effects of a climate catastrophe; and

WHEREAS, climate change poses an immediate and long-term threat to all working people, our communities and our economic security; and

WHEREAS, workers, communities of color and low-income people suffer disproportionately from environmental degradation and climate change; and

WHEREAS, climate change is already harming working families and vulnerable populations through wildfire, drought and flooding, extreme hurricanes, increased stress on the agricultural sector, jobsite health impacts like heat stroke, and the spread of infectious diseases; and

WHEREAS, the November 8, 2018, Camp Fires devastated the town of Paradise, caused at least 86 deaths, the most destructive wildfire in history, attributable in part to climate change; and

WHEREAS, all San Francisco residents and workers endured many days of hazardous and toxic smoke from that wildfire, emissions that closed construction work sites, schools, sporting events, and created hazardous health effects; and

WHEREAS, climate crisis is already having devastating effects on San Francisco residents and workers, and will increasingly, severely, and irreversibly jeopardize the well-being and economic future of generations of people unless concrete action is taken; and

WHEREAS, young climate activists and some members of Congress have successfully put the Green New Deal at the center of national discussion about how to address both the climate crisis and our historic level of economic inequality; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco's affordable housing crisis is resulting in displacement of San Franciscans - both Union members and not - to areas where they are more dependent on automobiles to meet their transportation needs thereby increasing their carbon emissions; and

WHEREAS, if climate action is to address inequality, the labor movement must be at the center of shaping climate policies to include just transition for workers, expand collective bargaining rights, and create green union careers, particularly in disadvantaged communities on the front lines of climate change; and

WHEREAS, workers in existing jobs, including firefighters, nurses, construction workers, public transit workers, many in the public sector, and many more are already mitigating the health and environmental effects of climate change, preparing our infrastructure for sea level rise, and advancing California's clean energy economy through a variety of ways; and

WHEREAS, the City and County of San Francisco owns, operates, and maintains extensive infrastructure and lands throughout Northern California for energy generation, energy transmission, and water supply employing over one thousand union members; and

WHEREAS, many union members work in sectors, such as construction, transportation, energy, agriculture, manufacturing and production, that will be directly impacted by transitioning to lower greenhouse gas emissions limits; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco has lowered its total carbon emissions by 30% below 1990 levels, lowered per capita emissions by 49% since 1990, and has committed to Net Zero Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 2050; and

WHEREAS, with the support of the State Building and Construction Trades Council of California, AFL-CIO, California has adopted a goal of 100% renewable and zero-carbon electricity and has demonstrated that clean energy industries can create good, middle-class jobs when linked with collective bargaining agreements; and

WHEREAS the AFL-CIO has issued Resolution 55 on Climate Change, Energy, and Union Jobs supporting the passage of key energy and environmental policies with a focus on ensuring high labor standards, the creation of union jobs, and environmental sustainability; and

WHEREAS AFL-CIO Resolution 55 encourages the United States Congress to enact comprehensive energy and climate legislation that creates good jobs and addresses the threat of climate change; and

WHEREAS, many labor unions, and organizations and community allies have passed resolutions and/or supported bold policies to address the climate crisis and other pressing environmental issues; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the San Francisco Labor Council, AFL-CIO, supports a Green New Deal that includes a strong and binding commitment on all Just Transition issues for workers and communities impacted by the transitioning economy; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the San Francisco Labor Council, AFL-CIO, supports a Green New Deal that includes Buy America provisions; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the San Francisco Labor Council, AFL-CIO, will advocate for a Green New Deal in concert with environmental and community partners that support the above provisions.

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, the San Francisco Labor Council, AFL-CIO, goes on record to request the AFL-CIO endorse House Resolution 109 and Senate Resolution 59 - Recognizing the Duty of the Federal Government to Create a Green New Deal, and urges all Congressional Representatives to cosponsor the Resolutions.

Adopted unanimously by the San Francisco Labor Council on April 8, 2019.



Q&A:

SOME HARD QUESTIONS ABOUT THE GREEN NEW DEAL

Few ideas have provoked more discussion than the GREEN NEW DEAL (GND). Basically, the GND states that (1) we need to take urgent action on climate now in order to jump start the transition to 100% renewable energy by 2030 and completely decarbonize by 2050; and (2) we need intentionally to use the transition to address economic justice (create high quality union jobs/redress income inequality) and social justice.

The GND is not a policy proposal; it is a set of principles which will guide the drafting of policies. Labor needs to be actively engaged and at the table for the drafting of the actual proposals.

Trade unionists have been asking some hard questions about the GND. Here are some examples -- and a few quick responses that don't aim to provide complete answers, but to show the kinds of answers that need to be developed.

Q. 100% renewable energy in 10 years is unrealistic - and whatever the timeline, how are you going to fuel airplanes? The trucking industry?

A. Climate science and the Paris agreement say 100% renewable energy is necessary by 2050 -- but we've got to jump-start the process now. The Green New Deal proposes a ten-year emergency program to jump start that process, not to finish it completely. Creating the technology to electrify airplanes and trucking is part of that jumpstart. The current reality is that planes are often grounded and transportation disrupted now by extreme weather events caused by climate change, so we need to address the root cause of the problem. And the GND recognizes that while reductions in some areas may not be technically feasible, every effort needs to be made to find solutions.

Our country's greatest technological achievements have occurred when the government partners with the private sector (getting to the moon; computers; aviation). The GND builds on that experience; it will jump start necessary technological advances, in electrification from renewables; upgrading and modernizing the grid; accelerating electrification of cars, buses and even planes; regenerative agriculture.

Q. Why should anyone believe that this plan would provide protection to workers in the energy industry? There is plenty of evidence that workers whose jobs are "transitioned" out of existence in manufacturing industries due to trade, technology, etc are basically disposed of with little more than some paltry unemployment benefits and "job training" for low paying jobs or no jobs at all. Why should anyone believe this will be any different?

A. The GND will create millions of new jobs building the climate-safe economy and most of them will be in the high-wage manufacturing and construction sectors. Fossil fuel-dependent jobs are being eliminated right now not by climate policy but because renewable energy is becoming cheaper than gas, oil, and even especially coal. The GND provides an alternative to throwing them on the scrap heap -- protecting workers and communities whose jobs are affected and providing jobs building the new economy. And it includes labor rights and standards to make them living wage union jobs. The GND is sometimes criticized for being "too radical" -- but that is just what will make it different from the phony "transitioning" of so many past programs.

Q. Throwing everything but the kitchen sink into this GND pie-in-the-sky plan will prevent anything from getting done - especially the infrastructure improvements we need. Why are you messing everything up with this socialist government takeover plan?

A. The GND proposes a giant infrastructure plan to rebuild our whole national infrastructure on a climate-safe basis. Polls show that it has massive public support. Notwithstanding President Trump's tweets, he, the Republican Senate, and the Republican right are blocking any program whose purpose is to fix our infrastructure rather than just give it away to wealthy investors. By combining the support for infrastructure with the support for climate protection, the GND can produce the political support needed to rebuild our infrastructure. Far from being a "socialist government takeover," it is rescuing our democracy from the rightwing stranglehold that is keeping the government from doing what the people want.