

For Class and Climate Justice

A Working Class Movement For a Peaceful, Sustainable, Full Employment Economy

Employer groups such as the National Association of Manufacturers, Chamber of Commerce, American Petroleum Institute, and the National Association of Home Builders, are spending big bucks peddling the lie that global warming is a job-killing false alarm. They are assisted by reactionary media and politicians they have bought and paid for.



Other bosses, such as those remaining in the United States Climate Action Partnership—which includes such good corporate citizens as the Big Three automakers, GE, and Rio Tinto—are not sure that they can sell outright denial much longer. They, along with liberal politicians, and even some environmental groups, assure us climate change problems can be solved through market measures such as cap-and-trade, and reducing fossil fuel burning with greatly expanded nuclear power and biofuel.

If we buy in to either of these scams the future of humanity will be bleak. Despite the hyped up “scandal” about errors in calculations there remains an overwhelming consensus among climate scientists that climate change has begun, much irreparable damage has already been done, and that the primary cause of this change is human economic activity. Drastic changes are required to prevent climate disaster.

A conservative estimate using a model developed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology projects a 9 degree Fahrenheit rise in the average temperature of our planet by the end of this century if effective countermeasures are not taken. On either side of this average vast chunks of present areas of temperate climate, such as now prevails in the USA and Europe, would become either frozen tundra or unbearably hot desert. Melted ice from polar regions and Greenland would raise sea levels—wiping out the homes of hundreds of millions. Human civilization as we know it could no longer function. Just survival of our species would become a challenge.

Why do bosses and their servants, who certainly know better, promote global warming denial? The profits they currently make from causing climate change far outweigh for them any concern about what happens to future generations. A study commissioned by two UN agencies determined that the world’s 3,000 biggest companies amass annual profits from environmentally destructive practices to the tune of 2.2 trillion dollars.

To gain even such basics as improved wages and working conditions required generations of determined, sometimes bloody, struggle with this boss class. All past victories for

workers have been tentative and today most are under attack once again by the employers. The class that fights us tooth and nail over every penny of labor costs will never voluntarily relinquish the obscene profits made from destroying our biosphere. That means the ball is in the working class court.

The polluting class will never have much luck in trying to refute science.

Their labeling of environmental measures as job killers is a powerful weapon, however. We’re willing to stipulate the bosses are experts when it comes to job elimination—they’ve slashed millions of them over the past couple of years, virtually none due to environmental restrictions.

Most mainstream union leaders long ago abandoned adversarial unionism, with its understanding of conflicting class interests of worker and boss, that once led to building strong unions, job security, and decent living standards. Instead they pursue a course of “partnership” with the employers. This has led to give-backs in wages, benefits, and conditions—accompanied by massive job loss.

Today most of these same leaders also tell us that our future depends on supporting the bosses’ environmentally destructive ways. They even supply props for demonstrations orchestrated by the employers in favor of such projects as Mountaintop Removal, to more cheaply mine dirty coal; keeping open nuclear power plants leaking radiation while demanding construction of many new nukes; and, of course, Drill Baby Drill anywhere and everywhere for more oil and natural gas. As cynical as the bosses, these would be employer partners heading our unions sell out the future of our kids and grandkids in a vain attempt to maintain their base of dues payers.

We believe it is possible to both take effective measures to address the climate change danger—the biggest challenge humanity has yet faced—and simultaneously save and create jobs. This won’t be done by the captains of industry, finance, agribusiness, and commerce with a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. It can only be implemented by an independent mobilization of the working class—the only force in society with both the material self-interest and the economic and political clout to do so.

(Please turn over)

What do we propose to do?

- Declare a Climate Emergency and begin a mobilization of our economic resources on the scale of what was done during World War II.
- Create a new Climate Emergency Public Sector beginning with nationalization of key sectors such as Finance, Energy, Transportation, and Auto.
- A restructuring of the economy, planned by scientists and environmentalists, managed by elected worker representatives, with a top priority of rapid, total replacement of fossil and nuclear fuels with clean, renewable sources such as solar and wind.
- Halt and reverse Urban Sprawl by repopulating and renovating our urban cores, restoring the forests, wetlands, and agricultural land wrecked by irrational development.
- Make our transportation cleaner, more efficient, while preserving convenience and affordability, by building expanded new urban transit systems and high speed, electrified inter-city rail lines.

Just Transition

While we are convinced this bold plan would create enough new jobs to ensure full employment for all who want to work we must honestly acknowledge many present jobs will be eliminated. Since this is being done in the interest of society as a whole we have a collective obligation to assist those displaced workers make the transition to good jobs in the Climate Emergency Sector.

This means providing retraining, and paying relocation costs, if necessary. And worker living standards need to be guaranteed until they find suitable new jobs. Of course, union contracts would remain in force and new union organizing would not be opposed.

The Alliance for Class and Climate Justice

We don't claim originality for any part of what we propose. We are open to working with others with more limited objectives around particular issues. But we think building a current within the labor and environmental movements around such a comprehensive approach to the twin crises of climate change and loss of good jobs is long overdue.

For more information about us and what we are doing go to the kclabor.org website and click on the link to "Alliance for Class and Climate Justice."

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