



**Testimony of Michael Williams, Senior Policy and Legislative Advocate,
BlueGreen Alliance**

May 24, 2012

Good afternoon. My name is Mike Williams. I work for the BlueGreen Alliance as a Senior Policy and Legislative Advocate, and have the privilege to help manage their climate and energy work. I am here today to convey the BlueGreen Alliance's support for the proposed Carbon Pollution Standard, and to express our strong desire for a comprehensive solution to addressing climate change.

The BlueGreen Alliance is a national partnership of labor unions and environmental organizations. Founded in 2006 by the United Steelworkers and the Sierra Club, and since expanded to now include four of the largest environmental organizations in the country and eight diverse and prominent labor unions. All told, the membership of BGA's partners represents the interests of over 14 million people across North America.

One of the main principles BGA was founded on was the dire need to address climate change. That through addressing climate change, America can build a lasting, sustainable economy that provides high quality employment, and helps rebuild the middle class.

As the Dean of the House, Congressman John Dingell, recently said, "We can't afford to have an economy in which some jobs work for the future. We need an economy in which they all do." It is a basic principle — that workers throughout every industry play a vital role in the 21st century, climate-conscious economy. We will achieve this only by reimagining, refocusing, and rebuilding our current economy.

The labor and environmental partners of our Alliance strongly advocated for a comprehensive approach to America's energy and climate policy, matching mandated reductions in greenhouse gas emissions with an investment portfolio meant to spur innovation across the many sectors of the 21st century clean economy, and enhance competitiveness within the traditional sectors.

Regretfully, we failed to implement this approach. Not just Congress, we all failed.

We must not use this as an excuse to turn our backs from what currently can and must be done. Nor can we use this as an excuse to turn our backs on fiercely advocating for a comprehensive solution.

The Carbon Pollution Standard fits well within the realm of what must be done. This proposed rule comes out of a long process that includes a mandate from the Supreme Court and an endangerment finding from the scientists at the EPA.

The standard will apply to future power plants, limiting the emissions of greenhouse gases to a standard on par with a natural gas combined cycle generation or a coal-fired plant equipped with carbon capture and storage. It will apply only to large power plants, and allows for projects that will begin construction within one year to forgo compliance.

This is a reasonable first step towards addressing climate change. The standard does not affect existing power generation, but it will ensure that long-term investments in energy infrastructure reflect the reality of climate change, driving investment in clean energy, which we believe will make America more competitive, more energy independent, and will create many good jobs.

This is a reasonable and necessary first step, but there is much more that needs to be done. The BlueGreen Alliance believes that in the absence of a comprehensive climate and clean energy policy, Congress should enact the following policies to complement the Carbon Pollution Standard and ensure that our country fully realizes the job-retention and job-creating benefits of the clean energy economy:

1. **Create clear market signals for clean energy deployment.** Congress should pass legislation that sets specific targets for clean energy generation that expands renewable resources and the implementation of a federal Energy Efficiency Resource Standard.
2. **Address global competitiveness.** Congress should adopt measures to prevent possible “carbon leakage” and promote the global competitiveness of energy-intensive industries. Such policies could include a border-adjustment measure to ensure a level playing field.
3. **Invest in cleaner, more advanced power generation.** Congress should provide direct assistance for advancements in and rapid deployment of technology that will clean up and improve the efficiency of power generation to help insure the continuation of highly skilled and living wage jobs.

4. **Provide a proper transition for workers and communities.** Congress, states, localities and utilities should ensure that workers and communities affected by the transition to cleaner energy sources are provided with necessary assistance.
5. **Guarantee access to capital markets for energy-intensive industries.** Tight capital markets and limited borrowing capacity continue to threaten the viability of some companies. Congress should provide loan guarantees, tax credits, grants, and other forms of assistance for American industry to make investments to increase efficiency and reduce emissions.
6. **Rebuild American manufacturing and infrastructure.** A vibrant clean energy economy requires that America retool its manufacturing base and renew its infrastructure investments. It is imperative that Congress develops a true industrial policy, and also passes a long-term, robust surface transportation bill.

Pollution is, quite simply, a form of waste and a sign of inefficiency. Over and over again the environmental safeguards of the last 40 years have resulted in waste reduction, energy efficiency, and greater economic competitiveness — creating thousands of new jobs and making existing jobs more secure.

In a global economy, where our international competitors are leading in the development of clean energy technologies and deployment, retreating from this basic understanding is tantamount to surrendering our economic future. Air pollution of all sorts also puts a tremendous drag on our economic recovery, from increased health care expenses to the costs of adapting to changed weather patterns.

Thus, although the BlueGreen Alliance believes that Congress ultimately should pass comprehensive climate and clean energy jobs legislation, the dangers presented by climate change and the potential for jobs lost as a result of inaction — leaving us further behind in the global clean energy market — are too great to delay any further the process of cutting U.S. carbon pollution under the existing law.

Finally, all too often people are offered a false choice between having good jobs or a clean environment. The truth is we don't have to choose between jobs and the environment; we can and must have both.