



## Protecting Our Health and Safety, Building a Stronger Economy

### Statement from the BlueGreen Alliance

Established 40 years ago to enforce our country's landmark environmental legislation, the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has improved the quality of the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the environment in which we live. Ever since its inception, opponents have wrongly charged that the vital public health functions of this agency have come at a cost to the American economy and, in particular, have caused significant job loss.

The BlueGreen Alliance believes that protecting the public's health and safety results in a stronger economy and that the pending EPA regulation of greenhouse gas emissions has the potential to make a more energy — efficient and globally competitive economy in the future. As history demonstrates that they have in the past, good jobs and a clean environment work hand in hand in the 21st century. The labor and environmental partners of our Alliance worked together in the 111th Congress to advance comprehensive climate and energy legislation that could have helped us to achieve this balance. However, Congress failed to act, and the problem of a worsening environment remains.

In 2007 the Supreme Court held that the EPA has the authority and responsibility to curb greenhouse gas emissions as a part of its obligations under the Clean Air Act. It would be a mistake with significant economic and environmental consequences for the 112th Congress to diminish this authority.

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. As EPA engages in regulating these emissions, it can and must set thoughtful, science-based, and economically measured reduction targets and standards.

Climate change poses an overriding threat to our economy, public health, and national security. The cost of inaction, even for a few years, will put the U.S. economy at a serious disadvantage to its competitors in China, Japan, and the European Union. Although done with significant government subsidies, China, for instance, has already created over one million jobs in its clean energy sector, surpassing the U.S. in the installation of wind-generated electricity, captured a majority of the global solar photovoltaic market and is outpacing the U.S. in clean energy deployment by two to one.

The continuing failure to set our nation on a path for clean energy development is a national security threat to future generations. Year by year, our reliance on foreign sources of energy has grown and now is the single greatest contributor to our unsustainable trade deficits, siphoning a trillion dollars a year out of the U.S. economy.

Congress should reject proposals that weaken the Clean Air Act, and instead should focus on steps it can take to supplement EPA action to address industry concerns about capital availability, international competitiveness, and complementary energy policies. The BlueGreen Alliance believes that Congress should enact the following policies to complement the Clean Air Act 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 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. Congress should extend, with updated eligibility criteria, and expand a range of proven programs such as the 48C Advanced Energy Manufacturing Tax Credits, and pass new transitional investment measures such as the IMPACT Act’s revolving loan program. Robust federal investments must be made to improve our crumbling infrastructure. Passage of a robust Surface Transportation Act with a secure funding stream could provide millions of jobs while improving transportation options. Investments into improving the nation’s energy infrastructure will help bring new generation capacity to areas that have renewable resources, but not the ability to move them to market.

These policies, combined with EPA action under the Clean Air Act to reduce carbon pollution, are critical to moving America toward its clean energy future. The BlueGreen Alliance believes that these steps represent a sensible approach to reduce carbon pollution and move us toward a clean energy economy while making the U.S. economy more competitive, putting millions of Americans back to work, strengthening our existing industries, and building the new industries of the future.