

September 7, 2011

President of the United States
Barack Obama
White House
Washington, DC 20510

Dear President Obama:

On behalf of the BlueGreen Alliance, our 14 national labor and environmental partners and the over 14 million people they represent, we write to express our dedicated support for returning the national focus to the critical task of job creation. Too much time and effort has been wasted on job-killing budget cuts and rollbacks of our bedrock public health and environmental laws. Slashing investments in clean energy and ignoring the costs of pollution to our economy and communities won't create jobs. What America truly needs right now is a robust plan that moves our economy into the 21st century. Therefore, we respectfully request that you incorporate strong, forward-looking, job-creating clean energy policies like those found in the Jobs21! plan into your soon to be announced jobs agenda.

Jobs21! is a nationwide jobs plan — a set of policies and investments that can create jobs, cut energy and transportation costs, create stability for business and make the country more competitive and more secure by reducing our dependence on foreign oil while also having vital public health standards move forward.

Through Jobs21!, we have outlined how moving America to a cleaner, healthier economy will mean more jobs and prosperity for our workers and communities. We will be taking this message across the country to workers, environmentalists ...to all Americans. Achieving this goal is by no means a small endeavor, but this big vision should reap big dividends. We ask that you put forward an ambitious agenda that mirrors the goals and principles of Jobs21! and maximizes job creation and renewable energy integration while promoting the health of communities across the country.

In particular, we believe that short-term efforts to spur clean energy manufacturing are vital. An expansion and improvement of the Advanced Energy Manufacturing Credit would continue to build upon the successes we have achieved in clean energy manufacturing over the last two years. A block grant program targeted toward small- and medium-sized manufacturers in areas with high

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unemployment would help manufacturers retool, improve the efficiency of their facility, train new employees and retrain current employees, and expand export opportunities.

To keep growing our advanced manufacturing sector and to move America to clean energy, we must continue to focus policy efforts on growing clean energy demand and development. With the proper safeguards to protect taxpayers, a clean energy deployment administration, or green bank, would provide seed money that would encourage private investment to support loans for an array of advanced clean energy technologies. We also urge you to extend efforts to aid the retooling of the domestic automobile industry, so that the technology needed to meet the new national program for fuel economy and tailpipe emissions will be produced in the United States.

Our clean energy industry will never meet its true potential if we do not level the playing field. Existing industries have benefitted from decades of federal support and being the entrenched providers of electricity, heat and power. Establishing consistent demand will create room for these new and emerging markets to grow into the job-creating powerhouses we fully expect them to be. To achieve this, we need consistent, long-term tax incentives for clean energy and a robust renewable electricity standard in the future, a policy that we have calculated to potentially create over 850,000 jobs in existing domestic manufacturing firms over 15 years.

Our country's residential, commercial, industrial, and public buildings account for more than 70 percent of the energy we consume. A dedicated effort to retrofit the buildings through these sectors would save millions of dollars and create hundreds of thousands of jobs. Comprehensive retrofits of schools, that take into account everything from PCBs in the lighting to the efficiency of their HVAC systems, is among the most impactful measures we could take regarding job creation, cost savings, and human health.

Measures to increase efficiency in the residential, commercial, and industrial sectors can be immediately achieved through programs like Home Star, Building Star, the Better Buildings Initiative, as well as key changes to the tax code, including enhancing the investment tax credit for combined heat power. In particular for our industrial sector, we should set a national goal of doubling the production of electricity from combined heat and power (CHP) and waste heat recovery (WHR) in the United States.

Furthermore, we hope your vision to rebuild our roads, bridges and transit systems, and make high-speed rail a reality for all America comes to fruition, and that it's done using domestically-sourced materials, components and cleaner vehicles. Strong, efficient infrastructure is vital to a strong economy and accounts for millions of jobs — and millions of jobs lost if we do not support fully-funded infrastructure investments. Bold ideas like an infrastructure bank and successful livable communities initiatives should continue and augment current efforts to fully invest in America's infrastructure. At a time when Europe and China are investing massively to compete in the global economy, now is not the time for the U.S. to curtail efforts to build a 21st century transportation system.

A clean energy economy will also benefit from maintaining EPA's existing authority to protect the health of all Americans by curtailing air and water pollution, including its legal obligation to control carbon dioxide pollution under the 2007 Supreme Court ruling. Keeping our air and water clean will protect the health of workers, their families, and communities, spur innovation, and benefit the economy by reducing health care costs. At the same time, investments and policies should be established to assist companies in retooling and becoming more efficient to provide for a just transition and to ensure fair competition internationally.

We need a bold, nationwide effort — a mission on the scale of the Apollo space program — to invest in key industries if we want to see the return of widespread prosperity across the country. We look forward to working with you as you roll out this agenda and as we continue to implement the Jobs21! plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David A. Foster". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

David A. Foster
Executive Director
BlueGreen Alliance