



CREATING GOOD JOBS, A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT, AND A FAIR AND THRIVING ECONOMY

## **The BlueGreen Alliance Opposes Deep Cuts to Key Programs for Workers and the Environment in the President's FY18 Budget**

May 25, 2017

The Honorable Rodney P. Frelinghuysen  
Chairman  
House Committee on Appropriations  
H-305 Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Diane Black  
Chairman  
House Committee on the Budget  
B-234 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Appropriations  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Yarmuth  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on the Budget  
134 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen, Ranking Member Lowey, Chairman Black, and Ranking Member Yarmuth:

As a coalition of the nation's largest labor unions and environmental groups, collectively representing millions of members and supporters, we write to strongly oppose the damaging cuts to critical agencies and programs outlined in the President's FY18 Budget.

President Trump's Budget is an all out attack on working families that will lead to unsafe workplaces and more polluted communities. It represents a broken promise to the American people, and it demonstrates that the priorities of this Administration are to gut the agencies and programs that Americans rely on: programs that invest in workers and hard-hit communities; ensure safe workplaces; spur innovation and economic growth; and protect our environment and planet for future generations. The proposed cuts would put workers in danger on the job; subject communities to greater risk of industrial pollution, spills and explosions; and stifle economic growth and innovation.

We are particularly concerned that this proposed budget makes significant cuts—or completely eliminates—agencies and programs that:

### ***Invest in Hard-Hit Communities***

President Trump's budget abandons promises made to communities hit hard by the decline of coal and other economically distressed communities. It eliminates the Economic Development Administration (EDA) from the Department of Commerce, which provides small grants and planning assistance to support small businesses, community revitalization projects, and infrastructure repair; terminates the Department of the Interior's Abandoned Mine Land (AML)

program, which cleans up retired coal mines and revitalizes coal communities; and eliminates funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), an independent agency that funds business, entrepreneurs, job training, and infrastructure development projects in 13 states in the Appalachian region, with particular focus on economically distressed communities.

### ***Ensure Worker and Community Safety***

President Trump's budget cuts nearly 20 percent from the Department of Labor (DOL) and over 31 percent from the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) budget, including \$129 million for enforcement. With these cut-backs, the agencies tasked with protecting workers and communities would not be able to implement and enforce key protections already on the books. This includes regulations like the nation's long-standing industrial safety rules, which help protect communities, workers, and emergency responders from catastrophic industrial chemical releases, fires, and explosions. These cuts would ensure fewer inspectors are on the job and more people are placed in harm's way.

The budget also eliminates the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board, an independent agency that investigates chemical disasters and makes recommendations to improve industrial safety practices. It also eliminates funding for the DOL's Occupational Safety and Health Administration Susan Harwood Training Grant Program, which funds training programs for workers and employers in high-hazard industries in order to maintain safety and worker protection in the workplace.

### ***Protect our Environment for Future Generations***

The proposed cuts would also significantly undermine the implementation and enforcement of laws like the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act, which for decades have protected our environment and public health. While the budget includes a modest increase to the EPA's Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (DWSRF), it would eliminate critical programs like the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and Chesapeake Bay program, which protect regional watersheds, as well as the Department of Agriculture's Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Program, which provides funding for clean drinking water systems, sewage disposal systems, and stormwater drainage for rural households and businesses.

Furthermore, the record illustrates that the rules currently on the books right now have not adequately protected American workers, our environment, or climate. Yet, gutting the EPA's budget would mean even fewer staff to do the work of developing new safeguards for our environment and communities. This budget would mean more pollution in our waterways, drinking water, and the air we breathe. Of course, these clean air, water, and climate protections also support critical outdoor industries, and they ensure that America's families and sportsmen and women can continue to enjoy some of our nation's most treasured places.

### ***Spur Innovation and Economic Growth***

The President's budget eliminates a number of programs and grants that spur innovation, generate economic growth, and create jobs. For example, despite the administration's repeated commitment to infrastructure investment, the President's budget would eliminate federal funding for dozens of new transit projects pending across the country. Robust, ongoing transit investments are not only critical to support local economic development and workers' access to

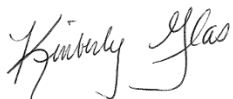
jobs and opportunity, but they support transportation manufacturing jobs far from the projects themselves. The proposed budget would also terminate the popular Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) competitive grant program, which funds innovative transportation projects targeted at spurring local, regional, and state economic development.

Similarly, hundreds of thousands of manufacturing workers nationwide are working today building the technology that increases fuel economy and cuts emissions under soundly structured vehicle standards that spur innovation and investment in the automotive industry. Proposed cuts to EPA would not only impact effective transportation rulemaking and agency staff, but preeminent government technical centers and resources as well, such as the vehicle testing and certification laboratory at EPA's Office of Transportation Air Quality. This cavalier attitude could result in investment-stifling uncertainty, loss of world-leading technical expertise and oversight, and harm to American consumers and manufacturing leadership.

The budget would clearly threaten the nation's global competitiveness and innovation edge when it comes to energy. The budget eliminates funding for the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy (ARPA-E), a program at the Department of Energy (DOE) that promotes innovative technology research and development. It would also eliminate funding for all DOE loan programs, including its Innovative Technology Loan Guarantee Program, Renewable Energy and Efficiency Projects Solicitation, and Advanced Technology Vehicles Manufacturing Loan (ATVM) Program—programs that ensure that we not only invent the next generation of technology in America, but manufacture it here too. It would also dismantle much of the government's work on climate change, which is critical not only to the environment we leave our children but to our economic strength. Policies and programs that invest in low-carbon energy and energy-efficient technologies help spur innovation, investment, and manufacturing while ensuring that the U.S. does not fall behind in the development and commercialization of the technologies that are driving a growing share of economic growth around the world.

Ultimately, Americans want strong protections for the workplace and the environment. They also want to lead the world in the kind of innovation that will create quality jobs in the U.S. while ensuring we leave a clean and safe environment for future generations. They want the government to work for them and count on hard-working government employees carrying out essential tasks in many communities. We urge Congress to reject this budget and instead move forward with an alternative plan that serves America's working families.

Sincerely,



Kim Glas  
Executive Director  
BlueGreen Alliance