



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

October 21, 2021

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Chairman, Committee on Finance
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Chairman Wyden:

As leaders of the BlueGreen Alliance, a coalition of some of the nation's largest labor unions and environmental organizations, collectively representing millions of members and supporters, we urge you to ensure the budget reconciliation package includes targeted funding for dislocated energy workers. America's energy transition is well underway, but a transition that is fair for workers and communities isn't something that will happen organically. Prioritizing and targeting federal resources to workers and communities in places impacted by this shift must be a deliberate choice.

That's why we're supporting a new bill unveiled last week authored by Sens. Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Bob Casey (D-PA), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Tina Smith (D-MN), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), and Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) called the American Energy Worker Opportunity Act. We respectfully request that the provisions of this legislation be included in the Senate's Build Back Better bill. It would provide a minimum investment of \$32 billion over 10 years to assist workers who are laid off as the nation shifts to cleaner, cheaper clean energy sources. This funding would provide wage replacement or supplementation; retirement contribution and healthcare benefits; and make available education and training grants to workers whose employment is terminated from a coal mine, coal-fired power plant, a business involved in coal transport, or an oil refinery. Additionally, the bill would direct educational grants for the children of dislocated workers.

Congress has the responsibility to ensure that the impact of a shifting economy and emission reduction targets does not fall disproportionately on the workers who have powered our nation for generations. Instead, we must provide these workers with comprehensive, wrap-around supports so they can enter new careers that provide high-quality jobs with family-sustaining wages.

Accessing existing federal programs often leaves dislocated workers with an impossible choice between training for the job they want or training for the job they need right now to support their families. Existing federal programs, such as those to access unemployment insurance and employment and training services, are insufficient to meet the needs for these workers. While it's critical we reform these programs for the long term to better support all workers, we have an opportunity to provide a targeted set of supports in the upcoming reconciliation package for workers impacted by energy transition.

This situation is very real for many workers across our economy. As Congress moves to advance legislation that builds back better and directs funding towards programs that combat the climate crisis and accelerate the deployment of clean technologies, robust support for dislocated energy workers must be included as a top priority.

Sincerely,

Collin O'Mara
President and Chief Executive Officer
National Wildlife Federation

Manish Bapna
President
Natural Resources Defense Council

Fred Krupp
President
Environmental Defense Fund

Mary Kay Henry
International President
Service Employees International Union

Gene Karpinski
President
League of Conservation Voters

Michael Brune
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James Slevin
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Utility Workers Union of America

Randi Weingarten
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American Federation of Teachers

Jason Walsh
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BlueGreen Alliance

Thomas Conway
International President
United Steelworkers

Kathleen Rest
Executive Director
Union of Concerned Scientists

Timothy Driscoll
President
International Union of Bricklayers and Allied
Craftworkers

CC: Speaker Nancy Pelosi
Chairman Richard Neal