



BlueGreen Alliance California Newsletter March 2025

Spring is in the air and the legislature is in full swing. BGA has been working on a variety of topics, including the release of a new survey on voters' perceptions of unions, tracking our partners' legislative priorities, and continuing our work on building decarbonization and offshore wind. We also attended the CEC's Electrification Summit, where our partner Sheet Metal Workers Local 104 participated in a panel on workforce development that is spotlighted below.

ICYMI:

A [new survey](#) of 1,189 likely voters across the country conducted by Data for Progress and the BlueGreen Alliance found that bipartisan majorities of participants believe union neutrality agreements improve workplaces and they prefer companies that commit to such agreements. A bipartisan majority of voters (63%) support union neutrality agreements—a commitment made by a company to not engage in a campaign to discourage their workers from organizing a union. In addition, 56% of participants said they would be more likely to support climate infrastructure projects if a company committed to remaining neutral.

“It is clear that the American people understand the immense power of collective bargaining, and they prefer businesses who don't trample on the rights of working people to organize into unions,” said **BlueGreen Alliance Executive Director Jason Walsh**. “Businesses benefit from empowering workers. Communities know that unions are more likely to secure higher wages for workers, especially those without college degrees, who come from low-income communities, and who identify as a person of color. People know their rights and their value in the workplace, and they prefer companies who respect that.”

Legislative Update:

While the BGA coalition has not taken any positions on bills, we wanted to highlight some legislation our partners are working on:

USW is sponsoring [SB 513 \(Durazo\)](#) that would ensure that personnel records related to an employee's performance include education and training records and would require the records to be accurately maintained to include this information. As California transitions to

a clean economy, many workers who have lost employment have had their training and education certificates withheld which prevents their ability to find jobs in other sectors. Many refinery workers are trained on the job, and this bill will ensure their credentials are available across sectors.

UAW is sponsoring legislation [SB 787 \(McNerney\)](#) that will create an office in the CEC to coordinate supply chain build out in the offshore wind, battery, and building decarbonization and heat pump sectors. The goal is to take California's leadership in the climate space to the next level and accelerate decarbonization while creating high road, union jobs.

CFT is sponsoring [AB 832 \(Muratsuchi\)](#) that will extend funding allocated under the California Schools Healthy Air, Plumbing, and Efficiency Ventilation Program (CalSHAPE).

Spotlight: SMART Panel at Electrification Summit

Last week, Sheet Metal Workers (SMART) Local Union 104 participated in a panel during the CEC's Electrification Summit in Sacramento, highlighting the successes in workforce development when it comes to heat pump installations. California's decarbonization goals need a highly trained workforce and success stories in training and implementing the clean energy workforce are already out there and should be scaled up.

High road training partnerships and union apprenticeships are driving a sustainable future and are developed to create good jobs for those with fewer opportunities. The California Jobs First economic blueprint framed workforce development strategies to advance investments and solidify California's leadership. The high road model is a strong solution to equity in the workforce and ensures these opportunities are accessible to workers from all backgrounds.

SMART apprentice Junuen-Mariah Ruiz shared her experiences with how being a union member has greatly benefited her life. Junuen is a domestic abuse survivor and was exposed to sheet metal workers through a women's training cohort at the Rising Sun Center for Opportunity. Junuen is a mom of three and was able to get an apprenticeship with sheet metal workers that has allowed her the stability and benefits she needs to support her children. The healthcare provided to her and her family allows her peace of mind and the reassurance that she can focus on her career while being able to raise her family.

The panel also focused on the importance of a highly trained workforce and the benefits to not just the workers, but to the consumer and society as a whole.

"As California transitions to a clean economy, it is essential that the consumer does not lose confidence in newer technologies because they were installed incorrectly," said **Chris Ruch, Codes and Standards Representative for the Sheet Metal Workers' Local Union 104**. "SMART union members are highly trained, ensuring that heat pumps and HVAC systems

are installed correctly and work as intended. State approved apprenticeships teach you about system understanding from start to end, all while providing high road benefits such as full family medical care and a modest pension so workers can retire with dignity.”

Thanks for reading! If you have any questions, comments, or feedback on what you want us to cover, please let us know: fgracey@bluegreenalliance.org

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The BlueGreen Alliance (BGA) unifies labor unions and environmental organizations into a powerful force working for an economy that fights climate change, protects the health of people and the environment, stands against economic and racial inequality, and creates and maintains good-paying, union jobs in communities across the country.

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