

# **Alameda County Central Labor Council Climate and Environmental Justice Caucus Mission Statement**

## **Resolution Adopted June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

Due to the alarming advance of scientifically-confirmed, human-caused climate change, the Alameda Labor Council's historical support of strong economic, environmental and health protections for working families and their communities, and the urgency to take action to transition to a more sustainable, just and clean economy now, this Council affirms that:

- The labor movement plays a major role as a force for progressive change and for social and economic justice,
- Labor has a vested interest in addressing the challenge of climate change, and
- We are stronger when we act together as Labor, and with frontline communities, environmental organizations and community allies.

This Council recognizes the impact that historical discriminatory industrial and housing development policies and resulting environmental degradation have had on the lives and health of workers and their families, noting that these negative effects disproportionately impact those communities with the least power.

We believe that the reliance on market-based solutions to the current climate crisis will only deepen social, racial, environmental and economic inequities, and is a central obstacle to achieving a sustainable and just economy. We know from experience that the labor movement must help shape the conversation if we are to affect positive change for working people.

The Alameda Labor Council rejects the myth that we must choose between good jobs and a clean environment, and is committed to vigorously promoting a just transition to a sustainable energy economy, steadily diminishing our reliance on fossil fuels as we support smart, inclusive and just development that provides opportunities for family-sustaining jobs to all workers. We will also promote equitable mitigation of the impacts of climate change, for example, flooding caused by sea level rise that will flood low-lying working-class residential areas, e.g., "the flats".

Therefore, the Alameda Labor Council hereby establishes a Climate and Environmental Justice Caucus to:

- Educate and engage our members and communities about the urgency of this crisis and our role in tangible solutions to avoid dire consequences for our children, grandchildren and future generations

- Provide political advocacy to support the creation and protection of good local jobs related to reducing greenhouse gases and mitigating the impacts of climate change in the building maintenance and operations of renewable energy, water, public transit, transportation, healthcare, and other sectors
- Demand that workers who might be displaced be retrained for the new economy jobs, offered early retirement without loss of benefits, and otherwise protected from having to bear the social cost of making this essential transition
- Advocate that a just transition not only protect those whose present employment is affected but must also open opportunities for those who have historically been denied those opportunities as a consequence of racial, ethnic, gender and other barriers to entry and ensure that the clean economy is creating local union career opportunities for all working people
- Encourage Labor to examine our own practices, such as how pension funds could be better invested to promote the transition to clean energy while ensuring retirement security
- Actively build working partnerships with local environmental and social justice groups

With these commitments, it is incumbent on the caucus to serve as a policy advisory body to the Council to assure that Labor's agenda consistently includes a mindful climate and environmental justice focus. Labor's concerns must also be present in larger community and regional discussions of environmental and climate issues.