

SAN FRANCISCO LABOR COUNCIL ENDORSES GREEN NEW DEAL

- Martha Hawthorne, SEIU 1021

The statement issued on April 12 by the San Francisco Labor Council announces passage of the resolution, "A Green New Deal Must Have Strong Labor and Community Provisions." The resolution was submitted by International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Locals 6 and 1245, and was approved on March 25 by the SFLC Executive Committee, then amended unanimously by the delegate body on April 8. The amendment:

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, the San Francisco Labor Council, AFL-CIO, goes on record to request the AFL-CIO endorse House Resolution 109 and Senate Resolution 59 - *Recognizing the Duty of the Federal Government to Create a Green New Deal*, and urges all Congressional Representatives to cosponsor the Resolutions.

Because this is the first action by a Labor Council to explicitly endorse the Congressional Resolutions, it's important to note the significance of the amendment. Many delegates voiced their support, although few delegates from the building trades were present and none of them spoke up.

Conny Ford, Office and Professional Employees International Union 29:

"When your 8-year-old granddaughter asks you what are you doing to stop climate change, it is another strong reminder of the urgency of this work. I want to make sure that for those of you who have not read the actual language of HR 109, here is one of many articles referring to Labor:

Article G - 'ensuring that the Green New Deal mobilization creates high-quality union jobs that pay prevailing wages, hires local workers, offers training and advancement opportunities and guarantees wage and benefit parity for workers affected by the transition'

Please note that this resolution was written by IBEW 6 and 1245. The jobs component is strong and gives us a strong voice at the table when future decisions are made and, just as importantly, gives me the opportunity to tell my granddaughter that the SF Labor Movement is doing everything we can to build a future for her and her kids and grandkids."

Ed Kinchley, SEIU 1021

"We need to adopt this amendment because it is important for labor to be at the table as this Green New Deal develops. We have already taken a stand in favor of a Green New Deal, but now there are Congressional resolutions to start making it happen. We need to be at that table."

Kathy Setian, IFPTE Local 20 :

"The engineers and scientists at the US EPA Region 9 are represented by IFPTE Local 20 (Engineers and Scientists of CA). Our workers are under attack, and our work itself is under siege. We support real actions to stem climate change and protect workers, not just lip service."

Frank Martin del Campo, SF Labor Council for Latin American Advancement:

"We unite with all previous speakers and support the clearly focused amendment. The interests of Labor are inextricably linked with determined, fearless and convincing youth whose powerful voices have shaped and formed the debate. We stand in their shadows. Solidaridad."

After the meeting, the discussion continued.

Jonny Kocher, IFPTE 21:

“I’m a member of the Sunrise Movement Bay Area and a proud member of IFPTE Local 21. It’s great to see teachers, nurses, stage hands, hotel workers, all united in solidarity under one roof. It was my first meeting at a Labor Council, because I’m not a delegate...yet. I was deeply grateful to see this amended resolution pass tonight! We only have 11 years left to radically decarbonize our society and we need everyone in this fight if we are going to win! “

Susan Soloman President, United Educators of San Francisco:

“I was ready to speak to the amendment, but when our Executive Director, Rudy Gonzalez asked for someone with an opposing view and there was none, I knew the resolution would pass. UESF passed a similar resolution just a few days ago.”

There are now 103 congresspeople who have co sponsored HR 109 and SR 59, including Kamala Harris, Barbara Lee and Ro Khanna and Jackie Spier. All major presidential candidates have declared their support. However Nancy Pelosi and Diane Feinstein have not signed on. The strong “Final Resolve” of the San Francisco Labor Council must not be ignored.

The mobilization for a Green New Deal is essential for the survival of the Labor Movement. Climate disruption affects all workers now. The crisis of income inequality and lack of affordable housing is especially evident in San Francisco. The affluent can afford to move into resilient cities like SF while our members and families are displaced to live farther from their workplaces, to locations with worse air quality, less public transport, and fewer resources to deal with the effects of climate crisis.

Maria Guillen, Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1021, shared a Haiku she wrote,

“The Youth are protesting -
Don’t buy us toys when we need
Clean air and water.

The youth are marching,
Damn adults in denial,
Their future calls them.

The youth will not quit,
Perhaps Labor taught them well,
When we fight, we win.

Labor, is change hard?
Not as hard knowing we fail,
Keeping status quo.

Forest fires blaze
Ice caps melt into tear drops
Hurricanes untamed

Please support amendment.
Let there be a green new deal
Let’s save the planet.”

Rudy Gonzalez, Executive Director of SFLC, summed it up by acknowledging IBEW Locals 6 and 1245 for submitting the resolution and thanked all the delegates who participated in the discussion and vote.