



News of how working people are fighting for a planet that is sustainable -- environmentally, economically, and socially. If you like what we are doing and want to connect, please sign up for our newsletter and other information on the Labor Network for Sustainability website ([Sign up here!](#)). You are welcome to repost anything in this newsletter to spread the word!



Help us build a powerful national organization for workers and communities to confront climate change. Membership is open to anyone interested and who endorses our [mission and principles](#).

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**Climacon2: Building Power for Workers to Confront
Climate Change**



From September 23-24, 2017, the Labor Network for Sustainability (LNS) convened our Second Labor Convergence on Climate (ClimaCon2) in Silver Spring, MD.

The Convergence process was launched at ClimaCon1 in January 2016 as a bottom-up organizing process for workers in traditional unions, other forms of worker organizing and labor support organizations to develop worker-led strategies to confront the climate change crisis. Since then, LNS has identified hundreds of people in the labor movement committed to confronting the climate crisis and has worked to connect them to the network.

ClimaCon2 represented the culmination of these 18 months of organizing. The theme for this year was "Building Worker Power to Confront Climate Change." We sought to provide a space for this growing base of elected leaders, organizers and rank and file activists to learn about their respective efforts, and update our organizing priorities and strategies for the next year. Over 130 people participated with representation from 17 unions, 3 state federations/central labor councils and 6 labor support organizations (labor centers, policy groups, etc.) as well as key environmental and economic justice allies.

The importance of broad-based coalitions rooted in worker and environmental justice was repeatedly noted as a key to success in local and state campaigns. A strong public sector and democratically run institutions and industries was another fundamental thread. This includes expanded public transit, publicly-owned energy systems, a publicly run-development bank as a vehicle to capture and reinvest divested pension funds, democratically run rural electric co-ops, and massive public investment in renewable infrastructure and just transition. At the end, one participant noted, "With my local, I want to work on creating a vision of what my local, my union, and my industry would look like at 100% sustainability. Also get training and bring that to my local."

For a full downloadable report on the Convergence [Visit Here](#)

Storm Devastation

Those seeking to contribute to labor-led support for the victims of Hurricane Maria can donate on-line at the website of the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement [Here](#)

Union Workers Volunteer to Help Puerto Rico

In the aftermath of hurricane Maria, the AFL-CIO teamed up with the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA (AFA-CWA), Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA), Machinists (IAM) and United Airlines to fly more than 300 first responders and skilled volunteers to Puerto Rico to help with relief and rebuilding efforts.

The flight was a response to the urgent need to get highly skilled workers to Puerto Rico to help people seeking medical and humanitarian assistance, as well as to help with the rebuilding effort. The nurses, doctors, electricians, engineers, carpenters and truck drivers on the flight will engage in various efforts, including helping clear road blockages, caring for hospital patients, delivering emergency supplies, and restoring power and communications. More than 20 unions have members on the flight.

Learn more about the relief effort [Here](#)

Harvey and Irma Show Climate Change is the Real Job Killer

According to MIT hurricane and climate professor Kerry Emanuel More, frequent and more intense storms fit what scientists expect to see accompany global warming. Physics, computer simulations and numerous scientific studies show that as the world warms [the strongest storms should get wetter and more intense, and probably more frequent.](#)

And the message is getting through: [the majority of Americans say that global climate change contributed to the severity of recent hurricanes in Florida and Texas.](#)

What has been the impact on jobs? [According to the Los Angeles Times](#)

"Hurricanes Harvey and Irma walloped the labor market last month, causing the nation to lose jobs for the first time in seven years," according to the U.S. Labor Department.

Total non-farm employment declined by a net 33,000 jobs in September compared with an upwardly revised gain of 169,000 the previous month. The Labor Department said 1.5 million workers - the most in 20 years - were not at their jobs during the survey week last month because of bad weather.

Restaurants and bars took the biggest hit. Total employment in September declined by 105,000 "as many workers were off payrolls due to the recent hurricanes." The sector had averaged job growth of 24,000 over the previous

Unions Submit Resolutions on Climate to AFL-CIO Convention

Several resolutions on climate change and just transition have been forwarded to the AFL-CIO for consideration at its upcoming convention. The Washington State Labor Council and Communications Workers of America submitted a resolution on Just Transition. National Nurses United, Amalgamated Transit Union, American Postal Workers Union, Alameda Central Labor Council and the Vermont AFL-CIO also submitted resolutions urging labor leadership on climate change.

Open Letter: Take a strong stand on climate change

Open Letter from Union Members and Our Families to American Labor Leaders TAKE A STRONG STAND ON CLIMATE CHANGE!

To the leaders of the American labor movement:

Working people, poor people, and frontline communities are most heavily impacted by the effects of climate change. We feel the force of this devastation first and worst-from more powerful hurricanes to wildfires, from rising sea levels to crop-destroying droughts and floods. Our families and communities receive the greatest blow and have the biggest stake in moving as rapidly as possible from a fossil fuel-based society to a sustainable energy society.

Global warming represents an existential threat to the world's people. We must act rapidly to avoid even more devastating climate change. But moving to 100% renewable energy will also impact jobs for many of us. So any transition, to be just, must protect workers and frontline communities impacted by the changes we must make from having to disproportionately bear rather than share the social cost.

Organized labor with its allies is the strongest, best-organized force to turn this around. Who will speak for the global majority of working people and poor people if organized labor does not?

The Earth is our only home. There is no Planet B. And there are no jobs on a dead planet. As union members and families of union members, we call on you to take the lead in backing policies that call for: (1) A rapid transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy; (2) Massive rebuilding of our energy, transport, and other infrastructure in support of that transformation; and (3) A just transition for workers and communities directly affected by climate change and the transition to renewable energy - including income support, retraining, retirement security,

and the creation of quality living-wage union-protected jobs in infrastructure, energy efficiency, and clean energy.

Future generations will ask what the labor movement did to respond to, slow and mitigate the worst effects of climate change. We urge you to take bold action to address the climate crisis with solutions that protect our planet and our people. You will have my full backing for these policies and the backing of millions of working Americans who are looking for your leadership at this critical moment.

The actions we take today will determine the world that our children, grandchildren, and future generations will inhabit tomorrow and for centuries to come. Let's act decisively now to improve rather than imperil their lives.

To sign on to the open letter follow [This Link](#)

Passing a climate resolution in your union

LNS is making available a template for unions and their locals to initiate dialogue and action on climate change. The Labor Convergence on Climate will seek to get hundreds of these passed in the next year.

Draft Sample Union Resolution on Climate Change and the Labor Network for Sustainability

Whereas:

- The labor movement seeks a sustainable future for the earth and its people;
- Climate change represents a mortal threat to working people, the labor movement, and society at large;
- We have to reduce greenhouse gas emissions fast. The time for slow, careful, cautious approaches is long past.
- Minimizing climate catastrophe requires a planned elimination of coal, oil, and natural gas emissions, as well as emissions from agriculture, waste, and other sources. It requires a rapid movement toward 100% renewable energy. That requires a planned, rapid construction of renewable energy infrastructure on a massive scale, comparable to the economic mobilization that the U.S. undertook during World War II;
- As the threat of climate change mounts, the rich continue to get richer, the poor get poorer, and working people get slammed. Fortunately, we can address both the climate crisis and the inequality crisis with the same set of policies. As a labor movement we need to re-center our priorities around these challenges;
- Climate protection must serve as a means to challenge environmental, racial, and gender injustice;
- Labor's climate policy should insist on the basic principle of fairness that the burden of policies that are necessary for society-like protecting the climate-shouldn't be borne by a small minority who happen to be victimized by their side effects. A labor plan for climate protection should

insist from the outset that any transition away from fossil fuels includes protection for the well-being of workers and communities whose jobs may be threatened;

- Full employment and economic security for all must be a central part of a labor program for climate protection because the threat of unemployment forces workers and unions to accept any jobs, even those that are destroying their own futures. Climate protecting jobs must provide a decent income, benefits, and the basic right of workers to speak, to organize, and to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing;
- It is the mission of the Labor Convergence on Climate (a project of the Labor Network for Sustainability) to be the organized voice within the labor movement for policies that are ecologically sustainable while also advancing the movement for good jobs and a just transition for workers and communities hurt by the effects of climate change and by the transition to renewable energy. Paragraphs 1-8 above summarize the principles of the Labor Convergence on Climate;

Therefore, be it resolved that (*name of union*)

1. Endorses the principles of the Labor Convergence on Climate and agrees to affiliate with the Labor Network for Sustainability; and
2. Establishes a committee on climate change that will appoint an individual to be the liaison with the Labor Convergence on Climate.
(www.labor4sustainability.org)

If you want to adapt this resolution for your own union, you can find some suggestions in the "[LNS Guide to Union Resolutions on Climate](#)."

Workers Must be in the Driver's Seat to Combat Climate Crisis

Sarita Gupta, executive director of Jobs with Justice and Labor Network for Sustainability board member, interviewed at the Second Labor Convergence on Climate, told Real News

The labor movement needs to provide a clear analysis of who is responsible for climate change, so that the powerful don't take advantage or crises to blame "the other."

See the whole interview [Here](#)

Union Scientists Speaking out for Science

Climate Scientists Carly Ebben Eaton and Anke Schennink, members of UAW local 5810 representing 7,000 Postdoc researchers at University of California

and Lawrence Berkeley Lab, presented a simple, graphic explanation of climate change to the Alameda Labor Council, AFL-CIO. They quote the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC):

Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, and since the 1950s, many of the observed changes are unprecedented over decades to millennia. The atmosphere has warmed, the amount of snow and ice have diminished, and sea level has risen.

To download their PowerPoint presentation for yourself or your union:

[Visit Here](#)

Just transition for coal workers and communities

Diane Cardwell of the *New York Times* recently visited devastated U.S. coal mining communities

The New York Times recently sent a reporter to find out "What's Up in Coal Country" and found the answer is "Alternative-Energy Jobs." The headline for Diane Cardwell's September 30 article noted "Miners may have just the skills for scaling wind towers and putting solar panels on roofs. And that's no small thing in Wyoming and West Virginia."

In Wyoming, home to the nation's most productive coal region by far, the American subsidiary of a Chinese maker of wind turbines is putting together a training program for technicians in anticipation of a large power plant it expects to supply. And in West Virginia, a nonprofit outfit called [Solar Holler](#) - "Mine the Sun," reads the tagline on its website - is working with another group, [Coalfield Development](#), to train solar panel installers and seed an entire industry.

For more, [Visit Here](#)

LA Times: California Unions and Climate Change

An article in the *LA Times* noted that an array of California unions provided "vocal support for fighting climate change" and "willingness to embrace green issues" scorned by national labor groups "bent or blocked" environmental proposals in this year's legislature. The article concluded by quoting Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de Leon, "It's going to be really important in the immediate future that we bridge the gap between labor and clean energy."

For the entire story [Visit Here](#)

We need your support to accomplish the work ahead. Your individual contributions will provide LNS with the resources we need for bold, independent action that will be necessary to accomplish our goals.

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