



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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## **AFL-CIO Passes First Resolution on Climate Change**

Join Together.  
Fight Together.  
Win Together.

At its Quadrennial Convention in late October, the AFL-CIO unanimously adopted a resolution on ["Climate Change, Energy, and Union Jobs"](#)

The resolution says that the fastest and most equitable way to address climate change is for "labor to be at the center of creating solutions that reduce emissions while investing in our communities, maintaining and creating high-wage union jobs, and reducing poverty."

If acted on, the resolution will bring about significant changes in organized labor and will bring American trade unions into far closer alignment with allies in the climate protection movement.

The AFL-CIO has never endorsed science-based targets and timetables for greenhouse gas reduction. This resolution still fails to do so. The AFL-CIO has also long endorsed an "all the above" energy policy which does not advocate for the transition to fossil-free energy at all, let alone on a timetable necessary to protect against catastrophic climate change. This resolution endorses renewable energy and energy efficiency, but also carbon capture and storage and nuclear power. It does not call for even a reduction in the burning of fossil fuel.

According to insiders, the decision by the leadership of the AFL-CIO to propose this resolution may well have resulted in part from the fact that a number of unions and state labor councils submitted far stronger climate resolutions, and that rank-and-file groups organized to support them.

Overall, this resolution represents a powerful statement of labor's stake in protecting the climate. However, it retains many of the assumptions and approaches that have often put unions at loggerheads with concrete climate protection efforts. Whether it actually represents a new beginning or just old wine in new bottles will largely depend on the growing sector of the labor movement that is committed to putting labor "at the center of creating solutions that reduce emissions while investing in our communities, maintaining and creating high-wage union jobs, and reducing poverty."

For a more extended analysis, see ["The New AFL-CIO Stand on Climate Change: What Does It Mean for Labor and the Climate?"](#).

By Jeremy Brecher

For video of the debate on the resolution [Visit Here](#)

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## NY Unions Say: Divest NY

New York City Public Worker Pension Funds are on the cusp of selling off or divesting from their fossil fuel stocks. How and why are NYC workers and climate

activists so intent on achieving this? What will it mean if they win this? How can pension fund divestment be a tool for climate justice? To find out, read "[NYC Public Pension Funds Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign](#)" by Nancy Romer.



Nancy Romer is a union and climate justice activist, a co-founder of the Environmental Justice committee of her union PSC-CUNY (AFT local #2334), and a member of the steering committees of Divest NY. She writes:



After five years of pushing for city public pension funds to divest from fossil fuel stocks, providing educational materials, lobbying efforts with politicians and pension board members, meetings with union rank and file and leaders, NYC workers have finally shifted on pension funds and climate change. The Divest NY coalition, now joined by activists and leaders in AFSCME District Council 37, United Federation of Teachers, Professional Staff Congress (CUNY-

AFT), and supported by Democratic Socialists of America activists, has expanded our reach through a petition drive, extensive leafleting, demonstrations outside of pension board meetings and presentations and resolutions at union meetings.

**On November 29 there will be a [8:30 am rally for divestment, followed by a 9:30 am Public Hearing on Climate Change](#) announced by New York City Public Advocate Tish James. Join at Borough of Manhattan Community College, Fiterman Hall, Conference Rooms 1306/7 245, Greenwich Street, New York, NY 10007**

## Update: Toward a Just Transition at Huntley

When NRG announced the retirement of the Huntley coal fired power plant at Tonawanda, NY, local unions and community groups were prepared. They had formed the Huntley Coalition and won \$30 million in the New York state budget for Tonawanda and other communities facing power plant closings.



(See "[Huntley, a Case Study: Building Strategic Alliances for Real Change](#)" by

Over the past year, 1,000 Tonawanda residents have participated in [Tonawanda Tomorrow](#), a community partnership with the Town of Tonawanda, community groups, local businesses, organized labor and residents. The effort is focused on "creating good-paying jobs for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, preparing our residents and workers for those jobs, and reinvesting in our community to preserve what makes Tonawanda such a great place to do business and raise a family." Now they have published [Tonawanda Tomorrow](#), an economic development plan with a vision and action steps to rebuild and shore up the revenue gap left by the plant's retirement. Next step: Take action to ensure the site is remediated.

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## **Something Smells Whitefish-y in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico**

As outside investors make a grab for PREPA, Puerto Rico's stricken electric power authority, Puerto Rican unions are playing a key role in pushing back - for example, by helping force cancellation of a \$300 million contract with tiny Montana-based Whitefish Energy. [See an interview with Angel Figueroa Jaramillo](#), head of UTIER, the Puerto Rican electrical workers union.

Delegates to the October AFL-CIO Convention [passed a resolution](#) calling on Congress "to enact a long-term moratorium on payments of all Puerto Rican public debt, followed by debt forgiveness, to prioritize the lives of Puerto Ricans over debt payments to Wall Street and free up millions of dollars for both short- and long-term recovery efforts."

To donate to continuing relief effort in Puerto Rico go to the [Labor Council for Latin American Advancement](#).

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## **An Interview with LNS' Joe Uehlein: "Climate change is the real job killer"**

An interviewer from the Real News caught up with Joe Uehlein, President of the Labor Network for Sustainability, at the recent Labor Convergence on Climate. Uehlein told them if trade unionists truly want to protect jobs, they must address the effects of climate change on labor. The full interview can be found [Here](#).

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## **EPA Union Fights to Protect the Environment - and Members' Jobs**



"Are we here to protect human health and the environment, or are we here to make sure companies make a profit?" That's what John O'Grady, president of the Environmental Protection Agency's AFGE Council 238, asks about the Trump administration's EPA. Read the interview "[Meet the One EPA Employee Unafraid to Call Out Scott Pruitt](#)"

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## New York Climate Jobs Now! Summit

On October 27, leaders in state government joined environmental and labor organizations in a major conference on bringing 21<sup>st</sup>-Century clean jobs to New York. [The Climate Jobs Now! Summit](#) focused on combatting climate change and reversing inequality in states and regions across the country.



The growing Climate Jobs New York brings together workers that are directly-impacted by New York's energy advances, including the Greater NY Building & Construction Trades Council, Utility Workers Local 1-2, United Association Plumbers and Pipefitters in New York State, the New York City Central Labor Council AFL-CIO, 32BJ SEIU, TWU Local 100, and more. Climate Jobs New York members include solar installers, building engineers, MTA trackworkers, power plant operators, heat and frost insulators and many other "climate workers."

Mario Cilento, President of the New York State AFL-CIO, says, "This is a proactive approach in how we transition to new energy sources and transition to a new economy. The labor movement is proud to be at the forefront of a better and brighter tomorrow both in terms of the environment and the creation of long-term quality union jobs to help build up the middle class."

For a recording of the Summit [Visit Here](#)

To sign up for information on Climate Jobs New York [Visit Here](#)

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## Washington State Labor Council Resolves "A Just Transition to Renewable Energy"



Washington  
State Labor  
Council,  
AFL-CIO

At its recent convention the Washington State Labor Council [passed a resolution](#) calling for "A Just Transition to Renewable Energy to Combat Climate Change." It supported "a transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy" and pledged to support

legislation, administrative rules, or an initiative that enables a just transition for workers and communities directly affected by the transition to a renewable energy economy, providing income, benefit, wage insurance and retraining support for workers in the fossil fuel industries, and creates quality jobs in infrastructure, energy and efficiency, and the clean energy economy.

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## **Government Workers Will Pay the Price for Climate Change**

According to a new report from the Government Accountability Office, climate change is draining government treasuries, making it more difficult for public employees to bargain for fair wages and conditions. That will impact federal, state, and municipal workers, teachers, healthcare workers, and all others whose livelihood depends on public funding.

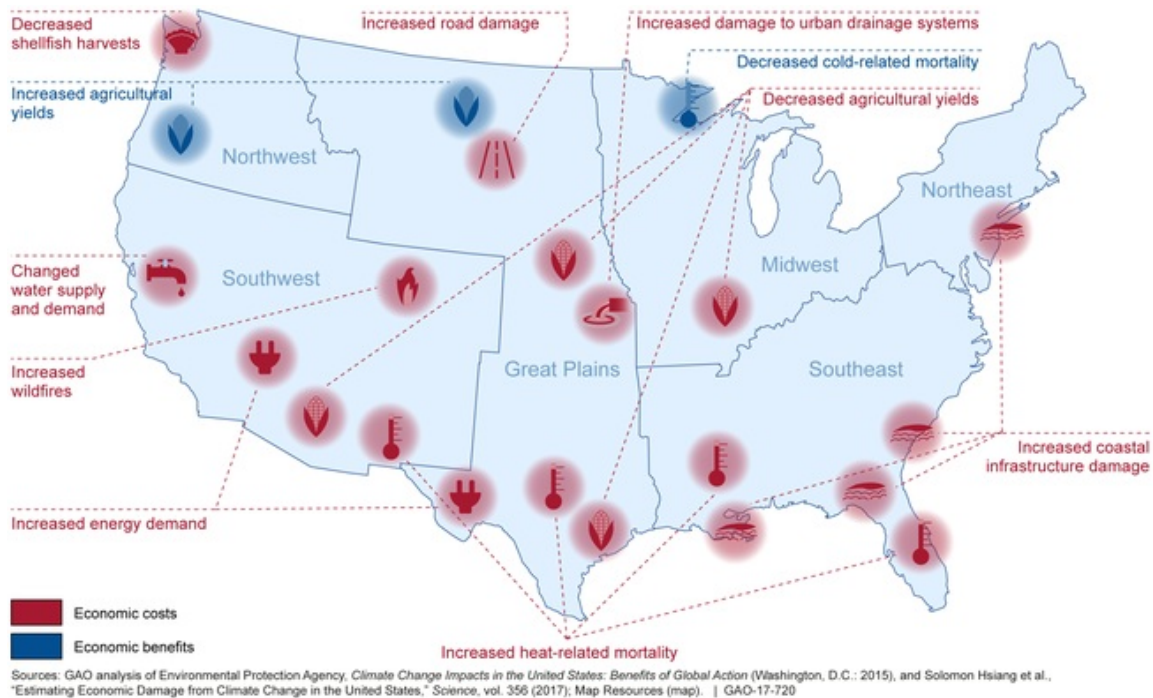
The report is called "[Climate Change: Information on Potential Economic Effects Could Help Guide Federal Efforts to Reduce Fiscal Exposure](#)"

It says that direct costs to the federal government for expenses like firefighting, flood insurance and payments for lost crops have come to about \$350 billion in the past decade. The GAO predicts that annual fiscal costs could increase by as much as \$35 billion a year by 2050, and by as much as \$112 billion by the end of the century.

State and local budgets are also deeply affected, but the effect varies by region. "The Southeast, Midwest and Great Plains regions will likely experience greater combined economic effects than other regions, largely because of coastal property damage in the Southeast and changes in crop yields in the Midwest and Great Plains." The West will suffer from increased drought, heat and wildfire. Each of these effects will reduce state and local tax bases, while increasing expenditure for emergency services, infrastructure repair, and other many other expenses.

The GAO estimates do not include many of the most damaging aspects of climate change that do not show up directly in the federal budget. They include hundreds of billions of projected damages from heat waves, droughts, wildfires, storms, and floods. These effects of climate change, while not directly included in the federal budget, are likely have a dramatic impact on the federal, state, and local tax base. They include annual costs before the end of the century of up to \$150 billion from lost work hours, \$89 billion in coastal impacts, \$87 billion in energy expenditures, and \$53 billion in crop yield losses.

### **Examples of Potential Economic Effects of Climate Change by 2100**



[Source Found Here](#)

## Pittsburgh Unions Join Enviro and Community Groups in Clean Rivers Campaign

Thomas Hoffman of the Sierra Club describes a community-labor-environment coalition to fight privatization and promote a \$2-4 billion sewer renewal for the city's regional water and sewer system. Hoffman writes,

The six organizations are Pittsburgh United, a PWF affiliate composed of labor, faith and community groups, Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network, a faith based organization, three enviro groups -Sierra Club, Clean Water Action and Nine Mile Run Watershed Association and Action United, a low income neighborhood organizing group. The Unions in Pittsburgh United (SEIU, UFCW and USWA) have been very supportive of the campaign because the neighborhoods where much of the green investments would happen are where their members live.

Hoffman writes, Pittsburgh is not unusual - many older industrial cities have the same problem. If you combine all the money that will be spent by these cities fixing this problem it totals to roughly half a trillion dollars.

To learn more, see "[Fighting for Green Solutions to Pittsburgh's Sewage in the Rivers Problem](#)" by Thomas Hoffman.

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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Donate today to [Labor Network for Sustainability](#) and help us build a future that works for all of us.

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