

## GI Bill for Workers

"Just Transition" is a policy approach aimed at ensuring no net loss of income for workers who lose jobs due to environmental action, trade agreements or other sweeping policies.

While trade pacts have decimated thousands of U.S. jobs, environmental laws have yet to cause similar economic damage. But the possibility exists if forceful environmental action is taken.

*In Canada, Just Transition is the reason Canadian unions back their nation's signing of the Kyoto Protocol.*

Just Transition presumes displaced workers should not pay more than others – in the form of their own lost wages – to achieve societal goals, whether they concern global warming or global trade, not to mention corporate profits. Among other benefits, those laid off would receive full wage replacement for an extended period and up to four years of full-time training or education benefits.

The federal G.I. Bill is an important precedent for Just Transition. The bill provided 17 million veterans with a living wage and tuition for up to four years. Critics claimed it was too expensive, but it is now viewed as the best manpower investment the U.S. ever made.

February/March 2003

# GREEN LABOR

*Canadian Labor Backs Kyoto, Just Transition*

## With science clear, many U.S. unions say... Time to Fight Global Warming

**I**t was big news in Canada in December when the country ratified the Kyoto Protocol on global climate change, joining every industrial nation in the world except Australia and the U.S.

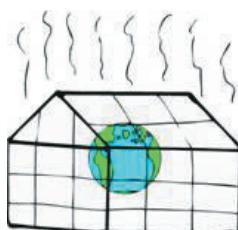
Of course scientific proof that the world is getting hotter is now

irrefutable. Even the industry-backed Bush administration reluctantly released its own report last June admitting the reality of global warming – and in the process exposed its strategy of trotting out junk science to slow environmental action.

Although it didn't make the papers in the U.S., it was also big news in the Canadian labor movement when the country's largest union of energy workers and the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) came out to support Kyoto.

In Canada, as in the U.S., opponents of the pact focused their attack on alleged job losses. But Canadian unions, led by the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP) and the CLC, made Just

Transition for displaced workers a condition of their support for the agreement. CEP even organized an intensive lobby effort, hosting "Kyoto Forums" across the country culminating in a public commitment by the Environment Minister to a transition program for workers.



**Will we tackle global warming in a way that protects workers and the environment, or in a way that makes big energy Corporations even richer?**

circulating among Canadian union members is that, to reach industry's estimate of 450,000 lost energy-related jobs, the toll would have to include all current and future workers, as well as thousands of

"The impacts on workers and their families should be kept very much in mind," noted Hassan Yussuff, Secretary-Treasurer of the CLC. "And 'Just Transition' has to be a central part of the Kyoto implementation plan."

So Corporations oppose Kyoto, but Canadian workers – whose jobs are on the line – support it. What gives?

One explanation is that business is wildly exaggerating potential job losses to scare the public. (A joke rumored to be

## Kyoto Lite

2002 was the second hottest year in recorded history – but the Bush administration appears determined to let the heat keep on rising.

The World Meteorological Organization, a United Nations agency, says the 10 warmest years have all been since 1987, nine since 1990.

In response, 102 countries have ratified or acceded to the Kyoto Protocol, a pact requiring greenhouse gases to be cut five percent below 1990 levels by 2012. It is a modest reduction achieved through a loophole-ridden system of emissions trading.

As modest as Kyoto is, the signatory nations do not include the U.S., even though we emit a quarter of the world's greenhouse gases.

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**GREENHOUSE GASES** include carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane and nitrous oxide. CO<sub>2</sub> from burning fossil fuels (coal and oil) provides most of the gas in the "greenhouse" – layers in the atmosphere that allow light from the sun to heat the earth.

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President Bush's plan, unveiled in February 2002, will not reduce global warming pollution. While it recognizes the need to respond to the climate change threat, the plan fails to protect either the environment or workers.

Because the Bush approach allows emissions of carbon dioxide to continue rising, it was praised by the energy corporations that profit from global warming pollution.

The Bush plan relies on voluntary emissions targets. Even if these targets are achieved, heat-trapping CO<sub>2</sub> pollution would keep increasing at roughly the same rate it has for the past 10 years, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Rather than mandatory greenhouse gas reductions, one Bush administration report suggests adapting to the inevitable changes caused by climate change, including heat waves, disruption of snow-fed water supplies, permanent loss of Rocky Mountain meadows and some coastal marshes.

"The only reasonable benchmark for global warming policy is whether it cuts greenhouse gases," said Andrew Stern, President of Service Employees International Union. "The Bush plan calls for more pollution at the same dangerous pace as the past decade."

For more information, view *The Bush Record* on climate change at the NRDC web site: [www.nrdc.org/bushrecord](http://www.nrdc.org/bushrecord)

**GLOBAL WARMING FACT**  
The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says earth average temperatures could rise as much as 10 degrees over the next century — the fastest rate in 10,000 years.

## A Call to Action:

# Labor, Environmentalists Must Join Forces

In there anyone left who believes corporations – the same folks whose cooked books and outrageous perks are shaking Wall Street to its core – have the best interests of workers or the environment in mind?

The labor and environmental movements in U.S. may not always have common cause, but we certainly have a common foe in global corporations. And neither movement by itself can effectively stop corporate-crafted attacks on labor rights and health care, the deliberate stalemate on climate change or the promotion of trade agreements that threaten both family-supporting jobs and the planet.

Working together, we have a chance to really change things. Remember the Battle in Seattle? Trade unionists marched alongside environmentalists and we shut down meetings of the World Trade Organization.

So where do we go from here?

There are many promising labor-environment collaborations on local and regional levels. My own union, for example, has joined with environmentalists in the Pacific Northwest to fight clear-cutting of Redwood forests and attacks on workers led by Maxxam Corp. and its CEO, corporate raider Charles Hurwitz.

But it is time to take the fight against unbridled corporate power to the next level. We need an ongoing, national labor-environment coalition that can leverage resources and take action in Washington and across the country.

I therefore invite union and environmental leaders to pledge participation in a new coalition dedicated to fighting for working people and for a healthy, sustainable environment.

*David A. Foster, Director  
United Steelworkers of America  
District 11*

The pledge will commit each organization to collaboration and action on three specific issues:



**The labor and environmental movements have a common foe in corporations, but we need to work together if we're going to win.**

- *International Trade* Agreements that destabilize the economy and destroy the environment;
- *Global Warming*, including Just Transition policies; and
- *Health Care*, a basic component of the social safety net that has been all but unraveled.

Why should working people fight to slow climate change? One immediate reason is that corporations and their "infectious greed" are coming after our jobs and destroying the environment whether our movements fight together or stand alone.

Another reason we should support climate change action alongside labor's longstanding battles for fair trade and universal health care is that global warming is a problem of epic proportions that will affect the world for generations to come.

Conceding to corporations the power to decide what is done about it will only mean continued degradation of the natural world and erosion of workers' rights everywhere.

In the coming weeks I will distribute a draft *Statement of Principles* and a call to participate in this critical effort. Please urge your union to join us.

Meantime, for more information, email [greenlabor@erols.com](mailto:greenlabor@erols.com).



## **Dispelling Myth about Massive Job Loss**

# **Global Warming Action that Creates Jobs**

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dead workers – who would lose their jobs retroactively.)

Indeed, industry's numbers don't add up – either in Canada or in the U.S.

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives released a study last year estimating that 12,800 Canadian energy workers will lose their jobs over the next 10 years if Canada acts upon its Kyoto commitments, but 16,000 new energy jobs will be created.

Dale Marshall, author of the study, says new jobs may not require the same skills or be in the same region, "which is why we need a strategy to help workers with transition."

In the U.S., a study released last year by the Economic Policy Institute and the Center for Sustainable Economy also asserts it is possible to fight global warming and simultaneously create jobs – but with the Bush Administration determined to "go it alone" and ignore the Kyoto agreement, the study proposes other measures to slow climate change.

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Clean Energy and Jobs is not a utopian study by environmentalists unconcerned with employment. Labor endorsers include Service Employees International Union; District 11, United Steelworkers of America; and UNITE. Environmental endorsers include Sierra Club, Natural Resources Defense Council and Union of Concerned Scientists.

**We're not going to make a choice between a safe environment and good jobs. We're opting for both.**

**—Bruce Raynor  
President, UNITE**

Clean Energy and Jobs concludes that a program to combat global warming can:

- Cut U.S. emissions of carbon dioxide by 27 percent below projected levels in 2010, and by 51 percent in 2020;
- Increase new jobs by 660,000 in 2010, rising to 1.4 million by 2020;
- Reduce our reliance on imported oil by 1.5 billion barrels as of 2020;
- Cut household energy bills in the next 20 years by \$475 billion.
- Provide full income replacement – up to five years – for workers dislocated during the process.

The plan proposes measures to promote energy-efficiency and clean-energy technologies; impose a tax on carbon emissions and a surcharge on nuclear and hydroelectric power; and transition assistance for workers and communities.

Bruce Raynor, President of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE), said the study is "more than just a bunch of ideas ... it says that we are not going to make a choice between a safe environment and good jobs. We're going to opt for both and we're going to fight for them."

*For more information, go to:  
[www.bluegreenalliance.net](http://www.bluegreenalliance.net)*

## **Climate Action and Employment**

**S**ectors with the largest job increases by 2020 due to Labor-Friendly Global Warming Plan (See Page 3):

Hotels/Restaurants	+228,000
Retail/Wholesale	+202,000
Education/Soc. Serv.	+191,000
Medical/Nursing	+150,000
Other Services	+140,000
Bus. Services	+100,000
Construction	+ 74,000

Source: *Clean Energy and Jobs*

## **UAW Members, Clean Cars**



**C**ounter to conventional wisdom, a recent survey of union auto workers in Michigan found they are more likely to favor tougher fuel-economy standards than the general public. According to a poll conducted by Lake, Snell, Perry and Associates for the Sierra Club, 77 percent of Michigan voters favor increasing standards to 40 miles per gallon over the next 10 years. An even higher percentage of United Auto Worker (UAW) households — 84 percent — favor increasing fuel economy to 40 miles per gallon over the same period.

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Broad support for the plan was won because it aims to preserve jobs while recognizing that BPA may need to curtail operations during fish migration periods and because of water shortages. In recent years, BPA energy curtailments and power sales to the market resulted in more than 5,000 layoffs in the region's aluminum industry, with many workers receiving no compensation.

— Adapted from an article in *District 11 Reporter*, Winter 2003



## Power Shift

Recent polls reveal strong union opposition to one of the key elements of President Bush's energy plan: drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR).

One poll found that by an almost 2:1 ratio, union voters rejected the argument that, in light of economic decline and widespread layoffs, the US needs to open ANWR for drilling to create 735,000 jobs. By a similar margin (61 to 34 percent), union households rejected the idea that allowing oil drilling in the Refuge would increase national security – an argument made by the Bush administration last fall while lobbying for passage of the President's energy plan.

Another poll by the Mellman Group examined "jobs versus environment" issues and ANWR. It addressed two opposing arguments: First, that the refuge should be opened because "economists say this would lead to 735,000 new jobs;" and second, that "even more jobs" would be created by investing in alternative technologies like wind and solar.

The general public favored the alternative energy path by a 67 to 26 percent margin. Among union households, a somewhat larger proportion (69 to 23 percent) supported the alternative energy message. The Mellman poll didn't address claims that ANWR creates jobs. But the Natural Resources Defense Council reports that industry estimates come from a 10-year-old oil industry-sponsored study that has been widely discredited.

For more information, go to: [www.nrdc.org/land/wilderness/artechnic/farcjobs.asp](http://www.nrdc.org/land/wilderness/artechnic/farcjobs.asp).

## Alliance Forged with Enviros

# Steelworkers' Power Plan for Northwest

**S**teelworkers in the Northwest won support last fall from a coalition of environmental and public interest groups for a long-term energy plan that would help troubled aluminum plants and safeguard the environment.

Historically, labor and "greens" have often been divided in the region. But in recent years Steelworkers have forged new alliances with the environmental movement over both common principles and corporate opponents. Examples include protests at the 1999 World Trade Organization meetings in Seattle and efforts to fight anti-labor and anti-environmental practices of the Maxxam Corporation.

"We have learned environmentalists can make sustainable jobs one of the products of environmental protection and steelworkers can make environmental protection one of our most important jobs," says District 11 Director David Foster.

USWA's comprehensive plan would aid smelters in the region by:

- Providing a reasonable amount of federal power;
- Ensuring protection of wages and benefits for workers adversely affected by energy curtailments;
- Securing financial credit support from the Bonneville Power Administration for development of environmentally-sound power by the aluminum industry;
- Ensuring conservation measures that protect vulnerable salmon species; and
- Allowing access to BPA power only to aluminum companies that are "good corporate citizens" and complying with environmental and workplace safety and health laws.

The Steelworkers plan is supported by the Northwest Energy Coalition, an influential 100-member group representing environmental, low-income, energy, tribal, and labor organizations in the region.

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