Solidarity for Climate Action
TWO CRISES

ONE SOLUTION
WE ARE FACING A CLIMATE CRISIS

If we stay on our current path, it could result in an increase in global average temperature above pre-industrial levels of at least 2.5°C (4.5°F)—and could exceed 4°C (7.2°F) by 2100—if some countries do not fulfill their Paris Agreement commitments.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said, "Limiting global warming to 1.5°C would require rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society," which "could go hand in hand with ensuring a more sustainable and equitable society."
Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Reductions: To avoid the catastrophic consequences of climate change, we must significantly reduce the pollution that causes it, including:

- Rapid GHG emissions reductions—based on the latest science and in line with our fair share—to put America on a pathway of reducing its emissions to net zero emissions by 2050;
- Deploying clean and renewable technology nationwide;
- Making massive immediate investments in energy efficiency across all sectors;
- Utilizing continual scientific review to inform and refine our progress; and
- Recommitting to achieving our emissions reduction pledges under the Paris Agreement.
As union membership falls, income concentrates at the top

Share of income going to top 10% of earners vs percent of American workers belonging to unions, 1917 to 2014
UNIONS FIGHT INCOME INEQUALITY

The share of the workforce represented by a union has declined to less than 11 percent since their peak in the 1940s and 1950s. With U.S. unions playing a smaller economic role, the gap between worker and CEO pay has exploded since the 1970s.

- In 2017, the CEO-worker pay gap was nearly nine times larger than in 1980. According to the AFL-CIO, S&P 500 firm CEOs were paid 361 times as much as average U.S. workers in 2017.

Data from Inequality.org
OUR VISION

We face the dual crises of climate change and increasing economic inequality, and for far too long we’ve allowed the forces driving both crises to create a wedge between the need for economic security and a living environment.

We know this is a false choice—we know that we can and must have both.
HOW WE GOT HERE

After the 2016 elections, we embarked on a project to determine the values, attitudes and beliefs of white middle class voters and middle-class voters in the Midwest on our core issues of:

- Climate change
- Clean energy
- Trade
- Jobs and the economy

We held listening session, focus groups, and conducted polling in Midwest and industrial states.
WHAT WE HEARD

1. The economy and jobs are the very top issues.
2. Globalization and free trade have lead to inequality, job loss, wage stagnation, economic insecurity, and de-unionization.
3. Climate change is real, but it should not be solved unilaterally or at the expense of jobs, and instead should be handled with a comprehensive solution.
4. Innovating industries to be cleaner and safer is part of a comprehensive climate solution.
5. Voters wanted a positive, unifying vision for creating jobs, protecting the environment, and building equity and opportunity for all.
There are two strong reasons to increase clean energy: because it will never run out (white swing voters) and to address climate change (voters of color).

**SINGLE BEST REASON TO INCREASE OUR USE OF CLEAN RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES**

- **Uses renewable energy sources that will never run out**
  - White swing voters: 39%
  - Voters of color: 26%

- **Help address climate change, pollution, other threats to environment**
  - White swing voters: 31%
  - Voters of color: 34%

- **Power from wind/solar will cost less in long run**
  - White swing voters: 19%
  - Voters of color: 24%

- **Help create more good-paying jobs**
  - White swing voters: 11%
  - Voters of color: 16%
Solidarity for Climate Action is our bold plan to address climate change and income inequality at the same time.
SOLIDARITY FOR CLIMATE ACTION

PRINCIPLES
Climate Stability: We must act now to protect workers and communities from climate disasters.

High-Quality Jobs: We must strive to create and retain millions of high-quality jobs while putting forward bold solutions to climate change. Making union jobs more accessible to all and increasing our nation’s union density will lift up all working people.

Clean Air, Clean Water, Safe and Healthy Workplaces and Communities: Tackling climate change goes hand in hand with ensuring that all workers and communities have access to clean air and water and that our workplaces and communities are safe, clean, and free of hazardous chemicals and toxic pollution.
**Community Resilience:** We need to expand public and private sector investments in our infrastructure and built environment that incorporate social, environmental, and economic considerations. We must support the efforts of frontline communities to adapt to and recover from the increased frequency and severity of climate change-induced natural disasters and impacts.

**Repair America:** We cannot address climate change with broken down infrastructure. We need a long and deep commitment to fully and properly rebuild and modernize our nation’s infrastructure.

**Rebuild American Manufacturing:** American leadership requires a comprehensive national commitment to sustainably manufacture the next generation of energy, transportation, and other technologies in the United States to fully capture the benefits to workers and communities.
Equity for Marginalized Communities: We must inject justice into our nation’s economy by ensuring that economic and environmental benefits of climate change solutions support the hardest hit workers and communities.

Fairness for Workers and Communities: Working people should not suffer economically due to efforts to tackle climate change. Workers and communities impacted must be afforded a just and viable transition to safe, high-quality, union jobs.

Promote Inclusive Public Dialogue: Workers and communities must have a central role in framing the problem and developing solutions to address climate change.
The BlueGreen Alliance and its labor and environmental partners are committed to the vision, principles, and policies outlined in *Solidarity for Climate Action*, and are committed to working together to identify concrete solutions to achieve it.
WHAT DOES NET ZERO MEAN?

Net zero emissions means using every equitable and safe means necessary to remove greenhouse gas pollution from our economy, from expanding clean energy to massive energy efficiency retrofits to reforestation. It means that we need to look at our country’s economy as a whole and look for every way possible to reduce and eliminate the pollution causing climate change.
SOLIDARITY FOR CLIMATE ACTION: FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE AND INCOME INEQUALITY

● Achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.
● Protect workers’ rights and grow unions.
● Repair America’s Infrastructure.
● Lead the world in clean and emerging technology production and supply chain development.
● Ensure that our workplaces and communities are safe, clean, and free of hazardous chemicals and toxic pollution.
● Close the carbon loophole and stopping the leakage of jobs and pollution overseas.
Clean Air, Clean Water, Safe and Healthy Workplaces and Communities:

AND...

● Raising labor standards to improve wages and benefits.
● Improve access to jobs and career paths for all Americans.
● Guaranteed pensions and a bridge of wage support, healthcare, and retirement security for impacted workers.
● Inject justice into our nation’s economy by ensuring that economic and environmental benefits of climate change solutions support the hardest hit workers and communities.
In 2017, research by the BlueGreen Alliance and the American Society of Civil Engineers show that to get the United States infrastructure to a “B” from a “D+” grade, there will need to be $2.2 trillion in investments.

This investment will create or sustain nearly 116,000 jobs per year in Michigan over the time of the investments, AND add $1.66 trillion to the United States GDP over the next 10 years.
HOW WE REBUILD AMERICA RIGHT...

- Make a robust, impactful, broad investment
- Reduce pollution and make our communities more resilient
- Create good-paying jobs
- Maximize benefits to our workers and communities—especially those most in need
Infrastructure and Community Resilience: An ambitious plan to rebuild and transform America’s infrastructure must include:

- Ambitious and strategic public investments;
- Investment in the revitalization and expansion of the public sector workforce;
- Robust investments in natural infrastructure—restoring forests and wildlands, reclaiming mines, and public lands maintenance;
- Vigorous investment in broadband networks to close the digital divide;
- Adaptation, resilience, and pre-disaster mitigation policies and investments;
- Targeted policies and investments to communities with the most need; and
- Prioritization of the use of the most efficient, resilient, and cleanest materials and products with the lowest carbon and toxicity footprints.
**Competitiveness, Strength, and Innovation:** We can rebuild American competitiveness in the global economy, and secure and create a new generation of good, middle-class jobs across America through:

- A national strategy to lead in clean and emerging technology production and supply chain development;
- Application of strong Buy American and Davis-Bacon requirements, as well as utilization of project labor agreements, for all public spending;
- Environmentally, economically, and socially responsible mining projects and effective recycling initiatives;
- Spurring innovation to greatly limit the emissions associated with energy-intensive manufacturing;
- Closing the carbon loophole and stopping the leakage of jobs and pollution overseas; and
- Ensuring trade agreements are enforceable, fair for all workers, and benefit the environment, including the climate.
High-Quality Job Creation and Retention: Unionization offers the best pathway for quality jobs and more importantly a good, family-sustaining livelihood. We must commit to:

● Increasing union density across the country through strong support of the right to organize throughout the economy, including in the clean technology sectors;
● Promote productive policies to ensure that workers have a meaningful voice on the job;
● Applying mandatory labor standards that include prevailing wages, safety and health protections, project labor agreements, community benefit agreements, local hire, and other provisions and practices that prioritize improving training, working conditions, and project benefits.
● Raising labor standards in the non-construction sectors;
● Ensuring a robust, skilled, and well-prepared workforce to address the extreme weather events and other impacts caused by climate change; and
● Maximizing the utilization and support for established training providers (such as registered apprenticeships, community colleges, and union training centers) and skill certifications for manufacturing.
Equity, Responsibility, and Safe and Healthy Communities: Justice and equity are critical aspects of any effective climate plan. America must commit to just solutions that:

- Improve access to jobs and career paths through community benefit, workforce, and other similar agreements;
- Directly reduce hazardous waste, toxic chemical emissions, particulate matter, and other non-GHG pollutants, first and foremost in frontline communities;
- Address cumulative environmental impacts that burden frontline communities with disproportionate air, water, and land pollution and climate risks;
- Improve the safety of our industrial facilities and protect workers, first-responders, and fence-line communities;
- Avoid creating a “low-carbon, high-toxicity” economy;
- Ensure frontline communities and workers have equitable access to energy efficiency savings and clean, affordable energy, water, and transportations choices;
- Make commitments to safe and healthy working conditions; and
- Have a recognition of our country’s opportunity and responsibility to help fund a clean energy economic development model for developing and emerging countries.
Fairness to Workers and Communities: America lacks a decent support system for people who have fallen through the cracks in our economy. The United States must establish a globally competitive social safety net, including:

- Effective and equitable access to high-quality employment, training, and advancement for all workers;
- Guaranteed pensions and a bridge of wage support, healthcare, and retirement security until an impacted worker either finds new employment or reaches retirement;
- Dedicated community engagement including workers, community members, and leaders to support and enhance the development of the local economy;
- Massive economic investment in deindustrialized areas;
- Mandated reclamation of closed and abandoned industrial sites; and
- Requirements for fair and safe working conditions throughout global supply chains.
THE RECLAIM ACT

The RECLAIM Act would commit $1 billion from an existing abandoned mine fund to projects that clean up dangerous old abandoned coal mines and spur economic development and diversification.

RECLAIM is truly a win-win. The bill supports the reclamation of abandoned mines, freeing up that land for new development opportunities in agriculture, recreational tourism, retail, and even renewable energy production. Not only will coal communities get their land back, but revitalization efforts have been proven to provide new economic opportunities and create jobs.
Priority one, must remain addressing working people and families’ immediate needs. To this end BGA is calling on decision-makers to include in the next stimulus package:

- Protect the health and safety of all essential workers
- Ensure the manufacture and supply of critical equipment immediately and secure the U.S. supply chain, jobs, and workers to meet ongoing need
- Protect communities and workers’ jobs, wages, and benefits
- Ensure critical services for community health and safety and support for education
HOW CAN YOU HELP

Join the BlueGreen Alliance at www.bluegreenalliance.org/join

Follow and engage with us on social media.
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Facebook.com/BlueGreenAlliance

Read more about and pledge your support for Solidarity for Climate Action at bluegreenalliance.org/solidarity
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