

OUR UNION AND CLIMATE JUSTICE

We are in a climate emergency. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has declared that our world has only a limited amount of time before passing the tipping point of permanent harm.

Our economy and society will be transformed by new technologies and the necessary actions to reduce carbon emissions. There is no contradiction between a strong economy and climate justice – in fact they are complementary. To make sure no-one is left behind, workers and their unions should be a key part of the movement for green jobs, fighting for equity and Just Transition in a sustainable economy.

A Plan of Engagement

Here is a basic outline of how you can undertake this work in your union:

- ✓ **Recruit a well-respected leader** in every organization to sponsor this effort;
- ✓ Ask the Executive to **adopt the resolution** on the reverse of this plan. Use *Greenprint for Greater Toronto* as a background for discussion;
- ✓ **Create an internal working team**, perhaps drawing from your union health and safety committee, to help reach out broadly to the membership using the resolution;
- ✓ Take the motion (see back of this document) to a **membership meeting** for **endorsement**. Decide what material is best to provide for that discussion – noting that the work includes both workplace-based efforts and broader campaigns for climate justice;
- ✓ **Post the resolution** on the website, and include it in your next newsletter;
- ✓ Explore **job training opportunities** for members to help green the workplace;
- ✓ **Recruit and train climate justice advocates** for workplaces and public campaigns;
- ✓ Establish your own **Environment Committee** at the local or regional level;
- ✓ Consider negotiating for language in your collective agreement to **establish a Joint Workplace Emissions Reduction Committee** (similar to Joint Health and Safety Committees) to bring the expertise of your members to the workplace table;
- ✓ Take the Convention resolution to your **regional or provincial union's convention**;
- ✓ Join the Labour Council's **Climate Justice Network**.

Resources

- 1) Toronto & York Region Labour Council's *Greenprint for Greater Toronto: Working Together for Climate Action*
- 2) Canadian Labour Congress's Policy Paper *Green Jobs for a #FairFuture*

CLIMATE JUSTICE MOTION

For Adoption by Local Unions

The climate emergency is real.

To ensure human survival – including the lives of our children and grand-children – we must challenge the powerful corporate interests that drive the current unsustainable economic model and seek to sabotage effective climate action. At the same time, we must show the opportunities to build prosperity and justice for all.

Not only is climate action the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to work on. Our union will commit itself to joining in the fight for climate justice, seeking to transform our workplaces into low-carbon operations that reduce energy use, waste, and greenhouse gas emissions, while protecting workers and training for the jobs of the future. We will undertake a comprehensive approach to becoming leaders in sustainability, which includes:

- Asking the employer to detail their plans to **climate-proof the workplace**;
- **Bargaining contract language** on climate, and a union role in sustainability;
- Seeking the establishment of **Joint Workplace Environment Committees**;
- Establishing **training programs** for members to be actively involved in greening the workplace;
- **Utilizing an equity lens** to ensure new job opportunities benefit all of our communities;
- Engaging in **campaigns for climate justice** – including **Just Transition legislation** for workers and communities impacted by changes to a low-carbon economy;
- **Supporting public services** that deliver quality programs and good jobs while ensuring public control and operation.

Our union will mobilize our members to oppose the destructive climate policies of Conservative governments, and partner with racial justice organizations to help deepen the analysis around equity and Just Transition within discussions on climate action.

SAMPLE CLIMATE EMERGENCY RESOLUTION FOR CONVENTIONS

The [national or provincial union] will reach out to engage every affiliate in the fight for climate justice, including supporting them to win contract language on climate, establish joint workplace emissions reduction committees and to ask employers to climate-proof their work.

The [national or provincial union] will urge every affiliate to mobilize their members to oppose the destructive climate policies of conservative politicians, and partner with racial justice organizations to help deepen the analysis around equity and Just Transition within discussions on climate action.

Because: The climate emergency is real. To ensure human survival we must challenge the powerful corporate interests that drive the current unsustainable economic model and seek to sabotage effective climate action. At the same time, we must show the opportunities to build prosperity and justice for all.