

Why Labor Should Care About Global Warming and AB 32

California is in a Unique Position. Climate change is a global problem, requiring global solutions. However, California is in a unique position to lead the United States, one of the largest polluters, in a positive direction. AB 32 (Nunez) requires the state to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25% by 2020, and then by 80% by 2050.

Transformation of our Economy. Cutting green house gas emissions will have a significant impact on the economy and on our member daily lives. Labor has historically been a strong counterweight to business interests, pushed for equity, and helped build the middle class. We should now urge a determined action by our policy-makers and others to address the climate crisis, a crisis that threatens both our ability to engage in sustainable employment and, ultimately, threatens life on our planet.

Winners and Losers. There will be a number of new green tech jobs --- as much as 89,000 by 2020 according to a study by the UC Berkeley Climate Change Center. Additionally, there will be potential for greening the jobs that already exist. The labor force in California will see a huge number of retirements in the coming decade. The California Economic Development Department predicts that there will be 6.5 million job openings between 2004 and 2014 with four million of these coming from retirements and two million from new job creation.

Job losses will occur as well. Refineries will be closed and employers will likely begin to rely on goods manufactured out-of-state which are cheaper due to less or no environmental regulation. We need to make sure this change happens in a just and equitable way and that every sector of the economy participate in cutting emissions. This includes averting layoffs by promoting retrofitting and energy efficiency. According to the Canadian Labour Congress, Energy retrofitting produces four times as many jobs as the creation of new energy sources and should be preferred. There needs to be policy of “Just Transition” incorporated into the implementation of AB 32. We need to make sure that there are adequate UI and COBRA benefits for impacted workers.

Training and Retraining the Workforce. The movement toward a greener economy affords us the opportunity to align current and new funds for training new and incumbent workers. Through this training process, there are ample opportunities for steering workers to union jobs and educating them about the labor movement. Currently, there is \$4 billion in the state workforce and economic development system and there will likely be new sources of funding in the next five years specifically earmarked for training the new workforce. This money needs to be aligned and focused on promoting union work.

Lifting our Image by Promoting High-Road Partnerships. Transformation to a green economy is an opportunity to steer our labor market toward “High-Road” jobs – union jobs with good pay and benefits, healthy and safe work conditions, career tracks, and no turnover. This means supporting the apprenticeship model and providing funds to retrain workers.

Labor’s involvement in the popular green economy, including engaging in state and regional collaboration with various stakeholders, will enhance the image of Labor. By boosting collaboration with community groups, we will be able to elevate issues such as the impact of pollution on workers and communities (For example Oakland Ports and Pesticides in the fields).

How will AB 32's "Early Actions" Impact Unions?

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) is in charge of instituting new regulations to achieve the reduction targets of AB 32. This includes adopting enforceable "Early Action" regulations by 2010. A "Scoping" plan is being used to get public comment regarding the new regulations. The new regulations will be operative in 2012 in order to meet the 2020 goal.

There are about 50 "Early Actions" that cover a wide variety of sectors of the economy. There are **concerns and opportunities** intrinsic to these changes that union leaders should consider. Below are some the targeted sectors that are of concern and interest to unions:

- **Transportation/ Goods Movement.** In the ports of California, the Longshore Workers and Teamsters will see changes in the way cargo is transported. CARB is planning to significantly decrease the reliance on diesel by trucks that spend hours idling waiting to unload cargo and by harbor craft. This will occur through the replacement of old diesel engines and by increasing reliance on electrical power for trucks and port operations. This "electrification" of the port will require new training and new equipment. Some other changes at the ports handling equipment. include: vessel speed reduction; idling reduction for cranes; and replacing cargo. Other early actions include the Electrification of Truck Stops, and the Electrification of Airport maintenance vehicles, are of particular interest to the Machinists union.
- **Transportation/ Vehicle Efficiency.** The Machinists and Auto Workers are impacted by the following changes. Tire inflation program; A/C leak tightness test and repair for Smog Check; Hybridization of medium and heavy-duty diesel vehicles; light-duty trucks; off-highway vehicles.
- **Fuel and Oil Refineries.** Operating Engineers, Laborers, Steelworkers, Boilmakers, and various Building Trades unions will be impacted. Energy saving measures for fossil fuel plants built before 1980. There are 59 older plants in California where a minor increase in efficiency (1-3%) of the burners leads to significant energy savings and financial savings. Additionally, CARB calls for Energy Audits at Refineries.
- **Power Plants.** Electrical workers and other Building Trades unions will be impacted by the Replacing old Facilities. CARB plans to phase out of pre-1980 power plants generating at least 100 mw and provide incentives to replace them with clean energy facilities.
- **Cement/ Manufacturing.** The Steelworkers and Operating Engineers will face significant changes in the cement industry that will impact their jobs. The "Early Actions" call for an increase in energy efficiency in cement facilities in California and for the use of blended cement. This has raised the concern that jobs will be lost as cement is simply imported from out-of-state and there will be no net decrease in carbon emissions. Currently a quarter of cement used in the state is imported. Additionally, this raises the concern that employers will use the carbon "tax" as a way to whipsaw the unions and seek concessions at the bargaining table to offset this perceived cost of doing business in California.