

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

On behalf of the nation's largest environmental and labor organizations, I write to express our collective desire for action on climate change that improves community health and safety, builds resilient infrastructure, and strengthens and creates economic opportunities for all citizens. We applaud your commitment to action, both nationally and internationally, to tackling our foremost environmental crisis – climate change – and we urge you to help us seize one of the greatest economic opportunities – a fair and just transition to the clean economy.

More than 2,000 scientists from around the world collaborated over the course of five years to produce the IPCC's fifth Synthesis Report; now, it is time for global political leaders to work together to design a clear, yet ambitious, fair and enforceable framework that addresses the economic and environmental needs of this and future generations.

We should take this as a challenge. Policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions can and should strengthen economies, build resilient communities and create family-sustaining jobs. Earlier this year, your administration took a bold and necessary step in proposing the Clean Power Plan. And now, you have come forward again to demonstrate both leadership and partnership through an historic agreement with China to curb the emissions of the two largest carbon emitters in the world. We support your commitment to significantly reduce emissions by 2025, but we call on you, your administration, Congress, and the global community to ensure emissions reduction is only one piece of a more comprehensive and ambitious effort.

A transition to the clean energy economy requires the resources, policies and priorities needed to retool our nation, create family sustaining jobs, strengthen and grow low-carbon sectors – including energy efficiency, renewable energy and commercial carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) applications – and ensure our communities are healthy and safe. If done right, addressing climate change can be one of the best ways to further develop our economy. With cleaner technologies becoming increasingly available and at lower costs, and the price of inaction on mitigation and adaptation rising, the equation is further tipping in favor of bold actions for smart investments in our infrastructure and workforce right now. Making our infrastructure more resilient can create jobs, and is vital to our environmental and economic future.

BLUEGREEN ALLIANCE PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS



We need bold action to retool our nation. We need an ambitious agenda that combines a sound emission reduction strategy with a sound infrastructure, jobs and community resilience strategy. Stagnating wages and employment are major issues in the U. S. and globally. We must combine our emission reduction goals with putting people to work at family and community supporting wages. The wealth of this nation, and indeed the global economy has been built on the contributions of millions of workers in carbon intensive industries. These workers should not be cast aside by policy. It is a false dilemma for workers to be forced to choose between a better environment and family supporting wages.

Directly related to this, and within the context of UNFCCC process, we have two recommendations. The first can and must be dealt with immediately, starting at this year's 20th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP20). We need national and global collaboration to develop and share best practices for a just transition for all workers, their families and the communities that depend on them. Second, we need your commitment to elevate the issues central to ensuring that climate action is fair to workers across the world. Financial support, social and worker protection policies and job impact data must be part of a comprehensive program to building opportunities and equity around the world.

We look forward to working with you to address and advance these issues. We are ready to move forward now to transition our nation to cleaner energy, more resilient infrastructure and a robust workforce that is supported by good economic and social policies. Working together, we can achieve a fair and just transition to a clean economy, and thus make climate justice synonymous with economic justice.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kimberly Glas".

Kimberly Glas
BlueGreen Alliance

CC: The Honorable John Kerry, Secretary of State
The Honorable Gina McCarthy, EPA Administrator
The Honorable Todd Stern, Special Envoy for Climate Change