

Resolution Committing CFT to a Climate Justice Agenda

Whereas we are facing a historic environmental crisis that threatens our present and future survival.

Whereas the science on climate change has only presented us with more and more severe warnings about the dire consequences of continuing on the same course.

Whereas a short list of the many catastrophic effects of unchecked climate change includes severe drought, increased disease, threatened food systems due to dust bowl like conditions, ocean acidification, increased global conflict over resources, economic collapse, and mass extinction. In short, the overwhelming majority of serious scientists as well as governmental agencies such as NASA and even the U.S. Defense Department are warning of a grim future if we fail to address this issue.

Whereas environmental pollution, the water crisis, and climate change all negatively impact workers' lives and health and the most damaging effects of the climate crisis will disproportionately impact disenfranchised communities with the least resources. Hence, the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council committed to promoting smart growth, green jobs, and real partnerships with the environmental community in order to work toward environmental and economic justice.

Whereas as a historical force for progressive change and social justice, the labor movement can, and must, play a powerful role in calling for swift action to address the climate crisis and in producing tangible solutions that will ensure we are strengthening, not weakening, our middle-class as we transition to a more sustainable economy.

Whereas the idea that the market is the only thing that truly matters in human existence is a central obstacle to achieving economic and environmental justice. We know from experience that the labor movement must be at the table to shape the conversation if we are to effect positive change for working people.

Whereas historically, we have been sold the myth that we must choose between good jobs and a clean environment. This is a false choice and has been perpetuated by a multi-billion dollar corporate network that dominates the political and public sphere. Thus the challenge is big and the answer is to change the game.

Whereas any successful movement to address the looming threat of climate change must also involve an accompanying revolution in values, a paradigm shift. As Naomi Klein put it when speaking to one of Canada's largest labor unions last year: "climate change—when its full economic and moral implications are understood—is the most powerful weapon progressives have ever had in the fight for equality and social justice. But first, we have to stop running away from the climate crisis, stop leaving it to the environmentalist, and look at it. Let ourselves absorb the fact that the industrial revolution that led to our society's prosperity is now destabilizing the natural systems on which all of life depends."

Let it therefore be resolved that the CFT is committed to promoting smart growth, green jobs, and real partnerships with the environmental community in order to work toward environmental and economic justice.

Be it further resolved that the CFT will:

- Engage our members and the community about labor's role in advocating for tangible solutions to the climate crisis that simultaneously strengthen our middle-class.
- Let our members know that good green jobs don't kill construction projects, in fact in some cases it actually increases opportunity.
- Insist that those who might be displaced should be retrained for the new economy as well as ensuring that the green economy is creating union career opportunities to ensure a just transition for working people.
- Build and sustain real partnerships with the local environmental movement and community groups committed to economic and environmental justice.
- Push for bold new political and policy initiatives that move beyond lip service to effectively address the two great issues of our age—historic economic inequality and climate change
- Ensure that candidates positions on climate justice are part of CFT's evaluation for endorsement in political races.
- Insist that we work towards ending all of our retirement systems' investments in fossil fuels and other commercial enterprises that are contributing to catastrophic climate change.
- Promote legislation that moves us toward sustainability and climate justice.
- Establish a task force on climate justice.