

CFT Climate Justice Task Force Mission Statement

At the 2015 CFT Convention, the delegates passed a resolution committing the CFT to a climate justice agenda which recognized that we are currently facing a historic environmental crisis that demands immediate action. In the short time since the convention, 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.

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 society. 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.

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. We even face challenges inside our own labor movement from those who acknowledge the existence of climate change but refuse to come to terms with the political and economic changes we need to make in order to address it. Thus the challenge is big and the answer is to change the game.

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."

In that spirit, the CFT Climate Justice Task Force is committed to:

- Engaging and educating our members and the community about labor's role in advocating for tangible solutions to the climate crisis that simultaneously strengthens our middle-class
- Letting our members know that good green jobs don't kill good employment opportunities; in fact, in some cases it actually increases opportunity
- Insisting 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
- Building and sustaining real partnerships with the environmental movement and community groups committed to economic and environmental justice
- Pushing 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

Purpose of the Task Force: With these global goals of the mission statement in mind, the CFT Climate Justice Task Force’s specific purpose is to serve as a policy body and recommend policies and action to the Executive Board and general membership designed to:

- 1) Recommend ways that CFT can educate our members and the community about the pressing environmental issues of our day resulting from climate change as well as possible solutions to the present crisis
- 2) Advise CFT on the building strong alliances and partnerships between labor and other environmental and community groups
- 3) Serve as a policy body inside the CFT that assures that CFT’s agenda always includes an environmental focus and that labor’s issues are always present in larger discussions of environmental issues
- 4) Ensure that CFT promotes progressive labor/environmental legislation
- 5) To encourage CFT locals to establish Environmental Caucuses and work inside their local Labor Councils to form Labor Council Environmental Caucuses.