



Climate Jobs National Resource Center

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U.S. Labor Leaders Respond to IPCC Report, Urge Swift Action

New IPCC report underscores urgency of equitable, pro-worker climate action and swift energy transition

Nationwide—Today, climate jobs leaders from across the United States responded to the [latest IPCC report](#), which spells out the dire costs and consequences of the impacts of the climate crisis, arguing that the updated climate science underscores the urgency of taking bold, science-backed, and pro-worker climate action to build an equitable renewable energy economy.

The Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability report released today represents the second portion of the IPCC’s Sixth Assessment Report. The IPCC experts find that human-caused climate breakdown has already led to certain irreversible impacts and that the window for adapting to climate breakdown will close quickly over the next decade. The report’s core message is that we must take immediate transformative action to implement equitable climate adaptation measures and slash emissions in order to avoid climate catastrophe.

Here’s what climate jobs leaders across the country are saying:

“The findings of the latest IPCC report are both deeply distressing and completely unsurprising. The facts remain constant: that climate breakdown is here and now, and it’s critically important that we act without delay. We have the policy solutions, tools, and vision to tackle climate breakdown and shape a thriving future for workers, communities, and the planet. Labor unions across the United States are organizing to advance a bold, pro-worker climate agenda that will stave off the worst impacts of climate change and create good union jobs that sustain more equitable communities. I remain hopeful that working together, we can make it happen,” **says Vincent Alvarez, President of the New York City Central Labor Council and Board Member of the Climate Jobs National Resource Center.**

“The climate crisis is an existential threat. According to today’s IPCC report, our actions in the next 10 years will be critical to avoiding climate catastrophe. From extreme heat to worsening storms, climate breakdown is already hitting workers—particularly workers of color and under-resourced communities—first and worst. The latest IPCC report makes it clear that unless we take bold action now, we’re locking in a devastating, deadly future for people around the world and future generations. We can’t let that happen. That’s why workers, climate advocates, and community groups across Rhode Island have joined together to fight for bold, pro-worker climate action at the scale and pace that the crisis demands. The labor movement in Rhode Island won’t rest until we make it happen,” says **Patrick Crowley, Secretary-Treasurer of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO and Co-Chair of Climate Jobs Rhode Island.**

“What the findings of this report reinforce is that there’s no time to delay our fight against the climate crisis. Climate Jobs Illinois’ plan in Illinois should serve as a blueprint for other states to enact pro-worker plans to transition to a clean energy economy that not only counteracts the growing threat of greenhouse gasses but also paves the way to a more equitable future by creating good-paying union jobs and apprenticeships for communities of color that have been disproportionately impacted by climate change,” says **Pat Devaney, Secretary-Treasurer of the Illinois AFL-CIO and Principal Officer of Climate Jobs Illinois.**

“Whether you live in New York or New Delhi, people across the world want the same things: clean water to drink, unpolluted air to breathe, fresh food to eat, and safe, stable shelter to call home. The damage wrought upon our climate, as detailed by the newest IPCC report, puts our ability to have those basic necessities in peril. That’s why the Climate Jobs NY coalition, a group of unions across New York, is organizing behind an ambitious plan for pro-worker climate action and a swift, equitable energy transition in our state. Building trades members in New York are ready to get to work building the future. We don’t have time to waste,” says **Gary LaBarbera, President of the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York and New York State Building and Construction Trades Council, and Director of Climate Jobs NY.**

“The IPCC report today shows that climate peril is real. But when I see labor unions across the state of Texas come together through the Texas Climate Jobs Project to fight for healthy schools, for more union jobs, for clean and plentiful energy, and for an equitable, worker-centered economy that benefits us all, I know that climate hope is real, too. When workers come together and decide our own fate, we can create and build a better world, whatever the future brings,” says **Rick Levy, President of the Texas AFL-CIO.**

“A problem like climate breakdown can feel so vast, so overwhelming, that it takes everything not to just shy away – particularly in light of the newest IPCC report, which confirms that the climate crisis is an existential threat that’s here and now. But when working people stand together to tackle this crisis, it becomes a lot easier to imagine a future much better and brighter than the one we currently face. This bold act of standing together to face down climate peril is what motivates our coalition of labor unions, the Maine Labor Climate Council. The science is clear: we have to act now. The Maine Labor Climate Council won’t stop until we achieve a just,

worker-centered, and climate-safe future,” says **Cynthia Phinney, President of the Maine AFL-CIO and Chair of the Maine Labor Climate Council.**

“The new IPCC report is deeply unsettling, but it doesn’t change what we already know: Climate breakdown is happening all over the world, but we have the tools and vision to create a better future. A future where good, union jobs are plentiful and meaningfully contribute to our communities, where healthy schools allow students and educators to breathe easy, where clean energy heats and cools our homes without fear of pollutants. As labor unions, climate activists, and community organizations continue to work together, that future becomes more and more within our grasp. Let us continue,” says **Joe Toner, Executive Director of the Connecticut State Building Trades Council.**

“Today’s IPCC report is a clarion call. The science is clear: the world is already woefully behind when it comes to climate adaptation. That’s why it’s so important that unions are taking matters into their own hands and organizing to advance an ambitious agenda for pro-worker climate action that will slash emissions and tackle racial and economic inequality. Labor leaders are putting forward a powerful vision for a better tomorrow that addresses climate change and creates good union climate jobs,” says **Mike Fishman, President and Executive Director of Climate Jobs National Resource Center.**

“The latest climate science from the IPCC is alarming. This updated science shows that the crisis is already hitting home in communities across the globe, causing massive destabilization and destruction. But we also know that there is an alternative, and labor unions across the country are leading the way. We can prevent climate collapse and remedy deep racial and economic inequality by embracing a swift transition to a renewable energy economy that’s powered by good union jobs. There is immense power in this climate jobs vision, and I remain hopeful that we can build such a future together,” says **Lara Skinner, Director of the Labor Leading on Climate Initiative at Cornell University’s Worker Institute and Board Member of the Climate Jobs National Resource Center.**

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