



## **TELL CONGRESS TO FUND GREEN JOBS!**

Talking Points and Sample Letter

June 2008

### **BACKGROUND**

On December 19, 2007 the Energy Independence and Security Act was signed into law. The 'Energy Bill' is a broad-ranging piece of legislation that will have major implications for green-collar job development in the United States in the coming decades. The two most critical "green-collar jobs" provisions are the Green Jobs Act and the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program. The Energy Bill includes authorized funding levels for both of these provisions, but did not appropriate any money for them. We need to get full funding for the Green Jobs Act and the Block Grant Program in this year's Appropriations Bill.

We must work hard to make sure that Congress understands the importance of funding these green-collar jobs programs. The budget submitted to Congress by the Bush Administration eliminates and under-funds a broad range of worthy programs and thus presents Congress with many competing priorities as they attempt to make up for this shortfall and pass an Appropriations Bill for 2009.

### **TALKING POINTS**

For a letter, phone call, or meeting with your Congressperson:

- Both of these green-collar jobs programs can be the building blocks of an inclusive green economy. They are a first step to ensuring that the work that most needs to be done in a clean energy economy is done by the people who most need the work.
- The Green Jobs Act will fill a critical role in our transition to clean energy by ensuring that we have the skilled workers needed to support the production, installation, and maintenance of clean energy technologies and has broad support from the renewable energy industry associations, environmental organizations, community groups and organized labor. Talk about the local impact in your community.
- The Green Jobs Act establishes a grant program for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Workforce Training, while also expanding our nation's ability to identify and track new jobs and skills associated with the growing clean energy



sector and develop best practices in training to address skill shortages already being experienced in this area.

- The Green Jobs Act should be funded with new money, rather than carving it out of existing education and training programs. President Bush's budget for 2009 requests cut of over \$2.2 billion to education and training programs. This disinvestment would come on top of the more than \$2 billion in funding cuts to these programs that have already occurred under his Administration.
- The Green Jobs Act is a necessary first step in training workers for the rapidly expanding renewable energy and renewable energy industries. A report by Management Information Services for the American Solar Energy Society estimates that in 2006 the renewable energy and energy efficiency industries created 8.5 million total jobs. With the right policies and investments, the report forecasts the growth of up to 40 million jobs in these industries by 2030.
- The Green Jobs Act responds to already existing skill shortages. The National Renewable Energy Lab has identified a shortage of skills and training as a leading barrier to renewable energy and energy efficiency growth. This labor shortage is only likely to get more severe as baby-boomers skilled in current energy technologies retire; in the power sector, for example, nearly one-quarter of the current workforce will be eligible for retirement in the next five to seven years.
- The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant will help form a new Federal partnership with cities, counties, and states to help the nation meet its energy and climate protection goals. The program will help local governments develop and implement comprehensive energy efficiency strategies. Block grants provided by this program will help create and grow new energy efficient communities, foster a nationwide market for renewable and efficient technologies, and achieve significant energy savings across this country. Talk about the local impact in your community.
- The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant will create tens of thousands of good jobs. Energy efficiency not only offsets more greenhouse gas emissions than renewables and alternative fuels combined, it generates a significant numbers of jobs that can't be offshored. The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) estimates that for every giga-Watt hour saved, the agency's programs create or retain 1.5 jobs.



### **SAMPLE TEXT**

For an email, fax or letter to your representative:

Subject: Please fund the Green Jobs Act and the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant

Text:

Please support full funding for the Green Jobs Act and the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program in the 2009 Appropriations Bill. These are essential investments in green-collar job creation and job training and will be fundamental to building an inclusive green economy strong enough to lift people out of poverty.

Both programs were part of the 2007 Energy Independence and Security Act, which was signed into law in December of 2007.

A fully funded Green Jobs Act will distribute \$125 million per year to identify needed skills, develop training programs, and train workers for jobs in a range of green industries. It targets a broad range of populations for eligibility, but has a special focus on creating “green pathways out of poverty.”

A fully funded Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program will distribute \$2 billion per year to cities and local governments for energy conservation, energy audits, fuel conservation programs, and the use of renewable energy. These “Green” block grants could create tens of thousands of green-collar jobs accessible to low-income city residents who most need work and careers.

Our green future is already being invented at the local level. Communities across the country are creating green-collar jobs and ensuring that the people who most need work are trained for the work that most needs to be done. The Green Jobs Act and the "Green Block Grant" Program will help bring existing initiatives to scale and start new ones in our community. Please support them.

Sincerely,