

## Jobs, Justice and the Climate Thursday, June 5, 2015

Climate change threatens the future of all humankind. Extreme weather conditions, storms, flooding, landslides, droughts and ice melting are reported ever more regularly from many parts of the world. Millions of people are losing their livelihood, their homes, their jobs – and many also their lives. The successive reports of the United Nation Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have increasingly called for urgent action in order to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases. However, after having negotiated for 20 years, our political leaders have failed to take necessary action.

Fossil fuel corporations are using their growing wealth and power to assert an “extreme energy” agenda; this includes using far riskier energy extraction methods to get to difficult to reach and often highly polluting fossil fuels (tar sands, hydraulic fracking, arctic drilling). The extreme energy agenda has serious implications for communities, workers, the climate and the environment more broadly, because these corporations are also using their wealth and power to oppose or delay efforts to address climate change.

We don't have to choose between the economy or the environment. Real climate action means investing in mass public transit, clean energy infrastructure and affordable housing. It means expanding low-carbon sectors like healthcare, education and sustainable agriculture. By taking *real* climate action, we can create an economy that is more fair and equal and offers hundreds of thousands of good new jobs.

We want an economy where workers win, communities have more democratic control, and those most impacted and impoverished are the first in line to benefit. An economy that honours Indigenous peoples' rights and recognizes their role in protecting the land, air and water for everyone. An economy that respects the limits of the environment made clear by climate science.

This July, Toronto will host a Pan American Climate Summit and an Economic Summit, where politicians will face a choice: listen to corporate leaders from across the Americas gathering to advance an economic austerity agenda that is increasing inequality and cooking the planet – or listen to the people.

It is morally indefensible for corporations and governments to continue to pursue an economic growth strategy that brings our climate closer to an irreversible tipping point. Canada needs an energy economy that respects Indigenous communities and creates good, clean jobs for workers. We call on the Canadian government to go to the Paris climate negotiations with credible climate goals to prevent more than a 2 degree Celsius warming of the world.

On the eve of those summits, let's make sure they hear our demands: a justice-based transition to a new energy economy, in which corporate polluters pay and ordinary people benefit. The only way to overcome a small, powerful group who have a lot to lose is to build a massive movement of people with everything to gain.

The Executive recommends:

1. Labour Council support and mobilize for a massive turnout from unions and communities to the rally and march on July 5<sup>th</sup>
2. Labour Council and affiliates continue to press all levels of government to embrace policies of green jobs and just transition within sustainable and equitable economies.
3. Labour Council endorse the goals of Trade Unions for Energy Democracy, an international coalition committed to a green future and public control of energy.