

Findings and Recommendations from the Just Transition Listening Project

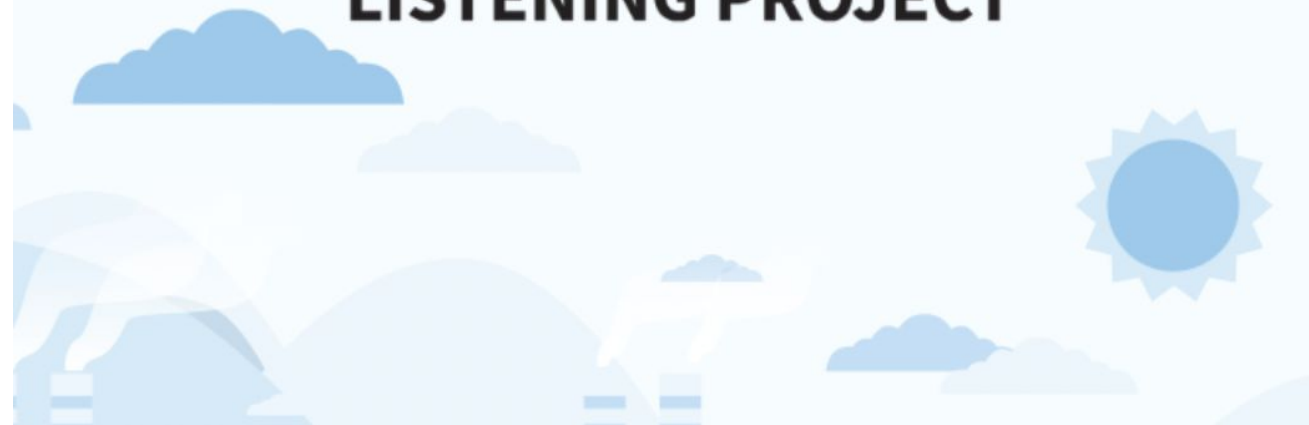
*Presentation for the Climate Center
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LABOR NETWORK
FOR SUSTAINABILITY



**JUST TRANSITION
LISTENING PROJECT**



Background

Research question: What is a just transition?

- ▶ 100+ Oral History Interviews (May-October 2020)
 - ▶ One on one several hour interviews- life stories and transition experiences
 - ▶ Centering voices of those who have lived that experience □ No one is more able to fully understand what is needed
 - ▶ Workers, Indigenous and Environmental Justice activists
- ▶ Research and Analysis
 - ▶ Transcribed and Analyzed over 3,000 pages of transcripts
- ▶ Findings and Recommendations
 - ▶ Problem, Process, and Pathways
 - ▶ Full Report: <https://www.labor4sustainability.org/jt1p-2021/jt1p-report/>

Major Findings

- ▶ **Problem:** Transitions are *constant* and *inevitable*
- ▶ Past transitions have *unnecessarily* been unjust
 - ▶ Trauma and loss
 - ▶ Existing policies are *fragmented* and *inadequate*
 - ▶ *Examples: shutdowns without plans, relocation dividing families...*
- ▶ **Process:** To be fair and just, transitions in any sector require:
 - ▶ attention to local conditions - workers, unions, disproportionately impacted communities must be at the table and have a meaningful voice
 - ▶ both targeted short-term and proactive long-term policies
- ▶ **Pathways:**
 - ▶ See our recommendations to move forward
 - ▶ The general failure of elected officials to deliver just transition policies points to the *need for wide scale* organizing building on common principles of agreement

Examples of workers and communities who came together to negotiate a transition

▶ I Address fossil fuel and related shutdowns

- ▶ **Huntley Coal Power** NY - created a state fund for impacted cities.
- ▶ ***Diablo Canyon Nuclear Facility-** ensured that workers and communities get financial support
- ▶ ***State of Washington** -EJ, labor, tribal, frontline participated in a plan for the distribution of carbon fees based on polluter pays principle. (Ballot Initiative 1631)
- ▶ **State of Colorado-** EJ, Labor create an Office of Just Transition
- ▶ **GM Lordstown**, Ohio- created a full-service Transition center with grant from Dept of Labor
- ▶ **Redwoods Employee Protection Act-** Congressional Bill supported wage replacement, job training, early pension for all workers. Indigenous people hired to practice and teach native forestry conservation.

▶ II Make Green Jobs Good Union Jobs

- ▶ **Steelworkers 675-** organized Proterra, the Electric Bus Company, with Jobs to Move America
- ▶ **Don't Waste LA-and Transform Don't Trash New York** -Enviros and labor coalition: drivers and communities get safer cleaner trucks and better driving routes. In LA improvement in drivers wages and working conditions and those of the women sorting recyclables.
- ▶ **Climate Jobs NY**—Building trades- Orsted Agreement

Recommendations - General

▶ Go Big

- ▶ Need a comprehensive approach that addresses the impacts on workers and communities across geographies, demographics and industries.
 - ▶ The federal government will need to play a lead role with programs and funding.
 - ▶ There are promising state and local just transition models. None have access to the resources to fully fund their efforts.

▶ Go Wide

- ▶ Trauma goes beyond income loss. Build and strengthen the social infrastructure.
- ▶ Going wide requires that unions, workers, and community organizations are *deeply engaged throughout the process*.

▶ Go Far

- ▶ Assisting workers and their communities requires a long-term commitment of support and investment into the future.

Recommendations - Policymakers

- ▶ Dedicated and robust funding
 - ▶ polluter pays principle rather than cap and trade
 - ▶ Federal Office of Just Transition with explicit funding in place
- ▶ Strengthen and expand worker protections and safety net provisions such as
 - ▶ wage replacement, alternative and comparable employment, health insurance coverage, relocation support, childcare, pension/retirement contributions
 - ▶ pass the PRO Act to help ensure new jobs can be good jobs
 - ▶ rapid response teams to address job displacement and mass layoff situations
 - ▶ bridge funding for localities where public sector revenue is affected
 - ▶ Build in demands of disproportionately affected communities- eg good jobs for all, clean water, respect for sovereign rights.
- ▶ Don't have to start from scratch, can build and expand on existing programs
 - ▶ Ex: Expand Trade Adjustment Act to include climate displacement and make assistance more robust with less rigid requirements and dedicated funding

Recommendations - Labor and Movement Groups

- ▶ Labor organizations may form climate committees
- ▶ Environmental & EJ and Indigenous organizations may form labor committees
- ▶ Begin or continue building cross-movement relationships to build power on state and/or local levels
 - ▶ build and sustain genuine personal and political relationships over time
 - ▶ Find ways to work together now on common issues

Thank you!

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Full Report: <https://www.labor4sustainability.org/jtlp-2021/jtlp-report/>