

ing and political action. Protecting our children's world and our own jobs will require a coordinated program, involving all levels of the union.

Securing Our Children's World—A Strategic Alliance against Corporate Globalization.

Historic times demand historic responses. Since our original policy statement was published, the shape of both the labor and environmental movements has changed in North America. The historic protections fought for by both movements are under serious attack from corporate-led globalization. We have been forced to defend the very right of workers to form unions. Landmark legislation like the Clean Air Act is being considered for repeal by the U.S. Supreme Court.

That is why the United Steelworkers (USW) has proposed joining forces with the environmental movement to build a visionary, values-based response to the anti-environmental and anti-worker policies of the Bush Administration that threaten to drive us back to the 1930's.

We need an energy policy that promotes visionary solutions like clean cars and clean energy, not one that rips off consumers; fouls our land, air, and water; threatens our children's health; and places our armed forces at risk to defend an everincreasing addiction to foreign oil. We need a fair trade policy that benefits low income and working people and protects workers' rights and the environment. And we need to protect workers and their communities from irresponsible corporate practices that release toxic chemicals in our workplaces and neighborhoods, endangering us all.

Most importantly, we need a strategic message and concrete actions that unite the labor and environmental movements in providing answers to the great public policy challenges of our time. Together, we can fight for and win "Good Jobs, A Clean Environment, and A Safer World."

A sound twenty-first century energy policy can create a new generation of domestic manufacturing jobs while reducing global warming and air pollution. Hybrid and other clean cars, public transportation, efficient heating and lighting systems, and clean renewable power plants are the keys to our energy freedom. Producing them can create more than 1.4 million new jobs and strengthen our economies while simultaneously making us more secure.

A just trade policy for the twenty-first century can promote growth and prosperity across all sectors of global society, not just for multinational corporations and a few elites, and would embed enforceable labor, environmental, and human rights standards in our trade agreements.

An informed twenty-first century policy on toxic chemicals can protect workers and communities from dangerous chemicals by sounding

In the current political climate in the U.S., we must make labor/environmental alliances a real political force in our communities and in state and local government.

the alarm on dangers and promoting safer alternatives.

Our countries are at risk. A century of environmental and workers' rights protections are in danger of being rolled back. We can and must act.

Our Next Steps. As always, the most important actions must take place at the local union level. First, local unions should establish a structure for dealing with environmental issues. In large locals, an environmental committee should be formed. In smaller locals, the issue can be handled by the safety and health committee. Whatever the structure, the committee should have the support and interest of the local union officers and the staff representative.

The first job of the local environmental committee must be to provide education to our members on the critical environmental issues of the day such as global warming or air quality and how they directly impact our members, their jobs, and their communities. In order to adequately arm our environmental committees, the International Union will provide educational materials for training our members on environmental issues. We have already found that both environmental organizations and some foundations will collaborate with us in this effort. Just as we taught the importance of international trade to our members' jobs and communities, now we must do the same around environmental issues.

In the current political climate in the U.S., we must make labor/environmental alliances a real political force in our communities and in state and local government. Our local union political action committees must take up this task. In the last five years Blue/Green Alliances have emerged in more than a dozen states taking on initiatives ranging from Renewable Energy Standards to corporate campaigns against rogue USW employers like AK Steel, Kaiser Aluminum and ASARCO. Building coalitions to gain strength for progressive causes should become a priority for our local unions.

The make up of the U.S. Congress illustrates clearly the natural alliance between the labor and environmental movements and also the benefits to



be gained from exploiting it. A study of 2004 voting records of the U.S. House of Representatives shows that the pro-labor and pro-environmental members of Congress (as measured by their AFL-CIO and League of Conservation Voters voting records) are virtually identical. One hundred eighty-three members of Congress voted for both labor and environmental issues more than 60 percent of the time.

Only 11 members of Congress voted for environmental issues more than 60 percent of time without also supporting labor. And only 27 members voted for labor issues that often without also voting for environmental issues. In other words, the friends and enemies of the labor and environmental movements are virtually identical.

It is interesting to note that if the labor movement succeeded in making these 27 pro-labor members of Congress pro-environmental and if the environmental movement changed the views of these 11 pro-environment members on labor issues, then the labor/environmental coalition would have the support of a majority of Congress, 221 members. The ten-year domination of anti-labor, anti-environmental forces in the U.S. House of Representatives would be over. Together, we win; divided, we fail.

Take the example of one right-wing congressman from Calif., This member was elected to congress vowing to repeal or gut the Endangered Species Act, the law that helped save the bald eagle from extinction. In addition to having a 3 percent voting record on environmental issues, this congressman has only a 12 percent lifetime voting record on labor issues, including votes in 2004 against providing an extension of unemployment benefits to laid off workers while voting for legislation (HR 4520) that provided \$40 billion in Foreign Sales Corporation tax breaks to companies that exported American jobs . This congressman is a perfect example of why the labor and environmental movements in the U.S. must work collaboratively to stop corporate-led globalization from pushing all of us back to the nineteenth century.

In Canada, the value of labor and environmental coalitions expresses itself differently. The right-wing corporate agenda of globalization has not yet taken root to the degree it has in the U.S. Nonetheless, many cherished Canadian values like its national health care system are under attack. The progress on environmental issues of the 1980's and early 1990's has stalled. Federal politics is dominated by a corporate agenda. And corporate trade deals threaten the security of Canadian jobs. Historically, the USW in Canada has supported important environmental initiatives such as the Kyoto Treaty through its support of the New Democratic Party and Parti Quebecois. Alliance building with the Canadian environmental movement can

help strengthen these political alliances and avoid splitting the anti-corporate agenda between the NDP and the Green Party. Unity in future federal and provincial elections will be important to turn back the right-wing assault on both labor and environmental protections.

In the area of trade reform, the labor and environmental coalitions in both countries have provided a powerful critique of the failures of official U.S. and Canadian trade policies over the last 15 years. The USW has had no better ally in its efforts to stop the North American Free Trade Agreement, Fast Track, Permanent Normalization of Trade Relations with China, the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Free Trade Area of the Americas, and the Central American Free Trade Agreement, than the environmental movement, led by such organizations as the Sierra Club, Natural Resource Defense Council, U.S. Public Interest Research Group, Friends of the Earth, and the Union of Concerned Scientists. Time and again, these organizations have stood with us in opposing these trade agreements and calling instead for labor and environmental standards that lift up other societies while supporting our own protections.

In both countries more work must be done on defining what are acceptable "Just Transition" programs to create new jobs, training and skills for workers who are displaced by the changes in our economy and environment. If we are to be successful in managing structural changes of this magnitude, adequate resources must be allocated in taking care of the human needs generated by environmental changes. The 2005 hurricanes illustrated the depth and complexity of these needs.

Other Local Steps. But there are other actions that our local unions should also take. The environment or safety and health committee should research their company's environmental record. Are their sources of raw materials threatened? Where does their waste go? What are they dumping into the air and water? Are their products harmful? Are they in violation of any environmental laws or regulations? Much of this information is a matter of public record. All of it should be legally disclosed to the union as information needed for collective bargaining. Any of it could be critical to devising a long-term program for protecting jobs.

Armed with information, the local union could, where necessary, work to negotiate a cleanup, or a switch to safer products, before the company is forced out of business. In 1982, for example, Local Union 6887, at the Noranda copper refinery in Montreal, helped the company negotiate a temporary variance from new water pollution regulations, in return for a commitment to install state-of-the-art controls assuring the plant's long-term compliance. In 1989 Local Union 1066, at the USX



Gary Works, used its political power to force a waste handling company on the plant site to reduce its inventory of dangerous chlorine gas, and to begin working with USX on an emergency response plan.

Most USW contracts give workers the right to refuse abnormally hazardous work. This provision should be extended to orders that threaten public health, or violate environmental regulations. "Whistleblower" language should be negotiated, protecting workers who report suspected environmental problems to the union or outside authorities.

Local unions can also join with environmental groups on common issues. We need them to sup-

port and understand the concerns of working people. They, in turn, can benefit from our organizational strength and knowledge of the workplace. Our corporate campaign work over the last two decades shows that the labor and environmental movements can develop "Corporate Codes of Conduct" on labor and environmental issues that change company behavior.

USW local unions at Kaiser Aluminum played an important role in convincing the Bonneville Power Administration to adopt such a code during their long labor dispute. The BPA required corporate purchasers of their power to observe all existing labor and environmental regulations to receive preferential industrial rates.

Legislative Action

At the level of the International Union, we must continue to work for progressive legislation. This includes laws:

- Improving air and water quality.
- Requiring reductions in toxic waste, and restricting the use of toxic chemicals.
- Promoting recycling, in ways that protect union jobs.
- Protecting "whistleblowers" who report suspected environmental violations, and workers who refuse to carry out an order that violates environmental laws or endangers the public.
- Guaranteeing "Just Transition"—income protection and job retraining for workers displaced because of environmental problems.
- Ensuring that new technology is introduced in a way that is subject to democratic planning, and protects the interests of working people and their communities.
- Banning, or defining as an unfair trade practice, the import of products made abroad under conditions that do not meet environmental standards.
- Prohibiting the dumping of toxic waste from North America in developing countries, and the export of products or processes that are banned in the exporting country for environmental reasons. Working to ensure the safe use of all other exports.
- Supporting strong international agreements on greenhouse warming, ozone depletion, and other global issues.
- Giving financial aid and debt relief to developing countries, in order to help them achieve sustainable development.

In addition, in the U.S., the union supports the maintenance and expansion of our basic environmental protections:

- Continuation of the Endangered Species Act
- Protection of the integrity of the National Parks' system
- Increased CAFÉ standards
- A continued ban on oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
- Opposition to the "Clear Skies Initiative" of the Bush Administration
- Ratification of the Kyoto Treaty
- Passage of a Chemical Security Act
- Maintenance of the Community Right-to-Know Act
- Passage of a national Renewable Energy Standard of 20 percent by 2020
- Maintenance of the new source review standards of the 1990 Clean Air Act

Lastly, in recognition of the importance of this work in the era of globalization, the USW will charge the IEB Task Force on Environmental Policy to review our work in this area on at least an annual basis. In addition, a committee of our key staff in the U.S. and Canada, assigned to this work, will meet regularly to assist in the ongoing implementation of the recommendations of this report.

Conclusion

None of this will be easy. Environmental issues involve difficult technical, economic and political questions. In the era of globalization, we have witnessed the power of new economic forces destroy well-known companies and the jobs and communities that they supported. We have witnessed massive economic dislocation. We have also come to realize that these same economic forces, if unchecked, can also destroy our environment with even more disastrous economic consequences than the 2005 hurricanes or the pine bark beetle of western Canada. As daunting as the problems are, we believe that meeting such challenges also holds the promise of a better life.

As trade unionists we are fundamentally optimistic in our belief that humankind only sets such problems for itself as it can solve. The issue is

not simply our ability to solve environmental challenges. The issue is how they will be solved and to whose benefit.

Economic and environmental sustainability are the keys to our success, both as a union and as citizens of our two countries. These must become the watchwords of our union. Are our employers embracing these two principles? Are our elected political leaders? If we believe in a future of Good Jobs, A Clean Environment, and A Safer World, then we must act.

An essential part of our moral responsibility as union leaders is to defend the long-term interests of working people. It has been said that we inherit the earth from our parents. But in reality, we borrow it from our children. It is our children's world. We must not fail to protect it.



International Executive Board Unanimously Supports Securing Our Children's World

On March 1, the members of the International Executive Board of the United Steelworkers (USW) voted unanimously to support the recommendations set forth in the report, *Securing Our Children's World*.

Leo W. Gerard
International President

James D. English
International Secretary-Treasurer

Thomas M. Conway
International Vice President (Administration)

Fred Redmond
International Vice President (Human Affairs)

Ken Neumann
National Director for Canada

Richard LaCrosse
International Vice President

James E. Pannell
Administrative Vice President

Ron Hoover
Executive Vice President (R/PIC)

James H. Dunn
Associate Secretary-Treasurer

Lewis Peacock
Vice President (Organizing)

James K. Phillips, Jr.
Vice President at Large

Kenneth Test
Co-Director

David McCall
Director, District 1

Gerald P. Johnston
Co-Director, District 1

Jon Geen
Director, District 2

Stephen Hunt
Director, District 3

William Pienta
Director, District 4

Gary B. Cook
Co-Director, District 4

Michel Arsenault
Director, District 5

Wayne Fraser
Director, District 6

Jim Robinson
Director, District 7

William R. Gibbons
Co-Director, District 7

Ernest R. "Billy" Thompson
Director, District 8

Robert E. Smith
Co-Director, District 8

Connie Entrekin
Director, District 9

Donald L. Langham
Co-Director, District 9

Lloyd Walters
Co-Director, District 9

John DeFazio
Director, District 10

Robert Bratulich
Director, District 11

Terry L. Bonds
Director, District 12

Roger A. Heiser
Co-Director, District 12

Gary W. Beevers
Director, District 13

