

An Open Letter from Environmental & Climate Justice Organizations on May Day

Worker power, immigrant rights, and racial justice must be at the heart of environmental and climate movements

As environmental and climate justice organizations, we declare our support for protests planned for International Workers Day (“May Day”), May 1st, 2017 and for workers who choose to participate by honoring the general strike.

International Workers’ Day was first established to commemorate the deaths of workers fighting for the 8-hour work day in Chicago in 1886. It has long been a day to uplift the struggles, honor the sacrifices, and celebrate the triumphs of working people across the world. The day has taken special significance in the U.S. since May 1st, 2006 when 1.5 million immigrants and their allies took to the streets to protest racist immigration policies.

Today, workers face unprecedented attacks on wages, benefits, workplace safety, and the right to organize free from fear and retaliation. But we know that we are all stronger when workers in our communities have safe, fair, and dignified employment with which they can support their families without fear of deportation or violence.

The effects of our fossil fuel economy fall first and worst on working class communities, communities of color, immigrants, and indigenous peoples who have not only contributed the least to climate disruption, but have the least resources to shoulder the burden of a transition to a new, climate-friendly economy. It is these frontline communities who are also at the forefront of change and whose solutions and leadership we most need.

As organizations working to transition our economy away from profit-seeking resource extraction toward ecological resilience and economic democracy, we know that worker power has to be at the heart of that transition.

We urgently need the wisdom and skills of millions of workers to transform our food, water, waste, transit, and energy systems in order to live within the finite resources of this planet that we call home. But the Trump agenda only promises jobs building more prison cells, border walls, bombs, and oil pipelines. Workers deserve not only fair wages, but work that makes our ecosystems and communities more resilient, not destroys them.

Extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures. No significant social change in this country has come without tremendous risk and sacrifice by ordinary people - from workers who walk off the job to water protectors facing down water cannons and attack dogs.

As environmental and climate justice organizations, we support workers who choose to walk off their jobs on May 1st because we know that the fight to protect land, water, air and soil is inseparable from the fight to protect the life and dignity of workers, migrants, and communities of color.

To workers participating in protests on May 1st, we say: “Thank you. You deserve better. And we’ve got your back.”

To that end, we join with unions and worker-led organizations throughout the country in asking that there be **NO RETALIATION** against any worker - union or non union - who exercises their rights by taking time off from work on May 1. Further, should workers face retaliation, we pledge our strong support for efforts to defend those workers.

To sign your organization onto letter and to specify what type of support you can pledge, click [here](#).

For more information, contact Climate Workers at brooke@climategworkers.org.

AUTHORED BY

[Climate Workers](#) and [Movement Generation Justice & Ecology Project](#)

SIGNED BY

350.org
350 Mass for a Better Future
350 Santa Barbara
Amazon Watch
Asian Pacific Environmental Network
Azul
Bay Area Justice Funders Network
Bay Area Labor Committee for Peace & Justice
Bay Area System Change Not Climate Change
Beyond Extreme Energy
Blue Heart
California Environmental Justice Alliance
Center for Economic Democracy
Center for Environmental Health
Center for Popular Democracy
Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment
Climate Justice Alliance
Climate Justice Project
Climate Workers
CODEPINK
CoFED
Corporate Accountability International
Diablo Rising Tide
Filipino / American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity (FACES)
Food Empowerment Project
Food First
Friends of Broward Detainees
Friends of the Earth
Fund for Democratic Communities
GAIA: Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives
Global Climate Convergence
Global Environmental Justice Project
Greenpeace
Groundswell Fund
Labor Network for Sustainability
Liberty Tree Foundation
Little Village Environmental Justice Organization
Missourians Organizing for Reform and Empowerment (MORE)
Movement Generation Justice & Ecology Project
Movement Strategy Center
NAACP Portland Branch
National Economic and Social Rights Initiative
New Economy Coalition
No Coal in Oakland
North Bay Organizing Project
Oakland Climate Action Coalition
Occidental Arts and Ecology Center
Oil Change International
People's Action
People's Climate Movement - Bay Area

PODER (People Organizing to Demand Environmental & Economic Rights)
Post Carbon Institute
Power Shift Network
Pesticide Action Network North America
Planting Justice
Popular Resistance
Railroad Workers United
Raizes Collective
Rainforest Action Network
Real Pickles
Right to the City Boston
Rising Tide North America
Sierra Club
Sierra Club Massachusetts Chapter
Sierra Club San Francisco Bay Chapter
Sonoma County Conservation Action
Students for a Just & Stable Future
Sunflower Alliance
SustainUS
The LEAP
Urban Habitat
U.S. Department of of Arts and Culture
U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives
U.S. Human Rights Network