

## Climate and Energy

**Generational Goal.** Transform our society from one based and dependent on fossil fuels to one based on clean and renewable energy, economic prosperity, and climate stability, thereby protecting humanity and preserving the health of the planet.

**Objective 1.** Reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050. These reductions can be achieved through the use of clean energy sources and socially just public policies.

### Priority Actions:

1. Enact and enforce a strong, mandatory, and declining cap on greenhouse gas emissions.
2. In any cap and trade program, auction 100% of carbon emission permits and use revenues to benefit the public. These revenues should be used to support clean, renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency measures; provide assistance to low-income communities, families, and groups adversely impacted by the transition to a more sustainable and less carbon intensive economy; help communities adapt to the unavoidable effects of global warming; fund state and local green jobs programs and partnerships with trade unions, industry, and community groups to identify labor shortages and job training needs; and implement training programs.
3. Align and focus tax and other financial rules, regulations, and policies to favor clean and sustainable energy choices over dirty and dangerous fossil fuels.
4. Invest *now* in the development and deployment of clean, renewable, and sustainable energy technologies. For example, create and extend production and consumer tax credits to promote and fund investment in and use of energy efficiency and clean energy technologies.
5. Require that all significant public policies and decision-making processes include consideration of their climate impacts.
6. Develop and implement sustainability principles and practices for developing and siting renewable technologies such that they: minimize greenhouse gas emissions; protect public health; improve environmental quality; protect public lands and sensitive ecosystems; protect biodiversity; and promote environmental justice.
7. Re-engage with the international community in passing a meaningful climate treaty, and show leadership at home and abroad.

### Potential Indicators:

- Greenhouse gas concentrations in the air.
- Life-cycle carbon accounting systems in place for major emitters.
- Investments in and number of clean plants/technologies/jobs coming on line.
- Allocation of auction revenues

**Objective 2.** By 2020, shift the allocation of federal, state, and local transportation spending such that 80% supports mass transit and 20% supports roads. Funding should be used on a “fix it first” basis; repair existing infrastructure rather than begin new construction projects.

### Priority Actions:

1. Expand, promote, support, and incentivize public transportation systems, including regional rails, to decrease the number of vehicle miles traveled per person.

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2. Build and restore livable, sustainable communities in such a way that commuting between work and home is minimal; neighborhoods are connected; and mass transit, walking, and biking are viable options for necessary day-to-day transportation.
3. Develop, deploy, and incentivize the production and use of clean and efficient transportation technologies, as well as sustainable low carbon fuels that have the least impacts on our environment, agricultural, and food systems.

**Objective 3.** Transform and de-carbonize the electricity sector, such that by 2050 80% of electricity generation in the U.S. comes from clean, green, and renewable energy sources. A smart and distributive energy grid should be adaptive to help ameliorate the effects of climate change (heat wave) break downs, etc.

**Priority Actions:**

1. Set a national and near-term target (e.g., 20% by 2020) for renewable electricity, and enact policies to achieve it, including a national renewable energy standard and incentives for deploying and overcoming the barriers to renewable energy technologies.
2. Dramatically scale up domestic production of renewable energy systems and their component parts. This reduces greenhouse gases directly and creates good, family-supporting jobs in many economically distressed areas of the country.
3. Modernize the electrical grid for solar, wind, and geothermal energy sources, with a focus on transmission and storage.
4. Phase out existing coal-fired power plants; stop construction of any new coal-fired power plants without carbon capture technology and until carbon sequestration technologies have been demonstrated and proven effective. Ban mountaintop removal mining. Enact tougher safety, waste disposal, and emissions standards to reduce the environmental and social damage of coal mining.
5. Establish and enforce stringent efficiency standards for utilities, appliances, and equipment; create incentives for energy efficient buildings and homes.
6. Promote national and near term targets for building efficiency ordinances (e.g. by 2015, cities over 50,000 will require that all new building are 50% more efficient than currently, and by 2030, new buildings will be CO2 net zero).
7. Conduct life cycle analyses and energy balance assessments to ensure that emerging alternative technologies are healthy, environmentally sound, and socially just.
8. No new nuclear power plants until the technology's significant safety, security, proliferation, and waste disposal problems are addressed. Government and industry research and development must address and resolve these problems before any expansion of nuclear power plants is considered. We should oppose further public subsidy and loan guarantees for the construction of new nuclear power plants.
9. Transform solid waste disposal systems to reduce greenhouse gas and particulate emissions through various policies.

**Objective 4.** Make climate and energy policy an opportunity to create green jobs and green pathways out of poverty and racial injustice.

**Priority Actions:**

1. Create good job opportunities in green and renewable industries for workers displaced by the transition to a low carbon economy, as well as for future workers; provide the necessary education and training, with a special focus on the working poor; and invest in education to prepare students to work in the green, low carbon economy of the future and to make informed consumer and lifestyle choices as citizens;
2. Invest in the infrastructure and resources needed for areas and communities that will be adversely affected by the environmental, health, economic, and social impacts of climate change. Integrate issues of adaptation and resilience into public policy as guiding principles.
3. Require that all public decision-making include 1) proactive social justice measures; 2) a statement of effect the decision will have on greenhouse gas emissions; 3) an understanding of the decision's vulnerability to the conditions of climate change (rising sea levels, water needs, oil or fuels, etc); and 4) a plan for how that vulnerability will be dealt with.
4. Define a green job as any well-paid, career track job that contribute significantly to preserving or enhancing environmental quality. Like traditional blue-collar jobs, green-collar jobs range from low-skill, entry-level positions to high-skill, higher-paid jobs, and include opportunities for advancement in both skills and wages.
5. Any green jobs program should 1) identify relevant environmental and economic goals and assess local and regional opportunities for achieving those goals; 2) enact policies and programs to drive investment into targeted green economic activity and generate demand for local green-collar workers; 3) prepare this new workforce by building green-collar job training partnerships to identify and meet workforce training needs, and by providing green pathways out of poverty that focus on recruitment, job readiness, job training, and job placement for low-income residents; and 4) leverage this program's success to build political support for new and bolder policies and initiatives.

**Objective 5.** Transform the agricultural sector into an efficient and sustainable system that becomes part of the climate solution.

**Priority Actions:**

1. Integrate energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies into agriculture and food production systems, for example, by installing wind turbines within cultivated fields.
2. Adopt policies and incentives that promote and reward sustainable and climate-friendly agricultural practices.
3. Increase public awareness of where its food comes from, how it is produced, and how it impacts the environment, as well as health and environmental benefits of a vegetarian diet.
4. Reorganize federal, state, and local agriculture subsidies to prioritize low impact, organic, energy efficient farming practices over conventional ones.
5. Ensure that emerging biofuels and renewable fuels policies result in actual reductions in global greenhouse gas pollution across their full life-cycle.
6. Ensure that emerging low carbon and renewable fuels standards address all significant inputs and impacts, including impacts on biodiversity and indirect land use changes, and build in mechanisms to improve counting and accounting for these effects over time.