



Protecting our Legacy

WHEREAS, Coal and nuclear power plants continue to take hard hits as America's energy mix continues to evolve. Seven U.S. reactors have closed since 2013 and at least a dozen more could follow over the next decade. Since 2010, at least 630 coal-fired plants — nearly 40 percent of the U.S. coal fleet — have either closed or announced closures; and

WHEREAS, Under-valuation of the contribution made by these facilities is resulting in premature closure, displacement of workers and loss of high-quality jobs, the disruption of the communities around them, and a weakening of the electric infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, The alarming rate of premature plant closures poses a serious threat to the reliability of the electrical grid. Once these base load power plants close, they cannot be brought back in any meaningful timeframe and insufficient assistance is available to displaced workers and their communities in the face of facility closures; and

WHEREAS, Private companies are increasingly buying up U.S. nuclear reactors slated for closure and promising to decommission them in dramatically less time than their utility owners had planned. Without proper regulation and oversight, these companies have significant incentive to cut corners, including the use of cheaper and less skilled labor, in order to extract higher profits from decommissioning trust funds. Furthermore, potential shortfalls in the funds also pose significant health, safety, environmental, financial and economic risks; and

WHEREAS, The electrification of end-uses will require significant base load energy beyond what currently exists. If the demand for electricity is to be met, it is imperative that this additional electric load be built before electrification is implemented on a large scale; and

WHEREAS, The UWUA's Power 4 America Trust Fund is a valuable resource for both workers entering the workforce and experienced workers that need training to attain skills that will allow them to transition to good paying jobs in the newest utility sectors; and

WHEREAS, Military veterans have strengthened the ranks of UWUA members since the earliest years of our union. We have a duty to honor their sacrifices by helping them make a successful transition to civilian life. Additionally, the training and skills that veterans gain in the military match up perfectly with many utility job classifications and some already have the certifications needed to work in the civilian arena and will not have to go through expensive and time-consuming training.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, Utility workers know there is a continuing place for the energy industries that built our nation. Bringing carbon capture systems to scale will ensure the high-quality jobs in those facilities can continue to support working families and their communities across the country for the foreseeable future. Keeping nuclear generators open is necessary if states are to meet carbon emission reduction mandates while preserving good union jobs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The UWUA will continue to advocate for responsible energy policy that puts a premium on grid reliability and good jobs. Through legislative and regulatory processes, the UWUA will urge that reliable, base load power generators such as coal-fired and nuclear power plants continue to play a role in the national grid and that these facilities receive proper market valuation for the full costs of their operation and for the security and reliability they provide to the nation's electric infrastructure; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, UWUA efforts have played an important role in the increased investment in Carbon Capture Use and Storage (CCUS) technology. The UWUA urges Congress to pass legislation to encourage the development of next generation low-emission carbon technologies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Nuclear power must continue to play a pivotal role in minimizing carbon emissions and providing grid reliability. The UWUA will advocate for nuclear energy to be granted zero-emission credit in state Renewable Portfolio Standards Development, and the increased investment of next generation nuclear technology; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, UWUA members have a proven track record of safety and efficiently decommissioning nuclear power plants. It is in the public interest for the workers who are most familiar with plant operation — the highly skilled and experienced employees who operated and maintained the plant — to play a central role in the decommissioning process. Both utility owners and private decommissioning companies must be held to the highest safety standards and decommissioning trust funds be funded adequately and expended properly; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, In cases where the retirement of legacy generation cannot be averted, the UWUA is fighting for “just transition” that adequately aids the communities in which those plants are located. A key component of just transition is training workers who lose good-paying jobs for new good-paying jobs in renewable energy jobs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Our P4A training and apprenticeship programs are opening doors into new, growing industries such as wind and solar power and are available to workers just entering the workforce as well as those transitioning in their careers. P4A training is unique in its use of retired UWUA members to lead training. Not only do our retiree instructors provide new members with the highest-level safety and operating procedures, they are building their own legacy at the UWUA; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, The UWUA is providing a solution to veterans who have done their duty, and are transitioning to civilian life and facing the challenge of entering a new trade. The UWUA has recently appointed its first Director of Veteran Affairs. The Utility Workers Military Assistance Program (UMAP) gives veterans the job skills needed to excel in the utility industry. By putting veterans to work in good union jobs, the UWUA is doing its part to honor those who have served the nation while addressing the growing shortage of skilled workers due to the aging workforce.