



Just Transition for Coal Communities

WHEREAS, The retirement of coal-fired energy plants devastates workers along with the communities in which they live. The effects are most severe in remote locations where opportunities for economic transition are more limited. People should not be forced to uproot their families in order to find decent paying jobs; and

WHEREAS, The closures are largely due to the lower costs of natural gas and the industry's relentless drive for greater profits. Deregulation of energy markets changed the ownership of coal plants, which today often have multiple owners remote from plant communities. Different owners often have differing regulatory concerns and market incentives, complicating and weakening a local community's position in transition planning; and

WHEREAS, All plans to close coal-fired plants must have a clearly defined program to protect workers and communities. Planners must take into account the total costs of closing fossil fuel generators, and that includes the loss of jobs and the impact on local economies. It is critical that tax bases of local towns and school districts are maintained; and

WHEREAS, In cases where closures cannot be averted, industry and public policy should support the adaptation of existing infrastructure for use of alternative fuels, thereby preserving local employment; and

WHEREAS, While coal provides a declining share of the U.S. energy portfolio, it will remain a part of the United States' generation fleet for years to come. The UWUA has long supported technology designed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from industrial sources, including both coal and gas-fired power plants, as well as heavy industrial sources. Responsible utility owners have invested in pollution control and efficiency technologies and, similarly, should begin to consider investment in emerging technologies to remove CO₂ emissions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The UWUA supports DOE's efforts and funding for research and development to enhance the performance and economics of the existing and future coal fleet; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The UWUA is a strong advocate of legislation, administrative rules, and other initiatives that enable a just transition for workers and communities directly affected by the closure of mines and coal-fired plants by providing a broad range of assistance via robust state and national administrative systems to support populations affected by changes in the energy industry; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, The UWUA also strongly supports the bi-partisan Revitalizing the Economy of Coal Communities by Leveraging Local Activities and Investing More (RECLAIM Act), which would fast-track long-term economic projects on reclaimed mine sites and support new businesses and jobs.