



JOBS & ECONOMY

A conversation with the BlueGreen Alliance's Jason Walsh

The nonprofit aims to unite labor unions and environmental organizations to build a clean-energy economy.



by SARAH KENNEDY JULY 8, 2021

LINK: <https://yaleclimateconnections.org/2021/07/a-conversation-with-the-bluegreen-alliances-jason-walsh/>



(Photo: Courtesy of BlueGreen Alliance)

Efforts to slow carbon pollution and limit global warming have the potential to drive job creation in renewable energy, green building, electric vehicle manufacturing, and more. But in communities that have long depended on jobs in the fossil fuel industry, many fear that the transition will lead to job losses and declining local revenue.

Jason Walsh is executive director of the BlueGreen Alliance, a nonprofit that unites labor unions and environmental organizations. The organization advocates for environmental solutions that create and maintain quality jobs.

Yale Climate Connections spoke with Walsh about the challenges and opportunities for job creation in a clean-energy economy and strategies for ensuring that the transition delivers high-quality jobs to the people who need them most.

YCC: Can protecting the environment and creating jobs go hand in hand? How important is it to address these things simultaneously?

Jason Walsh: They can go hand in hand, and we think they really *have* to go hand in hand, because we are dealing with more than one crisis at the same time. We certainly have a climate crisis – a climate emergency that we have to grapple with – but we also have a crisis of income inequality in this country that is grounded in economic and racial injustice. And so we’re going to need to pursue solutions that are just as interconnected and mutually reinforcing as the causes of those crises.

YCC: What kinds of jobs are created by the transition to clean energy?

Jason Walsh: There are a broad range, and they cross economic sectors: Installing new clean-energy generation – solar, wind, geothermal – will require an enormous amount of work. It already employs a broad range of building tradescrafts. And then you’ve got to operate and maintain all of that infrastructure, which involves a whole other set of workers. We have, on the manufacturing side, workers who build both the components and the finished products of clean technology in everything from automotive to steel to high-efficiency washing machines. And we’ll have a range of work repairing what we sometimes call our natural infrastructure – shoring up wetlands and coastlines and installing green infrastructure in urban spaces.

So I think it’s important to recognize that when we talk about green economy jobs, we’re not just talking about solar and wind, although those have been the predominant ones over the last decade. We’re talking about a broad range of economic sectors.

YCC: What about the scale of those jobs? How many jobs are being created?

Read more at: <https://yaleclimateconnections.org/2021/07/a-conversation-with-the-bluegreen-alliances-jason-walsh/>

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