

Attachment—Additional Questions for the Record

**Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change
Hearing on
“Back in Action: Restoring Federal Climate Leadership”
February 9, 2021**

Ms. Anna Fendley, M.P.H., Director of Regulatory and State Policy, United Steelworkers
(USW)

The Honorable Jan Schakowsky (D-IL)

1. In addition to his climate actions, President Biden also issued an Executive Order focused on Made in America laws, such as Buy American. The Administration sees an opportunity to use federal procurement and domestic content requirements to boost American manufacturing.

What do you think about this Executive Order and should Congress be building upon this approach as we consider potential infrastructure investments?

RESPONSE:

Our union strongly supports President Biden’s Executive Order on Ensuring the Future Is Made in All of America by All of America’s Workers. The strong and consistent application of Buy America preferences must be a critical component of any infrastructure investment, but this is especially the case when the investments are climate related. Buy America preferences directly retain and create domestic manufacturing jobs.

In addition, promoting a domestic preference in procurement helps us reach our climate goals as well. As I mentioned in my testimony, U.S. manufacturers generally produce products in a cleaner process than many foreign competitors. One example is that the U.S. steel industry uses only two thirds as much energy as the Chinese steel industry and produces less than half the CO₂ per unit of steel made.

The threat of emissions leakage, especially in energy-intensive, trade-exposed industries where USW members work, has the potential to undermine our nation’s climate goals if not addressed. Strong Buy America preferences in new and existing spending programs is a critical piece in preventing leakage. In addition, they will show competitor nations, like China and India, that

American commitment to addressing the climate crisis is not an opportunity for them to take advantage of our transition to gain market share in the U.S. at the expense of American production and jobs, and encourage them to take strong action. This is why Gina McCarthy explicitly tied the Biden Administration's climate actions to its Made-In-America actions, and we agree.

The Honorable Nanette Diaz Barragán (D-CA)

1. I recently reintroduced legislation called the Climate Smart Ports Act to invest to zero emissions technology for cargo handling equipment and trucks at ports, and shore power for idling ships. Nearly 40 percent of Americans live within three miles of a port, including my constituents near the Port of Los Angeles.

Can you speak to how investing in investing in climate smart ports can combat environmental injustice and create good-paying green jobs?

RESPONSE:

Ports are very important parts of our nation's infrastructure because they facilitate the movement of goods in and out of our country. However, communities near ports can have high levels of pollution, and a large portion of our nation's greenhouse gas emissions come from the transportation sector as a whole.

Some ports have previously engaged in efforts to curb some pollution by prohibiting idling and timing truck traffic. However, additional robust investments in new technologies to reduce both climate and other pollution could benefit nearby communities by further reducing pollution that goes into the surrounding neighborhoods.

Deploying new technologies for shore power, electric truck charging, and new cargo handling equipment has the potential to create new jobs for workers at the ports to install and maintain this equipment. However, care should be taken not to use this as an excuse to downsize the workforce at ports.

2. A challenge we face with making a just transition to clean energy is that union jobs are more common in the fossil fuel industry than the clean energy sector.

As new clean energy industries emerge, for example offshore wind, are we doing enough through federal policy to ensure new green jobs are also union jobs?

RESPONSE:

Thank you for this question. It is a very important question for policymakers to be asking because union jobs have higher wages and benefits, are safer, give workers a seat at the table about working conditions, and help level the playing field for women and people of color. The short answer is no, the federal government is not doing enough to ensure that new clean jobs are also union jobs. Sadly, there is not one silver bullet that will fix this problem, but instead a series of interrelated policies. Here are some things that Congress could do that would help:

- Pass the Protecting the Right to Organize Act (H.R. 842/S. 420), which the House of Representatives did in March.
- Ensure that public spending in the form of direct procurement, grants, loans, and tax credits includes conditions that mandate high labor standards and domestic content provisions.
- Direct investment in infrastructure and economic development into communities that have lost union jobs in fossil fuel related industries, from mining to power plants to manufacturing products for the supply chain. Many of these communities with significant job losses are not the communities where new clean jobs are being created. It's important to drive blue collar economic development in blue collar communities.
- Implement provisions to ensure that new technologies developed here at the DOE National Labs or other publicly-funded research institutions are then commercialized and manufactured here in the United States rather than overseas.
- Emphasize a focus on retaining union jobs, rather than just creating new jobs. Many companies in the traditional energy sector and its supply chain could utilize new technologies to either reduce or eliminate their emissions or produce a new product for clean energy. For example, a manufacturing facility that makes a product for the natural gas industry could retool to provide a component for the solar industry, or a shipbuilder who builds vessels for offshore oil and gas extraction could build new vessels for offshore wind development. However, often these companies need help identifying potential opportunities and finding capital to finance a big emissions reduction or retooling project. By funding Department of Energy programs for grants, loans, and technical assistance, Congress could help ensure that union jobs are retained in communities across the country.
- Support the work of the Biden Administration in the new Made in America Office created by the Executive Order on Ensuring the Future Is Made in All of America by All of America's Workers and the Executive Order on America's Supply Chains. These two efforts to assess and grow U.S. manufacturing capacity generally and for strategic supply chains will be very important to ensure that we are creating more manufacturing jobs in the supply chains for strategic clean technologies.

1. In your testimony you referenced the part that the Biden framework should “...retain and grow middle-class, union jobs in a diversity of sectors and geographies – an immense challenge that we cannot overstate, but what must be our ultimate policy goal.” Paper and wood products manufacturers are the largest producers and users of bioenergy of any industrial sector. In Georgia, the forest products industry employs over 49,000 people in good family wage jobs. In fact, more than 75 percent of U.S. pulp and paper mills are in counties designated by the Census Bureau as more than 80 percent rural. The U.S. is the only country in the world that does not recognize the carbon benefits of our bioenergy. Competitors in Europe are rewarded with renewable energy credits, placing U.S. mills at a competitive disadvantage. The creation and use of biomass energy in paper and wood products mills is integral and incidental to the manufacture of essential products such as pulp, paper, packaging, tissue and wood products. Rather than wasting the biomass residuals from their manufacturing process, pulp mills, integrated pulp and paper mills and wood products mills efficiently convert these biomass residuals to energy while manufacturing bio-based products valuable to society.

Can you explain the importance and economic benefit of recognizing the carbon benefits of renewable biomass energy?

RESPONSE:

Thank you for this question. The United Steelworkers is the largest union in the pulp and paper sector. Over the last year, we’ve been reminded how important paper products are in our society – first from the toilet paper shortage last spring, and then in the form of the many cardboard boxes delivered to homes carrying online orders.

Our members in the pulp and paper sector talk about how they use the whole tree, except the leaves to make paper products, which includes using the residuals to create energy. Using the whole tree prevents the natural decay of that biomass, which would naturally release carbon dioxide. It also means that the mill does not need to use energy from the grid, which is often produced from fossil fuels.

Energy prices are a significant concern for energy-intensive, trade exposed industries. The U.S. pulp and paper industry has made significant investments over the years to improve energy efficiency, including the widespread use of combined heat and power (CHP). However, more could be done by Congress to help ensure that the industry remains globally competitive and able to manufacture and sell products produced with the lowest emissions possible. USW has long supported recognizing the carbon neutrality of biomass as one helpful policy to keep these high-skilled, high-wage jobs in rural communities.