

Remarks by John Doherty, IUPAT Senior Advisor
U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
Climate Justice Roundtable: Community Perspectives and Where We Go From Here
July 29, 2024

Thank you for inviting me to speak today. I am John Doherty, Senior Advisor on Infrastructure, Workforce, Climate, and Equity for the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT) and a steering committee member of the BlueGreen Alliance. My title reflects our commitment to addressing workforce gaps while ensuring social, economic, and environmental justice are at the forefront of our efforts.

As everyone here knows, the passage of BIL, IRA, and CHIPS are significant because they represent the biggest ever investment in climate action and a clean energy workforce. But these laws are also significant because they create an opportunity to maximize the public benefits of these investments for workers, communities, and the environment. However, we have more to do to train a workforce to fill the jobs created by these laws.

Workforce development is at the crux of this economic and community development. It is not just about filling jobs; it's about creating sustainable careers that support families and the communities in which they reside. Labor standards such as prevailing wages, robust apprenticeship programs, and local hire initiatives are crucial. Prevailing wages provide fair compensation, apprenticeship programs cultivate a skilled workforce, and local hire initiatives support community-based and shared economic growth. These provisions ensure a level playing field and financial stability for American workers and are key to addressing systemic barriers that have historically marginalized communities.

IUPAT is committed to securing funding for workforce development initiatives that foster partnerships and pipelines within the workforce ecosystem. These partnerships span K-12 education, pre-apprenticeship programs, and the expansion of registered apprenticeships aligned with secondary career and technical education. The U.S. Department of Education offers significant opportunities to connect secondary career and technical education students with apprenticeship programs. By aligning these educational pathways, we can build pipelines into good jobs and ensure students are equipped with the skills needed for the jobs of the future.

Finally, I'll highlight a few specific ways we're working to make this happen:

- **Legally Binding Agreements.** Innovative projects around hydrogen are being developed with the use of agreements such as Project Labor Agreements (PLAs), which use skilled labor and often save money and ensure predictability in project planning. The EV battery supply chain is bringing jobs back to the United States via new manufacturing investments, but also through a jobs pipeline via the Battery Workforce Initiative and using Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs), which will ensure these projects provide tangible benefits to local communities, including job creation and environmental improvements.
- **Decarbonizing Buildings.** A large part of our shared work is in decarbonizing the building sector. The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) and green banks are instrumental in financing projects that reduce emissions and promote energy efficiency, all while allowing states to add labor provisions to ensure these jobs are good family-supporting union jobs in communities

across our country. As part of the BlueGreen Alliance, we released a "Roadmap to Federal Funding for Public Buildings" provides guidance on accessing funds to retrofit public buildings, reducing their carbon footprint. This roadmap also outlines how direct pay provisions under the IRA enable non-profit entities and local governments to benefit from clean energy tax incentives, accelerating the deployment of clean energy projects.

- **Career Skills Training Program.** This BIL program provides funding for nonprofit-led partnerships to work with industry and labor organizations to create programs where students concurrently receive classroom instruction and on-the job training to obtain an industry-related certification to install energy efficient building technologies. IUPAT's International Finishing Trades Institute was recently named as the first selectee.

In conclusion, we need to fill the workforce gap while we continue to implement these historic laws. Workforce development is a key part of ensuring the transition to a low-carbon economy is equitable, creates good jobs, and supports communities. Thank you for your attention and your commitment. I look forward to your questions and to working together.