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FRIENDS OF THE EARTH * GREENPEACE * LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS
NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION * NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL
NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION * RAILS-TO-TRAILS CONSERVANCY * SIERRA CLUB
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Jumpstart the Economy by Protecting the Environment

National Environmental Groups Propose Jobs in Clean Energy and Green Infrastructure

Washington, DC - Environmental and conservation organizations today released a green stimulus proposal that would create as many as 4 million jobs, reduce pollution, save energy, protect public health and safety, and restore the environment. The groups delivered their \$160 billion proposal for funding nearly 80 energy efficiency, renewable energy, public transportation, water infrastructure, national parks and public lands, education, and other environmental programs to the Obama transition team over the weekend and unveiled them on Capitol Hill today.

Shortly after the November election, President-elect Obama called for an economic recovery program “building wind farms and solar panels, fuel-efficient cars and the alternative energy technologies that can free us from our dependence on foreign oil and keep our economy competitive in the years ahead.” All 16 groups endorsing the proposal agree with the president-elect that our economic recovery hinges on making smart investments today that will protect our environment, restore our valuable natural resources, and set us on the path to a clean energy economy.

“President-elect Obama has the opportunity to not only create good jobs by making critically needed investments in energy, transportation, water and lands, but also to lay the foundation for a new 21st century economy,” said Rebecca Wodder of American Rivers. “We need smart investments to jumpstart the economy now and to keep our country competitive in the years ahead.”

Addressing global warming and shifting America to clean energy is a top priority of many of the groups involved in the green economic recovery proposal. Burning fossil fuels to power, our homes, industry, and transportation is responsible for 80 percent of U.S. global warming

pollution. Scientists agree that to avert catastrophic global warming America and the rest of the world must dramatically reduce global warming pollution by mid-century.

“President-elect Obama recognizes that with the challenge of rebuilding the economy comes the opportunity to repower America with clean, homegrown energy like wind and solar,” said Anna Aurilio of Environment America. “Investing now in clean energy, energy efficiency, and smarter transportation is key to improving our energy security, solving global warming, and jump-starting our economy.”

The groups’ proposal would help President-elect Obama fulfill his promise to make public buildings more energy-efficient, and even make federal buildings energy generators by installing solar panels on their roofs. The groups also called for extending clean energy tax credits, weatherizing a million U.S. homes, and updating public transit with new lower-carbon vehicles.

“Efficiency is the quickest, cheapest, cleanest way to reduce global warming pollution and has vast potential to create jobs and stimulate the economy,” said Jim Presswood of the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Approximately 30 percent of U.S. global warming pollution and 60 percent of U.S. oil consumption is due to transportation. Rather than spending money on new roads, the groups recommend investing in green transportation projects and addressing America’s billion-dollar backlog in road and bridge maintenance. Maintenance and rehabilitation create more jobs than new road construction and do so without increasing oil consumption and global warming emissions.

“Investing in public transportation and other transportation alternatives, the next generation of alternative fuels, and vehicle efficiency can reduce our dependence on oil, reduce global warming pollution, save families money at the pump, and create millions of good jobs,” said Colin Peppard of Friends of the Earth. “And when it comes to roads and bridges, the focus should be on maintaining existing infrastructure, not new construction.”

Clean water is also a priority of many of the groups that developed the green stimulus proposal. The American Society of Civil Engineers grades both wastewater and drinking water systems a D-, the lowest ratings of any infrastructure category. The groups stressed the need for 21st century green infrastructure solutions, like retrofitting buildings and homes with water-efficient plumbing, restoring floodplains, and planting trees and installing green roofs.

“Climate change is already causing serious water shortages, flooding, and damage to ecosystems. We need to invest more in water infrastructure, but we need to invest more wisely, too. Building new dams isn’t the answer. Instead, we must invest in green solutions like water efficiency and natural flood protection to create good jobs, save money, and protect public health and safety,” said Betsy Otto of American Rivers.

Finally, the groups highlighted the opportunity to create economic activity and jobs in national parks and other federal lands, agriculture, and environmental education and worker retraining. To protect America's forests, parks, wildlife refuges, and other public lands, the groups have proposed a program of nearly 37,000 new jobs that will include restoring native forest and grassland ecosystems and wetlands, repairing damaged watersheds, protecting habitat for threatened and endangered fish and wildlife, removing invasive species, and replanting native tree species. These jobs will have particular benefit in rural areas, the groups noted.

“Reinvesting in our national parks puts Americans to work in difficult economic times, and restores our national parks for our children and grandchildren to enjoy,” said Tom Kiernan of the National Parks Conservation Association, which cites nearly \$1 billion in ready-to-go projects in national parks in the coming year.

The proposal was presented by American Rivers; National Audubon Society; Clean Water Action; Defenders of Wildlife; Environment America; Environmental Defense Fund; Friends of the Earth; Greenpeace; League of Conservation Voters; National Parks Conservation Association; Natural Resources Defense Council; National Wildlife Federation; Rails-to-Trails Conservancy; Sierra Club; Trust for Public Land; Union of Concerned Scientists; and The Wilderness Society, and includes contributions from Apollo Alliance and Center for American Progress. The full document and cover letter to the transition team can be found at www.saveoureenvironment.org

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