

The National Jobs for All Coalition

Why the Climate Action Movement Should Support HR 1000

What is HR 1000? It's a job creation bill introduced by Rep. John Conyers (D. Michigan) and 28 cosponsors. It is designed to secure the right of all job seekers to decent employment by funding enough temporary jobs in the public and not-for-profit sectors of the economy to close the economy's job gap.

What is the economy's job gap? It's the difference between the number of people who want jobs and the number currently available in the economy. The job gap increases dramatically during recessions, but even with unemployment at its current (Jan. 2017) level of 4.8%, there are still almost 14 million more job wanters in the U.S. economy than there are available jobs.

What's so special about HR 1000? It's the only legislation currently before Congress that is designed to achieve genuine full employment (under 2%) by eliminating the economy's job gap entirely.

Wouldn't that be inflationary? Not if it's done with a carefully designed direct job creation program. That's why HR 1000 relies on the direct job creation strategy rather than just more stimulus spending.

What's in it for the climate action movement? HR 1000 would do four things for the movement.

1. It would deprive carbon polluters of their most powerful argument in the battle for public opinion—the job-creation benefits of environmentally harmful economic development. The achievement of sustained full employment would rob that argument of its destructive power. It would permit working people to “vote their conscience” regarding environmental policy rather than their pocket books.
2. It would provide a practical means of compensating workers whose livelihood really is threatened by the transition to a carbon-free economy. The fact that the transition would create more jobs than it destroyed provides slim comfort to people who would lose their existing employment—because there's no guarantee the newly created jobs would be located where they live and need their skills. HR 1000 would solve that problem.
3. It would dramatically increase the pool of public resources available to subsidize environmentally beneficial projects. The accomplishments of the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) in the 1930s illustrates this point, but the range of activities a job creation program could undertake today is far broader.
4. It would make it far easier to insure that climate action would lead to climate justice by guaranteeing jobs and climate friendly investment in disadvantaged communities, because that's where HR 1000's funding would be concentrated by virtue of its commitment of job creation for unemployed job wanters.

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