



# The Green Justice Solution:

A Win-Win Plan to Address Climate Crisis and Jumpstart an Equitable and Sustainable Economic Recovery

Summary & Highlights

A Publication of the Green Justice Coalition  
and Community Labor United

December 6, 2008



## Green Justice Coalition MISSION

We are a partnership of community groups, labor unions, environmental organizations and other allied organizations working to build a broad-based constituency in support of a sustainable, equitable, and clean energy economy in the Boston region. We are dedicated to ensuring that our region's growing green economy will create quality jobs, local workforce development opportunities and create healthier and safer communities. In particular low-income communities and communities of color have been overburdened by our unsustainable economy therefore we want to ensure that these communities are at the forefront of the growing green, sustainable economy.

Through research, policy recommendations and organizing we will demonstrate that a socially-just, environmentally-sustainable, and economically-prosperous future is attainable. The Green Justice Coalition is convened and staffed by Community Labor United.



### Green Justice Coalition's Steering Committee:

Alternatives for Community & Environment  
Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now  
Boston Climate Action Network  
Chelsea Collaborative  
Clean Water Action  
Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative  
MassCOSH  
New England Council of Carpenters  
Painters & Allied Trades DC35  
Project RIGHT

### Current Green Justice Coalition Members:

Adaptive Environments  
Boston Workers Alliance  
Boston Youth Environmental Network  
Chinese Progressive Association  
Greenport  
Green Roundtable  
Home Energy Efficiency Team  
Massachusetts Energy  
Massachusetts Green Jobs Coalition  
Massachusetts Interfaith Climate Action Network  
SEIU Local 615  
Sheet Metal Workers Local 17  
Urban Ecology Institute  
Urban Massachusetts Green Alliance  
YouthBuild

**Report author:** Mary Jo Connelly

**Contributions from:** Penn Loh, Mike Prokosch

**Layout:** Angela Mark, Red Sun Press

### Foundations supporting CLU, whose support helped make this report possible:

Anonymous Foundation  
Catholic Campaign for Human Development  
Discount Foundation  
Jewish Funds for Justice  
Hyams Foundation  
Herman and Frieda L. Miller Foundation  
Needmor Fund  
New World Foundation  
Public Welfare Foundation  
Solidago Foundation  
Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock

# The Green Justice Solution: a Win-Win Plan to Address Climate Crisis and Jumpstart an Equitable and Sustainable Economic Recovery

## A Green Wave is coming . . .

Our airwaves are flooded with talk about green: ‘green economy,’ ‘green jobs,’ ‘green buildings,’ ‘green products,’ and more recently, ‘green recovery’ and ‘green new deal.’ Global warming is forcing us to go green, and the “green revolution” will be as dramatic as the Industrial Revolution. To prevent floods, disease, economic and environmental disruption, we must transform the economy and stabilize the climate. We need to act forcefully, we need to act soon, and we need to act together: communities, political leaders, congregations, environmentalists, businesses and unions.

Today’s fluctuating energy prices and declining economy are highlighting green investments as an opportunity as well as a challenge. The challenge is to conserve energy, switch from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources, and lower greenhouse gas emissions fast enough to keep flood waters from swamping Boston. The opportunity is even greater. The green wave can lower energy costs, put people back to work, and jumpstart our sinking economy.

Finally, the Green Justice Coalition sees an additional, even longer-term opportunity in this green wave: an opportunity to rebalance our regional economy, to make Greater Boston more economically as well as environmentally sustainable. We strongly believe that joining an equity agenda with this green transition will allow us to more equitably share the benefits and costs of growth. We believe that this is our best chance in a generation for poor communities and communities of color to build wealth, health, and potential, and for all of us to bridge the growing race, class and geographical gaps that divide us.

## The Energy Efficiency Opportunity: a Dozen Reasons to Embrace This Strategy

We need an energy strategy that is tailored for our region—to Greater Boston’s densely-populated communities, our aging buildings, our temperature highs and lows, our dependence on imported fuel, our particular economy and workforce. We need a practical and cost-effective strategy that we can implement with technology we already have, one that we can move on today.

The Green Justice Coalition wants to call attention to such a strategy. Massachusetts and Boston have the opportunity to make a ‘win-win’ investment by increasing energy efficiency building weatherization on a very large scale. Mayor Menino and Governor Patrick have advanced strong climate action initiatives with policies that will support a major expansion of energy efficiency work. We are building on a strong foundation of proven energy efficiency programs and resources—including ratepayer-funded utility programs and energy services companies as well as recent energy alliance initiatives. We also start with a growing green economy: in 2006, Greater Boston ranked 5th highest among the Top Ten Metropolitan Areas for Green Jobs, with 1 in every 38 of the country’s ‘green jobs’ currently located in

the region, although most are outside the City of Boston. Finally, a strong network of environmental and environmental justice advocates are educating the public and building support for far-reaching but feasible solutions in our region.

Greatly expanding the energy efficiency retrofitting of area homes and commercial buildings is a proven strategy that can benefit our communities and our economy in a dozen different ways. Energy efficiency retrofitting:

1. **Reduces GHG emissions**, with the potential to shrink Greater Boston’s carbon footprint more quickly than any other strategy;
2. **Saves money for consumers by reducing heating costs**, helping residents to stay in their homes and helping businesses stay competitive;
3. **Makes our energy system less expensive to operate** by cutting demand and reducing the need for expensive new power plants and other ‘peak demand’ sources;
4. **Has a higher return on investment and shorter payback period** than any other clean energy investment;
5. **Keeps money in the local economy** rather than using it to pay for imported fuels;
6. **Improves air quality in our homes and communities**, reducing asthma and other respiratory diseases.
7. **Builds on our Commonwealth’s strong network** of energy efficiency programs and resources;
8. **Reduces unemployment and turns around our economy** by producing more jobs-- more quickly--than most other investments, green or not;
9. **Produces many jobs with modest training requirements** that our local training and education networks can prepare un- and underemployed residents to move into relatively quickly;
10. **Creates local jobs** that cannot be ‘outsourced’;
11. **Creates “green collar” jobs** that pay good wages, offer career opportunities and are accessible to local residents;
12. **Repairs our fragile regional economy** by reviving our industrial and construction sector, opening those jobs up to local residents and rebuilding a middle class.

We need to start thinking of energy efficiency as the cheapest form of energy. Energy efficiency is more than twice as cheap as today’s energy sources and three times as cheap as new power plants. As an economic and environmental strategy, it makes sense to invest in the cheapest energy first. Energy efficiency is only the first step; we are still moving in the wrong direction, with our houses, electronics and cars driving energy demand and GHG emissions upwards. But by improving energy efficiency first, we can generate the savings to pay for other more expensive investments in renewable energy and advanced technologies.

## The Green Economy, Green Jobs & Prospects for Growth

Investing in energy efficiency will directly create jobs in three areas:

- ◆ Energy Efficiency Upgrades – Auditing/Assessment and Construction
- ◆ Efficient Building Operations and Maintenance
- ◆ Energy Management

Job creation estimates for the building audits and retrofit construction range from **6.5 to 11 jobs per \$1 million invested in energy efficiency building retrofits, depending on the type of building, amount of work, and region of the country.** For residential retrofits, every \$1 million invested generates 11 on-site jobs plus as many as 5 indirect ‘support’ jobs. Finally, retrofits also create jobs in manufacturing energy efficient products.

Energy efficiency building retrofitting varies by type and age of building, but a typical 1-family residential retrofit usually includes:

Type of Work Percentage	Purpose	Estimated of Total Retrofit Construction Labor
Insulation	adding or replacing insulation (including insulating pipes);	54%
Electrical	replacing lighting fixtures and light bulbs, installing light sensors and thermostat controls, replacing appliances	20%
HVAC / Plumbing	replacing heating and cooling systems and improving indoor air circulation systems (including duct work, blowers, and fans) and replacing toilets and faucets to minimize water use;	15%
Windows and Doors and Air Sealing	replacing windows with insulated glass and caulking around windows and replacing doors and adding sweeps to minimize heating and cooling loss	11%

Larger buildings upgrades may also include installation of renewable energy systems (solar photovoltaic power, solar heating, and geothermal systems) or new roofs (green, solar or cool).

In addition, every retrofit starts and ends with auditing and quality control—assessing building energy use, recommending cost-effective upgrades and ensuring that installation was effective; but labor estimates for auditing work were not available.

Occupations that will see new job opportunities from growth in energy efficiency retrofits include:

- ◆ Energy Auditors / diagnosticians
- ◆ Electricians
- ◆ Heating/Air Conditioning Installers & Technicians and Plumbers
- ◆ Carpenters & Carpenters Helpers
- ◆ Roofers
- ◆ Laborers
- ◆ Insulation workers
- ◆ Industrial Truck Drivers
- ◆ Glazers
- ◆ Construction Managers
- ◆ Building Inspectors
- ◆ Building Operations and Maintenance workers

Most of the direct on-site jobs are construction jobs, although a number of new energy auditor jobs will also be created. Many require only modest training, making them accessible to residents without college degrees. Of the--full-year-retrofitting jobs that would be created, almost one-third would be entry-level, almost two-thirds would be skilled or semi-skilled and only one in fourteen would be supervisory. This mix of jobs creates opportunities for energy efficiency workers to move up a career ladder into union apprenticeships that offer long-term, high-wage careers in a skilled trade.

By growing the energy efficiency sector, we hope not only to create such good jobs but also to build pathways into these jobs for young people and others who were left behind by other economic development waves. A green economy must be built on equity, and to build equity into Boston’s energy efficiency opportunity we must address barriers to job access that many low-income residents and communities face. We see the need for what activist and author Van Jones calls ‘green pathways out of poverty’ to connect people in low-income communities and communities of color with new opportunities. This includes community-based education and training opportunities, mentoring and supports.

## Where Will the Money Come From?

Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) auctions provide funds to invest in energy efficiency, as do this year's increased federal funds for low-income weatherization. Utility regulation has created and increased financial incentives to invest in efficiency. New public-private Energy Alliances will also increase available financing, as will a growing realization among private investors that energy efficiency has a high and proven return on investment. And more dramatic investments in energy efficiency are on the horizon. On November 18, a broad group of citizens called for a state commitment to a \$1 billion "Massachusetts Energy Empowerment Revolution Fund" that could retrofit 400,000 homes and create 10,000 new green-collar jobs within two years.

At a national level, economists, policy makers and advocates are enthusiastic about the opportunity that "green recovery" presents to both address climate crisis and stimulate our slumping economy. President-elect Obama has proposed to help create five million jobs over ten years by investing in clean energy, and the Economic Recovery Plan he announced on November 21 to create 2.5 million jobs in the next two years includes clean energy jobs. His plan echoes one from The Apollo Alliance, Green for All and the Center for American Progress (CAP), whose director, John Podesta, coordinates President-elect Obama's transition team.

Apollo, Green for All and CAP have proposed legislation to stimulate the U.S. economy through federal investments in energy efficiency and green-collar jobs. Apollo estimates that a broad 'green' recovery could be accomplished for \$50- \$100 billion—much less than the \$700 billion financial rescue program—with much greater impact than more traditional stimulus packages. A 'green' stimulus would create four times more jobs than investing in the oil industry and more jobs than individual tax rebates. A green recovery would significantly reduce unemployment, and create opportunities for better paying jobs. Massachusetts' share of a national \$100 billion program would be approximately \$2.3 billion, which would create 42,500 jobs statewide. Investing just under \$1 billion of this (39%) in energy efficiency retrofitting would create more than 16,500 jobs.

## A Bottom Line for Success: Building Community Capacity and Ownership for Greening

Across the country enthusiasm has also been growing over the green transition's potential for advancing environmental and economic justice. The Green Justice Coalition and the broader movement in which we work believe that equity must be part of truly sustainable solutions to the climate crisis. Energy efficiency investments and green policies must address historic injustices, broadening opportunity for those who have been left behind. Beyond this moral imperative, we believe that prioritizing low income communities and communities of color in the green transition is also a pragmatic bottom line for success. To avoid dramatic climate, health and economic consequences that continued global warming will trigger, in the next 12 years together we must reduce total carbon emissions by at least 10%-25% from 1990 levels, and by 2050 we must reduce them by 80%. To conserve energy on this scale, climate change efforts must reach deep into our communities and broadly engage a majority of residents and workers. Small pockets of greening cannot meet these goals, however smart or dedicated the proponents.

We must start from the question: *"What does it take for a community to develop the capacity to green its own economy and environment?"*

Although the public sector and businesses have major roles to play in creating new energy and efficiency opportunities, greening our communities is not something that can come from outside, something that can be 'done to' or 'done for' us. Each family, each work group, each neighborhood and congregation has a critical role to play. The Green Justice Coalition has already brought together many different communities and sectors to educate each other about what is at stake for us in the transition to a greener economy, and what we need to do to realize the historic opportunity of energy efficiency.

Today we are reaching out to public officials. We are asking them to join with our communities to help make resources available to support our communities as they build their ownership and capacity to be at the front of this green transition. The policies in our 'equity agenda' will create safe, high wage jobs with benefits and access to union membership. They will generate community training programs, mentoring and other support systems that are critical to build 'green pathways out of poverty.'

## Why Must Equity Be At the Core of Any Climate Change Agenda?

### ***Because we're all in this together.***

Scientists agree that to stop and then reverse global warming, the United States must cut its current fossil fuel consumption/GHG emissions by 80% in under fifty years. The challenge of an 80% reduction is almost unimaginably huge. Everyone in our society, every household and community, will have to participate in reaching that goal. If working class communities and communities of color, which are now the majority of Boston's population, do not get the resources and policies they need to green their own communities, we will miss our goal by a very wide margin, and all of us, or all of our children, will suffer the consequences.

### ***Because the "green transition" will fix structural flaws in our regional economy.***

The erosion of manufacturing jobs over the past several decades has taken the center out of our regional economy and left it permanently enfeebled. Our recessions are deep, our recoveries are weak, and our "two Americas" job market increasingly fails to provide employment for the students in Boston's public schools. Any major public investment must confront our economy's structural weaknesses and implement policies that fix them. A green transition that includes equity at its core can jumpstart the jobs and industries that will permanently strengthen economy for the benefit of all workers, investors, and businesses in the region, not solely the disadvantaged.

### ***Because we're not all equally responsible for the current climate crisis.***

While we all contribute in some way to environmental destruction and climate change, the wealthy contribute more than the poor and working classes. The average suburban household in Greater Boston buys 85% more gas and uses 20% more electricity than city households.

### ***Because low income communities and communities of color have been paying a higher price.***

Historically, low-income communities and communities of color have borne the brunt of our economy's unsustainable environmental practices, while benefiting the least from the vast wealth generated. A 2005 study found that Massachusetts'

minority populations "live each day with substantially greater risk of exposure to environmental health hazards than white communities." A Massachusetts resident of color is 39 times more likely than a white person to live an environmentally-burdened community. More than two-thirds of Boston's solid waste facilities are in Roxbury and Dorchester, two of the city's most diverse and lowest income neighborhoods. Roxbury residents also suffer from high concentrations of diesel pollution and the highest asthma hospitalization rates in Massachusetts.

### ***Because inequality is at its highest level in decades, and growing.***

This city and region has become a place with intense concentrations of poverty and equally dramatic concentrations of wealth. In 2007, the City of Boston was the third most unequal among the 50 largest US cities, and it is growing more unequal. The city's highest income households claimed more than half of Boston's total income (56%), while the lowest income households got a tiny 2% sliver. Even before the current recession, one in five Boston families and one in three children lived in extreme poverty. Latino, Asian and African-American residents are much more likely to live in poverty than White residents, and City residents are twice as likely to live in poverty as others in the region. Low wage jobs are growing much faster than good jobs in our region, resulting in widespread poverty, and homelessness. Almost half of all adults living in poverty worked full or part-time jobs in 2007. And unemployment rates for Boston's young people are among the highest in the nation and climbing, even for high school graduates.

### ***Because our communities haven't always benefited from growth and development, poor people and people of color must lead the Green Wave***

Low income communities and communities of color must lead the way towards a green, sustainable future, because we have no other choice. Our communities, and working class people in general, run the risk of being left behind in the shift towards sustainability. We cannot expect that those who have benefited so

much from the current system will fix the problems in a way that will benefit us. Despite tremendous odds, our communities have resisted environmental injustices and pioneered innovative local solutions with very few resources. This gives us hope for finding a green justice solution to address the interconnected economic, environmental and social crises that people suffer from every day. Greening with equity is not guaranteed, but we have hope that the Green Justice partnerships we are forging here will help us take our place at the tables where decisions about the green economy are being made. We believe that these partnerships will help us to optimize our communities' access to energy efficiency programs, information, resources, and business opportunities.

### ***Because we will have to work to make new green jobs 'good jobs'***

If millions or even billions of dollars of public and public money is invested in energy efficiency retrofits in our region, it will generate thousands of new jobs and the coming year will be a critical year in developing the policy to regulate this expanding industry. The jobs it generates will not automatically be good jobs. Without strong advocacy, energy efficiency investment could easily generate primarily "low road" jobs--with low wages, few benefits and few training opportunities. "Green" industries such as recycling have already taken the low road, keeping employees in low-paying, hazardous, dead-end jobs. Many energy efficiency jobs could follow the same low road to misclassification and the underground economy. Our partnerships can help build a green road to high job quality, high safety standards, and opportunities for union membership.

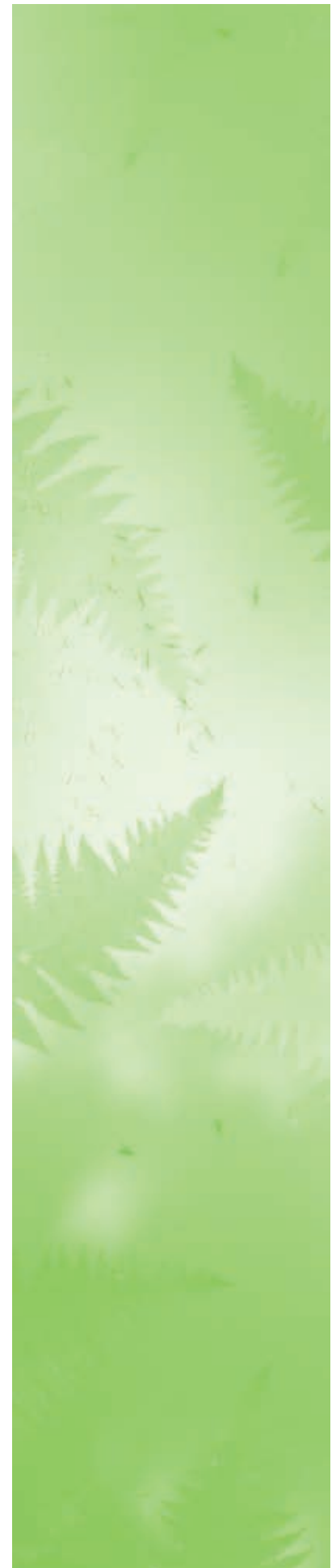
**The Green Justice Solution is a Win-Win Partnership to make this opportunity all that it can be for our communities and our region. Together we can:**

1. **Expand public and private investment in energy efficiency** to protect the planet, to make our communities healthier and to keep residents in their homes;
2. **Jumpstart an economic recovery** by targeting the resulting green jobs to un- and underemployed residents in our communities, and by targeting a fair share of the energy efficiency programs and resources to the communities that have born the largest environmental and economic burdens;
3. **Repair our increasingly unequal regional economy with an equity agenda** by enacting standards to make new and existing green jobs into 'good' jobs that can sustain families and communities, with livable wages, union opportunities, and career pathways that begin with accessible and effective green training.

Rooted in a strategic partnership between community, labor, policymakers, environmentalists, faith-based groups and green business, an expanded investment in energy efficiency will generate good jobs, lift families out of poverty and offer young people hope for a secure future, while saving energy costs, reducing GHG emissions and assuring that large parts of Boston will not end up underwater. As an economic recovery strategy, investing in energy efficiency is not a cure-all; in addition to greenings, we need to invest in wages and infrastructure for our seriously underfunded education, childcare and humans service systems, jobs that are filled primarily by women of all ethnicities and men of color. But we believe that investing in energy efficiency will cut energy costs for both families and the public sector, and will provide avenues for community members including women and people of color to enter new fields of employment. Energy efficiency retrofits are a big part of the environmental and economic Green Justice solution for our region, and a critical place to start.

**We can ride the green wave and make a difference in Boston.**

We have all the necessary ingredients in the Boston region to create a green economy that meets the needs of our communities. The political will is strong and growing, while public policy and resources are starting to come on line. Community, labor, and environmental partnerships have formed, and we are hopeful that our political leaders will join with us. Green industry already has a foothold in the region. We have the opportunity to connect all these elements into a powerful model for community-driven green development. But we must organize and strengthen our partnerships. If we don't, the green wave will simply wash over us and leave us behind. The time is now. We cannot afford to miss this remarkable opportunity.



## Community Labor United

Community Labor United (CLU) is a coalition of community and labor organizations that run joint campaigns to counteract the growing gap between rich and poor, while highlighting the connections between jobs and community issues. Our mission is to protect and promote the interests of working class communities in the Greater Boston region. CLU unites many of the strongest community organizations and unions in our region to drive forward policies that promote quality jobs, secure health care, affordable housing, job access, and environmental justice for the area's low and moderate-income people. Through collaborative research, leadership development and organizing, CLU unites our organizations and communities around a common vision and plan of action.

CLU carries out two types of research: campaign research that helps to frame and support our campaigns, and policy research on other issues of concern to working class communities in our region. In 2006, we published *The Hourglass Challenge: Creating a More Equitable Economy for Greater Boston*, which examines a range of policy and organizing opportunities for stemming this region's rapidly growing economic and racial inequality. In 2008, we published *Earnings, Poverty and Income Inequality in the City of Boston* in addition to this report, *The Green Justice Solution: A Win-Win Plan to Prevent Climate Crisis and Jumpstart an Equitable and Sustainable Economic Recovery*. *The NonProfit City: The Impact of Boston's Teaching Hospitals on Our Community* will be forthcoming later this month.



For more information, contact:  
Community Labor United  
8 Beacon Street, 2nd Floor



### CLU Board of Directors:

**Chair:** Richard Rogers, Secretary-Treasurer,  
Greater Boston Labor Council  
**Treasurer:** Lauren Jacobs, Organizing Director, SEIU Local 615  
**Clerk:** Tom Callahan, Executive Director, MAHA

Fausto DaRocha, Executive Director, Brazilian Immigrant Center  
Enid Eckstein, Vice-President, 1199 SEIU  
Tom Flynn, Political Director, NE Council of Carpenters  
Penn Loh, Executive Director, ACE  
Roxan McKinnon, Executive Director, City Life/Vida Urbana  
Warren Pepicelli, Manager/Vice-President UNITE HERE  
Noemi Ramos, Head Organizer, ACORN  
Jim Snow, Director of Organizing, Painters & Allied Trades DC35

### Strategy Committee:

Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE)  
Associations of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN)  
Boston Teacher's Union (BTU)  
Brazilian Immigrant Center (BIC)  
Chelsea Collaborative  
Chinese Progressive Association (CPA)  
City Life/Vida Urbana (CLVU)  
Greater Boston Labor Council (GBLC)  
Massachusetts Affordable Housing Alliance (MAHA)  
New England Council of Carpenters (NERCC)  
Painters and Allied Trades, DC 35 (IUPAT)  
Project RIGHT  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 615  
1199 Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
UNITE HERE  
United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1445

### CLU Staff:

Lisa Clauson & Darlene Lombos, Co-Directors  
Kalila Barnett, Senior Organizer  
Mary Jo Connelly, Research Director