The Just Transition Employment and Retraining Working Group

Final Recommendations, Voted on August 30th, 2024

Final Recommendation #1

The MCCC should support Just Transition Principles in its ongoing work of supporting climate change action:

- Quality clean job creation
- Occupational training and education
- Promoting investment in clean jobs and impacted communities
- Identifying and eliminating structural barriers to employment
- Hiring and retaining underrepresented workers
- Collaborating with stakeholders, especially emphasizing workers
- Ensuring fossil fuel workers are supported in transitioning into green energy sectors

Final Recommendation #2

To successfully support Just Transition Principles in Maryland's new clean energy economy, new infrastructure projects should consider following best practices regarding labor, including but not limited to prevailing wages. This can be done through project labor agreements like the provisions under HB 397 of 2024, which supports Title 17, Subtitle 2 of the Maryland Finance and Procurement Article. This would provide job security and support for new and existing decarbonization construction projects of varying sizes.

Final Recommendation #3

The JTWG proposes a Green Jobs outreach campaign in 2025 to encourage applications and participation in clean energy-related apprenticeships (including energy audits, LEED certifications, and other relevant training programs) alongside the adoption of clean energy technologies. This two-pronged approach will support job growth in the clean energy sector as well as public adoption of clean energy technologies that job growth is contingent upon. This could include expanded Electrification Pilots across Maryland jurisdictions and other programs that educate consumers about greenhouse gas reduction strategies, which may include residential electrification and decarbonization, as well as provide financial and technical resources to implement decarbonization upgrades. The campaign would partner with pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, institutions of education, and other programs that specialize in clean energy workforce development and training to recruit segments of the population who may be underrepresented, including but not limited to person from economically marginalized communities and previously incarcerated persons, in the clean energy workforce.

Draft Recommendation #4:

- The JTWG proposes additional strategic investments into expanding current registered apprenticeship programs that support transferrable skills, such as proven workforce models programs like the Maryland Department of Labor's Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN) Maryland, Registered Apprenticeship, and Maryland Works for Wind (MWW) to address existing and emerging workforce needs in solar, wind, geothermal, electrification, and other clean energy sectors.
- Investments in Registered Apprenticeship will be needed to create a robust clean energy workforce, but additional support for programs and certifications based around specific clean and sustainable occupations will also be needed. An infusion of additional funds in the EARN model will allow the Maryland Department of Labor to support new sector-based efforts to address occupational specific needs. Additionally, investments in workforce ecosystems, like the MWW framework, will allow partners, like unions, to develop curriculum, purchase new equipment, and provide specific training to ensure workers have the right skills to safely work on new clean energy projects, ensuring programming is responsive to emerging clean energy technologies and bolstering the availability of a highly skilled workforce to support these critical projects.