

A CALL FOR A NATIONAL CLEAN ENERGY CORPS

Millions of Americans wish to serve in the fight against global warming, but lack organized opportunities to do so. Millions of others seek pathways out of poverty or better employment in the clean energy economy, but lack the needed skills and connections to employers. We propose a national Clean Energy Corps (CEC) to meet both needs while significantly reducing national greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

CEC would be a combined service, training, and employment effort, concentrated in cities and neglected communities, to combat climate disruption and demonstrate the equity and employment promise of the clean energy economy. CEC would engage in diverse actions but prominently include efforts to improve the energy efficiency of buildings — the source of two-fifths of national energy consumption and GHG emissions. Such improvements can pay for themselves through their resulting energy savings, making this part of CEC's program largely self-financing. It will generate enormous demand for new jobs in communities that need them.

CEC's integrated approach to climate mitigation builds support for that effort by demonstrating its immediate benefit to our communities and offering all citizens opportunities for meaningful service to it. We call for a \$200 billion federal investment in the effort over the next decade. This investment will pay for itself in direct energy savings, increased worker productivity, reduced social service and health costs, and reduced GHG emissions.

- *\$10 billion for enhanced national environmental service.* Americans are convinced of the threat of global warming and overwhelmingly support national service. CEC would expand national service opportunities — within AmeriCorps, Senior Corps and Learn and Serve America — to combat climate change. The \$10 billion new commitment, ramped up over the course of the decade, would effectively double federal support for national service.
- *\$50 billion for state and local green jobs development.* Low-income and working-class Americans need training and other assistance to gain jobs in the clean energy economy. The Green Jobs Act of 2007 is a first step toward recognizing this. CEC would go further, with \$5 billion available annually — on a match basis with states and block grants to our cash-strapped cities — for regional and community green jobs workforce development. At least half this new investment should go toward job preparation, matching, and retention efforts for the unemployed or poor.
- *\$140 billion for a revolving loan fund for building efficiency.* Efficiency is the cleanest and cheapest way to meet our energy needs, and building energy efficiency offers enormous opportunities for energy savings and good green jobs. We propose a federal revolving loan fund to help capitalize this work. Supplemented with other public dollars from states and cities, and used throughout to leverage private capital investment, the fund would be paid for through realized energy savings.

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