

U.S. environment workers to Biden: Declare a climate emergency!



By Mark Gruenberg

The Chicago-based union which represents 1,000 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Midwestern regional workers doesn't want President Joe Biden to wait for a dithering Congress to join in the attack on oil, a key source of carbon emissions. It wants him to ban U.S. crude oil exports and issue a moratorium on oil and gas pipeline permits, effective now.

At least that's what Local 704 told Biden EPA Administrator Michael Regan in a letter last week. It said Biden should declare "a climate emergency and take major unprecedented actions" against carbon and other greenhouse gases which cause global warming. Besides bans, Biden should "commit to a carbon-free (electric) power system by 2035."

The EPA workers' letter, first reported by the Chicago Sun-Times, comes at a key time in the increasingly polarized domestic war over global warming, and as Biden and other world leaders addressed the issue in a global summit in Glasgow, Scotland.

Congress is tangled up over Biden's agenda, including \$550 billion over 10 years, mostly in tax credits, to push power plants and other industries to shift away from carbon-based fuels—coal, gas, oil—to renewable energy sources.

The tax credits are part of his Build Back Better plan, officially a "reconciliation bill," dealing with

taxes and spending allocations. All 50 Senate Republicans oppose it and "moderate" Sens. Joe Manchin, D-W. Va., and Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., are holding it hostage for their votes. The other 46 Democrats and both independents favor the BBB legislation.

Manchin, along with the GOP, is a heavy recipient of campaign cash from the corporate class, particularly energy interests. He flatly opposes cutting greenhouse gas emissions, making the same

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argument coal companies and the Mine Workers do: They cost jobs. Sinema, a recipient of campaign money from banking interests, opposes Biden's higher corporate taxes in the BBB bill.

Without even knowing about what the court was going to do, but with Biden's pro-environment

Union members at the Environmental Protection Agency, tired of just waiting for legislation, press Biden to immediately ban oil exports and halt pipeline permits.

pledges and executive orders on one side and the quagmire Congress on the other, the AFGE local's letter urged Biden to go ahead on his own.

That means hiring more EPA workers, including 200 more in the Chicago-based region, which covers Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, and Ohio, the letter said. While it did not say so, approximately one-third of the agency's workers were driven out—quit—under the former anti-environment, pro-fossil fuel GOP Trump regime.

And climate change is hitting everywhere. "Extreme rain and droughts are wreaking havoc on Lake Michigan's water levels, and downstream Chicagoans are facing increased flooding as the Chicago River swells with the overflow.

Meanwhile, Biden is trying to convince other world leaders the U.S., the largest emitter, per person, of carbon into the atmosphere, will once again take the lead in cutting such emissions—cuts scientists have proven are absolutely necessary to prevent even more-catastrophic global warming than has already

occurred.

The U.S. will cut greenhouse gas emissions "by well over a gigaton" by 2030, he told the Glasgow summit. A gigaton is 2.2 million U.S. pounds. One environmental group calculated that weight is equivalent to 44,000 fully loaded U.S. aircraft carriers, including sailors, guns, ammo, and planes.

And union workers will do it in the U.S.—and should do it worldwide, he declared.

Biden said his BBB bill and its clean power provisions "will incentivize clean energy manufacturing, building the solar panels and wind turbines that are growing energy markets of the future, which will create good-paying union jobs for American workers—something that none of us should lose sight of.

"Will we act? Will we do what is necessary? Will we seize the enormous opportunity before us or will we condemn future generations to suffer?" Biden asked. "Climate change is already ravaging the world. It's doing it every day."

Washington-Baltimore News Guild gains big card-check win at Politico

By PAI

Another month, another potential big win, this time at Politico and an allied publication, and by card check recognition, for the Washington-Baltimore News Guild.

Of course, Axel Springer, the German publishing house which bought Politico and the allied Energy and Environmental News for \$1 billion in late August, may not have much choice in the matter, though the two sides are discussing the bargaining unit.

Leaders of the PEN Guild, which will be the new WBNG affiliate, showed up with signed union election authorization cards from more than 80% of the 250-plus workers. "PEN" stands for "Politico and Energy and Environmental News."

"The PEN Guild's broad support includes members from every department, reporting team, and medium within the newsroom and spans from recent college graduates to long-tenured newsroom stalwarts with decades of journalism experience. They all believe newsroom employees of Politico and E&E News deserve to have a voice in decisions that affect us all," the new unit's leaders said in a release.

That point came home to the workers after a loophole in the Axel Springer takeover documents resulted in workers' 401(k) accounts being frozen for all of 2021. The deal finally closed in late October.

"If employees had had a seat at the table, I doubt something as important as our retirement and healthcare savings would have been missed," staffer Leah Nylen, who's been hit by four corporate takeovers of newsrooms in the last 15 years, told The News Guild. At each, including the Axel Springer takeover, workers lost pay or benefits, she said.

Other goals of the new unit are "equitable pay, a diverse and inclusive workplace, and job protections for everyone," the PEN Guild leaders said. Improvements in those areas, through collective bargaining "will make the newsrooms of Politico and E&E places where we are able to do our best work possible."

"We take pride in this work and the acclaim it has won for our publications...But these achievements have not resulted in just conditions for everyone, and not all of us enjoy the same protections and perks."

Worker win happens after they experienced a freeze on important benefits that resulted from the takeover of Politico by the German media giant, Axel-Springer.

Minnesota answers Sudanese people's call for solidarity



By Wayne Nealis

Last weekend, the Sudanese community in Minnesota rallied at the state capitol to protest the coup carried out by Sudan's military leaders Oct. 25. Rally participants responded to the call of the Sudanese diaspora to act in solidarity with those protesting on the streets of the capital Khartoum and cities across Sudan. Rallies were also held in numerous countries and U.S. cities on Oct. 30, including Washington, D.C.

Addressing the 150 attendees in Minnesota, attorney Ismail Hussein said, "The Sudanese people are determined to keep peacefully protesting and fighting their just fight...to achieve freedom and justice."

The voices of Hussein and other speakers echoed with solidarity and pride in their fellow citizens on the streets of their homeland. This was most evident in speeches by several young Sudanese and the words of two local Sudanese poets.

Reports from Sudan are limited, as the coup leaders have shut down phone and internet services. Still, People's World was afforded an opportunity to speak with someone in Khartoum that a Sudanese contact attending the rally reached by WhatsApp. The person, who will go unnamed to protect his identity, said that the "situation is extremely tense." They added that it "could go either way," alluding to whether the people or the military will win the battle taking place on the streets.

According to an Oct. 28 article by Mohammed Abu Obaid on the website The Conversation, much of Su-

dan's economy is owned or controlled by its military leaders. He suggested these officials were worried that the civilian coalition backing democratization and demanding civilian oversight of the military could put their holdings in jeopardy. With civilian rule, military officials could face charges related to the violent suppression of the 2019 uprising in which hundreds killed by the armed forces.

Al Jazeera reported Sunday that 7 days after the coup, thousands of protesters continued to pour into the streets each day and that 11 people were killed and an unknown number injured and detained.

Hussein condemned regional nations supporting the coup leaders and demanded these nations stop interfering in Sudan's internal affairs. According to media reports, this includes Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates—all of which are U.S. allies. A few days before the coup, the Biden administration sent Jeffrey Feldman, U.S. Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, to Sudan ostensibly to dissuade the military leaders from acting. Feldman was evidently unpersuasive.

A press statement issued by the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Sudanese Communist Party the morning of the coup called upon "all the forces that stand with the civil authority to declare a political strike and civil disobedience until this coup is defeated." The party also appealed for international solidarity with the people of Sudan to overturn the coup and return the nation on the path toward democratic civilian rule.

Rallies were also held in numerous countries and U.S. cities on Oct. 30, including a rally attended by thousands in Washington.

LOCAL NEWS

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Teachers in NEA to push Voting Rights Act despite Republican filibuster threat

By PAI

The nation's largest union will keep pushing for the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, which would restore the teeth the GOP Supreme Court majority pulled from voting rights, despite a GOP filibuster threat.

In an e-mail urging the union's 3 million members to sign a petition to lawmakers, the National Education Association (NEA) President Becky Pringle, a middle school science teacher from Philadelphia, calls voting rights protections is crucial.

"Senate Leader Mitch McConnell and other Republicans failed to protect our democracy by standing in the way of advancing the Freedom to Vote Act," she wrote.

"As a middle school teacher over than 30 years, I am struggling with how to explain their indefensible action to our students, who are watching as they try to restrict access to our democracy and stack the deck against them. We will not be silent. And we should not allow Senate procedure to stop critical legislation like this from passing."

"HR4 would reverse dangerous, undemocratic trends flowing from Supreme Court rulings: *Shelby v. Holder*, decided in 2013, which invalidated the crucial 'preclearance' provision of the landmark 1965 Voting Rights Act and *Brnovich v. Democratic National Committee*, decided just a few months ago, which further weakened the law," NEA says.

The *Brnovich* case, from Arizona, let that GOP-run state's voting curbs—particularly on the collection of absentee ballots—stand.

Labor respalda una reconstrucción Build Back Better ley

By Mark Gruenberg

Ha habido muchas salchichas en la Casa Blanca y en el Capitolio durante los últimos meses sobre la legislación Build Back Better del presidente demócrata Joe Biden. Y, al final, parece que ganó "lo posible".

Es como ver el bosque, no los árboles. Por supuesto, algunas declaraciones elogiosas, incluida la de la presidenta de AFL-CIO, Liz Shuler, también señalaron una causa favorita (árbol) u otra.

Los grupos elogiaron el proyecto de ley Build Back Better revisado, que se dirigirá a los enfrentamientos del Congreso la próxima semana, aunque Biden tuvo que talar algunos árboles.

Un gran árbol que Biden tuvo que cortar fue revertir el recorte de impuestos de Trump-GOP de 2017 para las corporaciones y los ricos. Otro le habría dado a Medicare el poder de negociar a la baja los precios de los medicamentos recetados. Un tercero fue licencia familiar y médica pagada. Primero Biden lo redujo de 12 semanas a cuatro, y luego la oposición del senador Joe Manchin, demócrata por Washington. Va., Lo obligó a deshacerse de eso.

Por otro lado, Build Back Better incluye una tasa impositiva corporativa mínima absoluta del 15% y una tasa del 50% sobre las ganancias de las empresas estadounidenses en el extranjero.

Pero si Build Back Better, oficialmente llamado "proyecto de ley de reconciliación", tiene éxito, junto con el plan de "infraestructura dura" de cinco años de Biden para reconstruir las carreteras en ruinas, los subterráneos chirriantes, los aeropuertos obsoletos, eliminar sus tuberías de agua

revestidas de plomo y "verde" tanto en sus autobuses como en sus vehículos eléctricos, será un logro enorme para el presidente y su partido.

Eso es porque la cantidad de republicanos de la Cámara que se espera que apoyen a BBB es una palabra: cero.

También será la mayor expansión de la red de seguridad social muy deteriorada de la nación desde la Gran Sociedad, si no el New Deal, que estableció la red de seguridad en primer lugar. Y el plan de Biden también aumentará los impuestos, literalmente, a los 700 multimillonarios del país.

Quedaron intactos otros dos recaudadores de ingresos, ya que se supone que los proyectos de ley de reconciliación solo cubren los gastos y los impuestos: multas más altas y un alcance más amplio de las sanciones por infracción de la ley laboral, e impuestos sobre las emisiones de carbono del petróleo, el gas y el carbón, como una forma de combatir el clima. cambiar fomentando cambios hacia energías limpias y verdes. Pero la AFL-CIO informó que las multas se mantuvieron.

La elaboración de salchichas se debió a un pequeño grupo de los llamados demócratas: nueve en la Cámara y los senadores Kyrsten Sinema, demócrata de Arizona y Manchin de Virginia Occidental. Con los demócratas con solo una ventaja de 220-212 en la Cámara y el Senado en un empate de 50-50, roto por la vicepresidenta Kamala Harris, las deserciones amenazadas podrían hundirlo todo.

Así que estad atentos. La elaboración de salchichas todavía está en marcha.

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