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4-STATE COALITION UNVEILS BLUEPRINT TO “REIMAGINE APPALACHIA” WITH A NEW DEAL THAT WORKS FOR US

50+ groups outline policies to that could create a 21st century economy that’s good for workers, communities, and the environment

[Download the policy blueprint](#)

PENNSYLVANIA - The Keystone Research Center joined a broad and diverse coalition of thought leaders and organizations from West Virginia, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and Ohio today to [release a policy blueprint](#). By expanding economic opportunity while reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the blueprint outlines a vision for vibrant Appalachian communities where everyone is paid enough to support themselves and their family, future generations can put down roots, where they have clean air to breathe and water to drink, whether they are white, Black, Brown or Indigenous.

“The investment needed to arrest climate change will create millions of trades and industrial jobs and our region can use this investment to feed the hunger of our working people for opportunity and a chance to contribute,” said **Stephen Herzenberg, economist and executive director of the Keystone Research Center**.

The "New Deal that Works for Us" is built on three main pillars:

- 1. Expanding opportunity through public investments**—creating good jobs that provide a future for all working people, including former coal workers, and regardless of the color of their skin, ethnic background or gender.
- 2. Building a 21st century sustainable economy**—putting people to work modernizing the electric grid, growing clean and efficient manufacturing, building a sustainable transportation system, repairing damage from the last century, and relaunching the Civilian Conservation Corps for “carbon farming” and other carbon absorption jobs.

3. **Making sure all working people share in prosperity**—growing unions and raising wages throughout the economy, ensuring universal health and child care, and promoting local ownership in the region

Despite some improvement, last Friday's state-level June jobs report showed that Pennsylvania has lost one of every 9 jobs since February, and even higher share than nationally and in the rest of our region. The federal government needs to jumpstart our economy with federal investments that also address our changing climate..

The coalition to Reimagine Appalachia was born out of a broad recognition that years of policies pushed by absentee corporations and their politicians have created an economy that doesn't work for most people living in the Ohio River Valley. There continues to be a desperate need for family-sustaining jobs in communities of all sizes. This is especially true because of COVID-19, which has hamstrung already-struggling local economies in the region, while limited federal assistance to families now set to run out. COVID also adds to the economic pain in the region before the pandemic.

Appalachia has long provided the raw materials for the prosperity of the nation, while the region itself has suffered high rates of poverty and unemployment, and low wages. Bad actors in the extractive industries have also left our land scarred, and our workers and neighbors sick, particularly our neighbors of color.

In response, economic, environmental, and community leaders, along with grassroots organizations, came together to brainstorm the best pathway to a 21st century economy that's good for workers, communities, and the environment.

"By gathering ideas and input from groups around the region, we're building a vision for where we want to go and identifying the steps necessary to get us from here to there," said **Ashley Spalding, Research Director for Kentucky Center for Economic Policy**. "We just need to get federal policymakers to commit the resources."

Endorsements for the blueprint come from a diverse array of organizations representing the voices of residents across four states in the Ohio River Valley, and are listed in the blueprint itself.

"Federal policymakers are designing stimulus packages and we are on the brink of an election. Now is the time to amplify our voices to ensure the people of Appalachia have a say in how our region rebuilds," said **Hannah Halbert, executive director of Policy Matters Ohio**. "Appalachia needs to be at the table of national climate change conversations or we'll be on the menu."

In the coming months, the coalition will roll out a series of white papers fleshing out the details of our framework. As we do, we will continue to seek additional input and support from interested stakeholders, union leaders, grassroots and grassroots organizations, thought leaders, and elected officials. Together, we will build the vision of a 21st Century Appalachia and then work together to make that vision a reality.

Get more information on the coalition website here: <https://reimagineappalachia.org/>.