

# DEVELOPING POLICY WITH AN EQUITY LENS

A reflective proposal review questionnaire  
courtesy of the Green Justice Coalition



**The Green Justice Coalition (GJC)** unites grassroots organizations, environmental groups, and labor unions to advance Massachusetts towards a sustainable, equitable, and clean energy economy. GJC does this by fighting for a more locally controlled, public energy infrastructure that builds community wealth and health. All people deserve to have a safe and healthy environment, and the resources and opportunities to learn, work, play and live in prosperity.

The current energy economy is unsustainable and overburdens working class communities and people of color. Most are excluded from the benefits of the renewable energy economy and suffer disproportionately from pollution and unmanageable energy costs. To make matters worse, our communities continue to suffer from the chronic side effects of a fossil fuel-based energy system. In a “dirty fuel” economy, the “dirt” doesn’t just go away; pollution and waste products become our toxic neighbors.

**Over the years, a body of firm principles has guided the Green Justice Coalition:**

Working class communities and people of color must be at the forefront of decision making since they suffer the most from the dirty fossil fuel economy and the climate crisis.

Confronting the climate crisis is not only our responsibility, it is also our right. To do this, new green resources must be accessible to all, and a greater share should be distributed to communities most unfairly impacted.

Similarly, it is our right to demand that those who continue to profit from the climate crisis take greater responsibility to address the inequities that stem from the fossil fuel economy.

Environmental policy is economic policy. Therefore, green jobs must be good jobs, with family-supporting wages, good benefits, safe working conditions, career pathways, and targeted opportunities for local residents, women, and people of color.

Fossil fuel workers have a right to a just transition, which means as we move towards renewable energy, we must ensure all workers have adequate severance pay, extended healthcare benefits, job training opportunities, and priority hiring.

**Green Justice Coalition Steering Committee:**

Alternatives for Community & Environment (ACE)

Boston Climate Action Network

Boston Student Advisory Committee/Youth on Board

Chinese Progressive Association

Clean Water Action

Coalition for Social Justice

Community Labor United

GreenRoots

Neighbor to Neighbor

Many of our environmental allies often request the support, endorsement, and equity analysis from the Green Justice Coalition for their policy work. They understand that the strength and credibility of the GJC and partner organizations is and continues to be built on a foundation of deep grassroots engagement to advance the work. This means an extensive process of evaluating the policy being proposed, analyzing the impacts on our working-class communities, developing strategies to advance the work, and, most importantly, providing opportunities for our members to take leadership throughout this process. Unfortunately, GJC and our partners are not typically provided the resources to engage at this level on every policy that is proposed by other groups.

Nonetheless, GJC understands that grass-tops allies operate differently and have a unique role to play to advance our shared objectives. In the spirit of building a movement together, we offer the following analytical framework to determine whether policy proposals incorporate an “equity lens.” GJC grassroots partners hope that in the longer-term, our allies will see the value of using this framework and learn to develop processes within their own organizations to ensure their work is centered in equity, inclusion, and justice.

# Ensure No Disproportionate Burdens On Vulnerable Populations

- What are the economic, racial and gender demographics of those living in the area that will be impacted by your proposal? Please also include workers, seniors, youth, and persons with disabilities.
- What methods have you used to engage local residents and workers who will be directly impacted by your proposal, and in what ways was your proposal informed by members of affected communities or organizations that authentically represent them?
- Does your proposal rely on a consumption tax, such as sales tax, congestion pricing, vehicle-miles-traveled tax, etc.? If yes then, what part of the proposal addresses its regressive tax structure?
- Does your proposal include any other taxes, fees, or penalties?  
If yes then, how will working class communities, women and people of color be protected from this new financial burden?
- Does the proposal include the development of new consumer technologies or the broad adoption of existing technologies that are not already widely known and available to all consumers?  
If yes then, does the adoption of new technology replace older technology and with no increased cost burden for low-income households, or with no other adverse consequences that exacerbate disparities in class, race, or other inequities?

- Does your proposal require or rely on environmental, geographic, economic, or other modeling or analysis of impact?

If yes then, how does your proposal ensure the modeling or analysis includes an assessment of the disparate impacts based on workers, people of color, women, youth, seniors, and other vulnerable communities?

## **Protect And Preserve Public Land, Resources, And Services**

- Is there any long-term lease, permanent sale of or irrevocable use by a private entity of public infrastructure or publicly-owned natural resources required or permitted under the proposal?

If yes then, how does the proposal ensure community oversight, annual economic assessments on impacted communities and accountability mechanisms for this private entity?

- Will any public sector jobs be contracted out to for-profit companies?  
If yes then, how does the proposal ensure jobs will maintain family-sustaining wages, safe working conditions, good benefits, and career pathways for existing and future workers?

- Are public dollars used to purchase goods (i.e. building infrastructure, subsidizing solar technology) or services (subsidizing energy efficiency and solar installations)?

If yes then, how does the proposal direct at least 51 % of the total value of goods or services purchased to benefit environmental justice and gateway communities, impacted workers, and other vulnerable populations?

# Promote Racial And Gender Equity

- What are the economic benefits of your proposal for working class, environmental justice, and gateway communities?
- Does your proposal include fees, taxes, or penalties?  
If yes then, does the proposal allow for at least 51% of the increased revenue to be directed to working class communities, women, and people of color?
- Does your proposal require public hearings or public input into decision-making?  
If yes then, does the proposal include explicit provisions for multilingual and multicultural notice, outreach, and translation at all decision-making stages, as well as at times and locations that would provide easy access for people with disabilities and most impacted communities?
- Does your proposal include the creation of a new board or public body for ongoing management and oversight?  
If yes then, how does your proposal ensure at least 51% representation of women, people of color, seniors, youth, people with disabilities, impacted workers, and local residents?
- Does your proposal include new job opportunities for women and people of color?  
If yes then, how does the proposal ensure these jobs have family-sustaining wages, safe working conditions, good benefits, and career pathways?

# Advance Opportunity Towards A More Sustainable, Equitable Economy

- How does your proposal help build towards the longer-term solutions necessary to confront our climate crisis?
- How does your proposal promote neighborhood-based or collective ownership of energy generation, storage, and distribution systems?
- How does your proposal ensure equal access to new green resources and technologies, as well as targeted distribution to most impacted communities?
- How does your proposal support fossil fuel workers towards a just transition, with adequate severance pay, extended healthcare benefits, job training opportunities, and priority hiring?
- How will your proposal decrease the growing wealth divide based on race, class, and gender?



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JUSTICE  
COALITION**