



TUC Congress 2018

Greener Jobs Alliance Briefing: *'Full spectrum' of unions support motions on climate change, energy and a Just Transition*

Delegates to the TUC's 150th annual Congress will debate six motions <https://bit.ly/2wHjYWN> setting out new directions for TUC policy on climate change, energy and a Just Transition.



The Greener Jobs Alliance welcome the GMB's proposal for a TUC-led conference in their motion, *Just transition and energy workers' voice*.

But we have a duty to express our concern that this motion limits input on TUC policy from other unions, making 'energy unions' views 'paramount'. Although the proposed conference on *Just Transition* is long overdue, when it comes to fighting climate change, every union should have a voice: in the fire and rescue services, food manufacturer, rail transport, public services, the NHS. No less than nine unions have motions or amendments on climate change and a just transition at TUC 2018.

Motions in brief

01: Industrial strategy: an economy for the many

Unite's motion calls on the TUC to campaign for an industrial strategy that includes:

- Strengthening collective bargaining in the workplace and across industrial sectors.
- Investment in UK manufacturing, electric vehicles, construction and infrastructure.
- Support for high-quality apprenticeships.

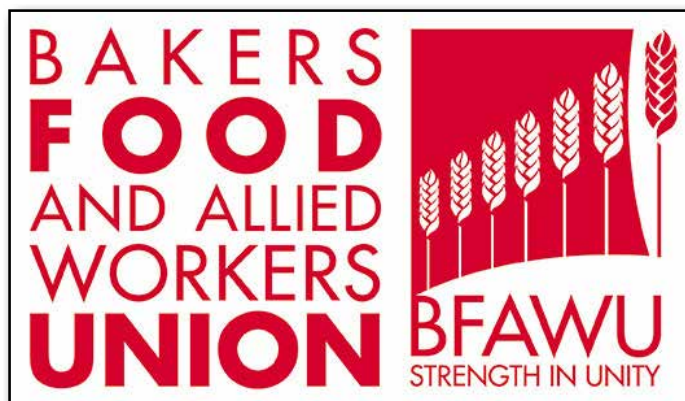
ASLEF's amendment links industrial policy to a just transition: *'Support for investment and strategic planning to ensure UK industry is at the forefront of a just transition to a low-carbon economy and the fight against climate change, including by means of an integrated transport strategy.'*

07 Just transition and energy workers' voice

In support of gas industry members, the GMB motion argues that *'lower carbon gas'* is an essential for the UK's secure, affordable and lower carbon energy supply.

Backed by *Prospect*, the motion, *'congratulates GMB, Prospect, UNISON and Unite for calling a just transition conference to ask members employed in energy precisely what they, their communities and industries want and need from an energy sector of the future...The views of the workers affected, as expressed through these trade unions, should be paramount to development of all TUC policies on energy, industrial strategy and climate change.'*

08 Fracking



The Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union wants an outright ban on fracking. It recognises the challenge of decarbonising of heat, given the UK's high reliance on gas, including imports; and the rights of affiliates to protect their members' interests in the gas sector. But fracking is not the answer to this challenge.

Fracking will lock in fossil fuel infrastructure, poses health risks to workers and communities, and pollutes water resources on which agriculture and food manufacturing depend.

The motion calls on the General Council to consult with affiliates on energy decarbonisation policy, and to develop strategies to support workers in the transition to a zero-carbon industrial strategy. And to lobby the government to immediately ban fracking.

A Unison amendment shifts the fracking ban to a 'moratorium' pending a fracking risk assessment, and calls for a 'clean gas' strategy using hydrogen/biogas.

09 Strategy for a low-carbon industrial region

A Trades Unions Councils' motion welcomes the low carbon industrial strategy developed by the regional TUC for *Yorkshire and the Humber*. The region has more carbon gas emissions than any other in the UK. The TUC is working with unions, employers, local agencies and NGOs on new investment in environmentally sustainable solutions, to protect jobs and plant for the long term.

The motion calls on the TUC 'to encourage other regions to develop appropriate low-carbon regional strategies,' reflecting the particular carbon footprint applicable in their area. And '*to put the fight against climate change at the heart of its campaign strategy.*'

68 Grassland fires

The FBU motion points up the increased risk of grassland fires as a result of climate change. Firefighters worked excessively long hours during these fires, putting huge strain on fire cover and resources. The FBU condemns the government for an '*unprecedented period of austerity against public services, which ...put the public and firefighters at risk.*'

Grassland fires, like flooding and other extreme weather events, are foreseeable matters of national resilience and that resilience is being undermined by local cuts. The motion calls for massive reinvestment in fire and rescue services personnel, training and equipment.



A TSSA amendment notes, 'the sad irony that the day Saddleworth Moor caught fire, Westminster ditched the Swansea Tidal Barrage but endorsed Heathrow expansion.' It calls on the TUC to reconsider its position on supporting growth projects.

77 Food security and sustainability

The British Dietetic Association calls on the TUC to ensure that whatever the outcome of Brexit the food system is firmly shaped by values of justice, good quality and safety. It calls on the General Council to campaign for global access to sustainable foods that minimise environmental impacts.

GJA commentary

Leading scientists are now openly saying that extreme global weather of 2018 is 'the face of climate change.' Congress will debate motions and amendments from a wide union spectrum: Unite, GMB, FBU, ASLEF, the Bakers Union, Prospect, Unison, the British Dietetic Association and the TSSA. Tackling the root causes of climate change is a concern for the whole labour movement.

- 1. The GMB motion would limit the debate on 'all TUC policies on energy, industrial strategy and climate change' to the energy unions** (itself, Unite, Prospect, Unison). Many unions have legitimate concerns. The FBU's motion is about the growing risk of wildfires in the face of austerity-led cuts to services. For the Bakers Union, fracking is a direct threat to water quality in food manufacturer. The summer heatwave pushed many hospitals into emergency measures. Unions across the board, from environment agencies to local and central government, all have legitimate issues to raise on behalf of their members in frontline operational or administrative functions.
- 2. Climate change is not just an energy issue.** It's about investment in rail and electric cars. Low carbon regional strategies for heavy industries like steel. Home insulation. Greening every workplace. Unite has criticised the lack of government support for the transition to electric cars, calling for the government to enter into '*urgent meaningful talks on a just transition with the car industry.*' <https://bit.ly/2oCQeH2>
The climate emergency is an issue for all trade unions and their members. Unions should work together for a Labour government to tackle the energy, climate and industrial crises this country faces.
- 3. An outright ban on fracking is supported by powerful evidence already publicly available.** Pollutants from fracking damage water supplies, leak methane to the air, and are linked to health risks for children <https://bit.ly/2PB6eop>. There is no democratic support for fracking, with communities across the UK fighting local drilling companies wherever they appear.

Sources:

Extreme global weather is '*the face of climate change*'

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/jul/27/extreme-global-weather-climate-change-michael-mann>

Does the NHS have a summer crisis?

<https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/health/2018/08/does-nhs-have-summer-crisis>

Fracking is back in England – and only the Tories want it

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/fracking>

TUC fringe meeting: Just Transition – beyond tokenism

Tuesday 11 September, 5.45pm, meeting room Exchange 1, Congress Centre.

Organised by the GJA and Campaign Against Climate Change. How unions can lead the campaign for an economic transformation, placing the planet, decent jobs, equality and social justice at the heart of the political agenda.

Speakers:

- Clive Lewis MP Shadow Treasury Minister (tbc)
- Chris Baugh Assistant General Secretary, PCS
- Sarah Woolley Regional Secretary, Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union
- Bill Adams, Regional Secretary, Yorkshire & the Humber TUC

Chair: Suzanne Jeffrey, Campaign Against Climate Change