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**Testimony before the House Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**Subcommittee on Energy**

**February 27, 2019**

Good morning and thank you, Chairman Rush and members of the Subcommittee on Energy, for this hearing to discuss “Clean Energy Infrastructure and the Workforce to Build It.”

My name is Vien Truong, President of the Dream Corps and here on behalf of Green For All, a national initiative dedicated to building an inclusive, green economy strong enough to lift people out of poverty. We are here in support of “Blue Collar to Green Collar Jobs Development Act of 2019.”

We are facing two major crises in our country: poverty and pollution. For too long, we’ve thought about and addressed these issues separately. Developing programs and policies to tackle our economic and environmental problems in different siloes - even though they are deeply interconnected. Low income communities are hit first and worst by pollution. This is for many reasons - from their proximity to pollution, to their increased vulnerability to climate disasters, the increased costs of living resulting from scarce resources. It is for this reason that working families stand to gain the most from moving towards a cleaner and more sustainable economy.

I have fought for policies and programs that prioritized families, the economy, and the environment for over a decade. Our team at Green For All launched our Moms Mobilize campaign, lobbying congress to maintain the EPA’s funding, and unify the country around the health, safety, and security of our communities. And thankfully, 100% of EPA funding was secured, because people stepped up to stop this attack on our public health.

We worked with Congress to protect the EPA funding for two reasons: first, the health and safety of our children is a top priority; and second, protecting the environment and supporting our economy are not contradictory. The clean energy sector is a pool of potential job growth, larger than any other in the United States.

We can already see this growth in both the solar and wind power industries. Solar panel installation and wind turbine technician jobs increasing at the fastest rate in the market.

According to the International Renewable Energy Agency, jobs in the solar industry increased by 24% between 2015 and 2017 alone, while jobs in the rest of the economy experienced only a 2% growth rate. In 2017, solar employment expanded at 17 times the rate of any other industry.

If we invest in clean and renewable energy, we can and will protect our planet, our families, and our future, and revamp our economy in the process, creating millions of jobs. Investing in clean and renewable energy means investing in a new job market, including jobs to retrofit existing buildings, meet increased energy efficiency standards on new buildings, and install and manufacture solar panels, wind turbines and other materials needed for improved energy efficiency and renewable energy. These new jobs have the potential to pay good wages, provide benefits that help families make ends meet, and improve health outcomes by advancing renewable energy and energy efficiency.

These new jobs also have the potential to employ workers in places where racial bias, exclusion, and sustained disinvestment have produced communities of concentrated poverty.

To reach our goal of a clean energy economy, we must consider two challenges that lie ahead of us: job access and job quality. We must ensure our investments result in robust, fulfilling, and career-oriented job pathways, and take the proper measures to prevent low-quality, seasonal, or temporary jobs that fail frontline communities and fossil fuel workers along the way. A transition to a clean energy economy means a just transition, uplifting those most impacted by fossil fuels and in need of well-paying, secure jobs.

Finding and training workers must begin long before we are ready to fill jobs; that process can and must begin when our youth -- our students -- begin to develop job skills and envision career pathways. That means working both with traditional and non-traditional educational platforms, ensuring energy-oriented skill-sets become fiscally, educationally, and culturally accessible. Apprenticeship and internship programs provide the opportunities for young people to begin these skills-developing processes early on, and gain mentors, compensation, and career visioning in the process. A clean energy economy must include long-term visions and career ladders for potential employees, establishing a stable, secure job market that allows for personal and professional growth.

The workforce bill's emphasis on outreach to minority-serving institutions allows for students, young people, and underserved community members to participate in multiple forms of clean energy engagement, and thereby sustainably implement clean energy practices. Supporting a clean energy economy means starting with the folks most impacted and ensuring that they are the ones to make an impact, too.

By working with and supporting minority-serving institutions and target communities, the Workforce Bill sets itself up both for environmental and economic success. To ensure that communities most impacted by pollution are served by the bill, we must continue to consider

long-term career planning and unforeseen community needs through amplifying on-the-ground voices and including folks in the planning process.

Similarly, we must collaborate with companies and workers to ensure a just transition from fossil fuels to clean energy. As we transition our energy sector, we want to leave no workers behind, no communities behind. By emphasizing outreach to displaced and unemployed energy workers, the Workforce Bill takes the proper measures to provide stable and secure employment pathways for all.

We must develop new access point for candidates to enter the energy sector, as this bill promises to do by providing the support, training, and security to families, workers, and underserved communities alike. While challenges lie ahead of us, institutional and network collaboration, long-term market planning, and centering underserved communities will ensure our transition to a just, sustainable, and profitable clean energy economy.

Our country is facing a time of economic peril *and* grave environmental catastrophes. This is the time when bold leadership is required to take America forward to a cleaner and more sustainable future. Fully funding this Act will help us move towards building that sustainable economy that can lift all boats.

Thank you.