

Labor and the New Energy Economy -----Harriet Applegate, 10-22-07

I.. Welcome to Cleveland

Wish I could say Home of the ALCS Champs

Cleveland is surely the Come-from-Behind city but we just didn't make it
THIS year.

Perhaps we can extend the analogy a little bit farther by saying that Cleveland
certainly puts out and we're certainly in the running for big things; and
above all, we certainly know how to make the most of what we've got
And that is why I'm so glad this very important conference is taking place
here; we hope to become the model of the City of the Future – A Green
Industrial City.

How can we do this?

I wish I could say it's easy but I'm sure that most of you here have found
that making these needed changes is not an easy task

That's why we have to have conferences like this: to figure out how to do
what is so obviously needed.

The environmentalists are way ahead of us: they've been having
conferences for years

We in labor are just now coming to the party

That is why this is such a momentous occasion

II. Your charge here tonight and tomorrow is a very important one

- Many of us for years have been 'talking about' an alliance between labor
and environmentalists; in fact the Steelworkers have blazed the trail and
have put together not only the Apolllo Alliance which is one of the
sponsors of this conference but also the Blue Green Alliance for those of
us on the ground struggling to make these connections.
- But going from talking about it to doing it has proven a daunting task:
 - After a long period of time when environmental issues seemed to be
important political issues, we had 2-3 presidential cycles where the
environment was not even mentioned, much less considered to be an
'issue'
 - Labor's need for JOBS and defending what we had trumped
everything else
 - The political climate could not have been worse with the world's
biggest opponent of both labor and the environment occupying the
White House for the last 7 yrs.

III. But NOW – in part because the neglect of environmental issues has caused global
warming to get really seriously out of hand - NOW the time has arrived where labor
issues and environmental issues are practically one and the same

NOW - we have studies that show the greatest job growth potential is in the
area of alternative energy – something like 22,000 jobs in Ohio alone are
possible in the alternative energy production parts industry;

NOW – we have a great opportunity to re-industrialize the de-industrialized Mid West by moving forward in alternative energy mfg

The European companies cannot turn out enough wind turbines for the huge demand in the US right now; we desperately need to get more manufacturers on line; and the demand won't go down because there is no end to the number of wind turbines that can go up – we could have one on every street corner.

NOW – we have the will to pursue some of these projects – and again that is why a conference such as this is so important; we need to crystallize our goals and further develop our strategy and tactics in order to be prepared to seize these opportunities so that production doesn't go elsewhere.

Other regions of the country are ahead of us – the SW, the NW, the NE

Every region except the South actually and they are working on this too

We need to look at our natural advantages – and they are considerable – in order to figure out how to catch up:

- low carbon footprint transportation: Waterways
- PRODUCTION PARTS ARE US
- We already do all this stuff
- **Most important: We have the skilled workers** that these other regions are dying to get;

We need to take these natural advantages and use them to our advantage – just like the Indians did NOT do in the ALCS with their great bullpen

IV. And this is the last reason why this conference is so critical to us:

We need to get up to speed and to develop the will to push these ideas

What does this mean?

for the Building Trades. that means talking to contractors, educating them, bringing them up to speed, getting them to get LEED certified

for the MFG unions that means getting educated about the new jobs in parts production and working to get laid off workers quickly into training programs that will prepare them for the new jobs – and – in the case of the USW – perhaps the IAM – it could and should mean talking to owners and investors about the possibility of locating in your area

for the public sector that means working with your employers to make sure that you are a full partner in working to reduce the carbon footprint - there are so many ways this can be done and you will be learning these ways tomorrow

for the service sector – I suspect that those of you from the service sector could be saving yourselves exposures to toxics as you learn green alternatives to some of the products you use in your daily lives

we even have something for teachers: Green Schools, I believe it is

IN conclusion, we have tried to make this conference broad in its appeal – as it is our first attempt to bring these issues together with this audience. We hope you return to your workplaces armed with information and inspired to make little and big changes where you work. And also within your unions to alter consciousness just a little bit so that your union sisters and brothers understand how we can position ourselves to seize opportunities, prepare ourselves to forge ahead and **LEAD** the process wherever necessary and possible.

HAVE A REALLY PRODUCTIVE CONFERENCE. WELCOME TO THE FUTURE!!!!