California’s Jobs and Climate Action Plan for 2030 provides concrete recommendations that can be applied in other states and the nation to ensure that workers are supported as policies to meet stringent greenhouse gas emissions reductions are implemented. It is premised on the value of a high-road economy, in which businesses pay the wages and benefits necessary to attract and retain skilled workers, who in turn perform high-quality work.

The Action Plan identifies specific complementary labor policies that can be incorporated into climate policies to generate family-supporting jobs and career pathways for disadvantaged workers. It then shows how training investments can deliver the skills required to perform these high-quality jobs and broaden access for all workers. It also provides recommendations on the transition for workers in declining industries to comparable livelihoods if jobs are lost.

Briefs in this series summarize the recommendations for some of the critical climate sectors addressed in the Action Plan: electricity generation, energy efficiency, electric vehicle manufacturing and charging infrastructure, public transit and infill development, trucking, and waste.

Role of transportation in climate action

The transportation sector is the state’s largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for about 40% of the statewide total and 28% of the national total. The great majority of those emissions, 70%, are the result of passenger travel, primarily in private cars. California has set a target of reducing transportation emissions by 31% by 2030. Public transit is an important part of the state’s climate action plan, as it is essential to moving more people more miles with fewer emissions. Also essential is infill development to reduce sprawl and lower commute times. Denser development is largely implemented through state and regional planning processes and land-use regulations, as well as subsidies for affordable housing and urban infrastructure. Cities and counties have also taken a leading role in lowering reliance on cars by encouraging the use of bicycles, scooters, and walking, both through investments in smart streets infrastructure as well as via contracts with bicycle and scooter rideshare businesses. (Other strategies to decrease emissions from passenger travel include increasing the number of low- and zero-emission vehicles on the road and lowering the carbon intensity of transportation fuels; these are discussed in Policy Brief #3: Electric vehicle manufacturing and charging infrastructure.)
Ensuring that policies to reduce vehicle miles traveled create family-supporting jobs in middle-class careers

Public transit employment has historically provided family-supporting wages and benefits for workers without a college degree, and has been a path to upward mobility for black and brown Californians. However, public transit is facing unprecedented threats from public budget constraints, COVID-19, and the growing use of Transportation Network Companies (TNCs, e.g., Uber and Lyft), which generate low-wage jobs with no benefits. Shoring up public transit and ensuring that TNCs and alternative transportation are complements to, rather than substitutes for, public transit not only contributes to climate goals but also produces family-supporting jobs. Public agencies that partner with TNCs for the provision of last-mile travel services should require contractors to meet wage, benefit, and training standards to ensure better labor outcomes.

Lowering vehicle miles traveled through encouragement of infill development, investment in green urban infrastructure such as smart streets, and capital investments in urban rail all create jobs in construction. As is the case with construction in renewable energy and energy efficiency, the use of project labor agreements, community workforce agreements, apprenticeship, prevailing wages, and responsible contractor requirements promotes quality jobs and inclusion on construction projects.

### Key recommendations for public transit and infill development

#### Job Quality Policies: to ensure family-supporting jobs and access for disadvantaged workers

**Public Transit and Passenger Travel**

- Support funding for public transit operations.
- Expand programs where public transit agencies contract with transportation network companies (TNCs) for first- and last-mile mobility; include responsible procurement policies.
- Incorporate worker protections and labor standards in comprehensive regulations of TNCs that also address congestion and vehicle miles traveled, through licensing or rules and fees on access to curb space and public streets or other policy levers.

**Infill Development and Urban Infrastructure**

- Where public sources contribute funding to infill development projects, awarding agencies should set minimum workforce standards or include scoring criteria that reward applicants who create good jobs and expand access to workers who are not well-represented in the construction trades.
- Where the state awards grants to local transit agencies, require PLAs or CWAs for transit infrastructure expansion projects.

#### All Transportation Subsectors

- Use job impact metrics to measure the impact of climate policies on job numbers, job quality, and job access.

#### Workforce Training Strategies: to prepare current and future workers and provide needed skills to employers

**All Transportation Subsectors**

- Support high-road industry training partnerships for transit operations and registered apprenticeship for infill development.
- Support professional development and capacity building in transit agencies and regional transportation planning authorities.
- Track training program outcomes for graduation, attainment of industry-recognized credentials, job placement, retention, wages, and wage progression.
The report “Putting California on the High Road: A Jobs and Climate Action Plan for 2030” offers a vision and plan for integrating economic and workforce development into major climate policies and programs to help achieve California’s major climate goals: achieving 2030 greenhouse gas emission reduction targets and transitioning to a carbon neutral economy by 2045. It was prepared by the UC Berkeley Labor Center and lead author Carol Zabin, and was submitted by the California Workforce Development Board to the state legislature in September 2020.

View the full report along with briefs in this series at: https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/putting-california-on-the-high-road-a-jobs-and-climate-action-plan-for-2030/.