

Green New Deal (by Sam Schultz)

- A brief history of the Green New Deal
 - [The initial effort to realize what's now stylized as a Green New Deal was proposed in the early 1960s by the Democratic senator from South Dakota and future presidential candidate George McGovern.](#)
 - Captivated by Eisenhower's warning of the "military-industrial complex" in 1961, McGovern argues that the nation's federal defense budget was akin to a New Deal program run amok.
 - In 1964, McGovern sponsored legislation for the creation of a National Economic Conversion Commission (NECC) to transfer jobs in defense to peacetime work. His chief motivation for this was to reallocate military spending to fight environmental problems and give defense workers "green jobs"
 - Then came Vietnam. Lyndon Johnson's decision to escalate the war in Southeast Asia derailed McGovern's vision. Hawkish Democrats became enemies to the NECC. The Johnson administration criticized McGovern's idea for a 10% cut to a \$300 billion defense budget, calling the idea radical.
 - When the NECC would be revived over two decades later as the Cold War was coming to an end, it would be a smaller, private endeavor focused on public education about economic conversion and disarmament and stripped of its earlier environmental goals.
 - [Thomas Friedman first popularized the term "Green New Deal" in a 2007 column in the New York Times.](#)

- Friedman started calling for a “Green New Deal” to end fossil fuel subsidies, tax carbon dioxide emissions, and create lasting incentives for wind and solar energy.
 - Friedman’s ideas made it into the mainstream the following year when presidential candidate Barack Obama added a Green New Deal to his platform.
 - In 2009, the United Nations drafted a report calling for a Global Green New Deal to focus government stimulus on renewable energy projects.
 - A month later, Democrats pushed a cap-and-trade bill through the House with the promise of spurring \$150 billion in clean energy investments and creating 1.7 million “good-paying jobs”
 - This bill ultimately died in the Senate.
- Around the same time, in 2007, British economist Richard Murphy began discussing a GND and founded the [Green New Deal Group](#), which funneled some ideas to the Labour Party.
 - In 2009, Tories won in the UK and the Republicans swept the 2010 midterms which quieted talks about a GND amongst politicians.
- In 2016, a GND became the centerpiece of the Green Party presidential campaign of Jill Stein and has been part of the [US Green Party](#) and [European Green’s](#) platforms for years.
- What is the Green New Deal?
 - A recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released a report recently that says humanity has just over a decade to get carbon emissions under control before catastrophic climate change impacts become unavoidable.
 - Activists concerned with this have proposed the Green New Deal (GND) hoping it will reverse the effects of climate change.
 - (The name stems from Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s original New Deal of the 1930s)

- While there are no exact details on what the plan will include, in the loosest sense, it is a massive program of investments in clean energy jobs and infrastructure with the goal of transforming the energy sector and the entire economy as a whole.
- [According to David Roberts at Vox](#),
 - “The Central theme of all contemporary GND work is that the GND is not just a climate change policy. It is a vision for a new kind of economy, built around a new set of social and economic relationships. It is not merely a way to reduce emissions, but also to ameliorate the other symptoms and dysfunctions of a late capitalist economy: growing inequality and concentration of power at the top.”
 - “The GND is, at its heart, a form of social-democratic populism. Its intent is to involve the entire citizenry in the shared project of adapting to the 21st century, and in so doing materially improve the quality of life of the poor and middle class. It is an attempt to rebalance the economy and the political system, away from a monomaniacal focus on private goods, toward a more generous view of public goods and public purpose.”
- In November, the Sunrise Movement (a youth-led organization focused around a GND), Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and the Justice Democrats, released a proposal for a Select Committee on a Green New Deal, outlining their vision for the kind of plan such a committee would produce.
 - [The proposal states](#), “(A) The Plan for a Green New Deal (and the draft legislation) shall be developed with the objective of reaching the following outcomes within the target window of 10 years from the start of execution of the Plan:

- Dramatically expand existing renewable power sources and deploy new production capacity with the goal of meeting 100% of national power demand through renewable sources;
 - Building a national, energy-efficient, “smart” grid;
 - Upgrading every residential and industrial building for state-of-the-art energy efficiency, comfort, and safety;
 - Eliminating greenhouse gas emissions from the manufacturing, agricultural and other industries, including by investing in local-scale agriculture in communities across the country;
 - Eliminating greenhouse gas emissions from, repairing and improving transportation and other infrastructure, and upgrading water infrastructure to ensure universal access to clean water;
 - Funding massive investment in the drawdown of greenhouse gases;
 - Making “green” technology, industry, expertise, products and services a major export of the United States, with the aim of becoming the undisputed international leader in helping other countries transition to completely greenhouse gas neutral economies and bringing about a global Green New Deal.”
- “(B) The Plan for a Green New Deal (and the draft legislation) shall recognize that a national, industrial, economic mobilization of this scope and scale is a historic opportunity to virtually eliminate poverty in the United States and to make prosperity, wealth and economic security available to everyone participating in the transformation. In furtherance of the foregoing, the Plan (and the draft legislation) shall:

- Provide all members of our society, across all regions and all communities, the opportunity, training and education to be a full and equal participant in the transition, including through a job guarantee program to assure a living wage job to every person who wants one.
- Diversify local and regional economies, with a particular focus on communities where the fossil fuel industry holds significant control over the labor market, to ensure workers have the necessary tools, opportunities, and economic assistance to succeed during the energy transition;
- Require strong enforcement of labor, workplace safety, and wage standards that recognize the rights of workers to organize and unionize free of coercion, intimidation, and harassment, and creation of meaningful, quality, career employment;
- Ensure a ‘just transition’ for all workers, low-income communities, communities of color, indigenous communities, rural and urban communities and the front-line communities most affected by climate change, pollution and other environmental harm including by ensuring that local implementation of the transition is led from the community level and by prioritizing solutions that end the harms faced by front-line communities from climate change and environmental pollution;
- Protect and enforce sovereign rights and land rights of tribal nations;
- Mitigate deeply entrenched racial, regional and gender-based inequalities in income and wealth;
- Include additional measures such as basic income programs, universal health care programs and any

others as the select committee may deem appropriate to promote economic security, labor market flexibility and entrepreneurship; and

- Deeply involve national and local labor unions to take a leadership role in the process of job training and worker deployment.”
- Democratic leadership announced that this House committee will not have subpoena power and that Rep. Kathy Castor of Florida has been chosen to head the committee
- Activists are also demanding that any Representative who accepts fossil fuel money can't be allowed on the committee.
- Ocasio-Cortez's proposal doesn't just call for a committee, it requires that the committee produce a plan that fully decarbonizes the economy, invests trillions of dollars, and provides a federal job guarantee while addressing and mitigating historical inequalities.
- [The three core principles of the GND: decarbonization, jobs, and justice](#)
 - 1) The plan must decarbonize the economy.
 - “We want the policy to match the findings in the IPCC report - to match the scale of the problem,” says Waleed Shahid of Justice Democrats.
 - Ocasio-Cortez's platform calls for 100 percent renewable electricity and decarbonizing the entire US economy within 10 years.
 - 2) The plan must include a federal jobs guarantee and large-scale public investments.
 - “The GND opens an opportunity to renegotiate power relationships between the public sector, the private sector, and the people,” says Gunn-Wright.

“We are interested in solutions that create more democratic structures in our economy.”

- The GND would involve large-scale investments, on the order of trillions of dollars over 10 years, alongside a federal jobs guarantee. A job paying at least \$15 an hour, with good benefits, would be available to anyone who wanted one.
- 3) The plan must include a just transition.
 - The plan includes protections for those hardest hit by historical discrimination and those set to suffer most from the effects of climate change.
- [This article paints a utopian picture of what our world would look like under a Green New Deal.](#)
- [Dataforprogress.org's take on a Green New Deal](#)
 - They say,
 - A GND is necessary to meet the scale and urgency of environmental challenges.
 - It can bring job growth and economic opportunity, especially to historically disadvantaged groups.
 - It is popular among American voters
 - It can be executed in a way that is environmentally just
 - And it financially feasible and necessary.
 - Transform to a low-carbon economy
 - The US needs to reduce its annual greenhouse emissions from 2016 by 16% to achieve our 2025 reduction target communicated through the Paris Agreement, and 77% to reach our 2050 target.
 - 100% clean and renewable electricity by 2035
 - Solar, wind, hydro, geothermal, sustainable biomass, and renewable natural gas.
 - Zero net emissions from energy by 2050

- The full US economy must run on a mix of energy that is either zero-emission or 100% carbon capture by 2050. This includes residential, commercial, and industrial electricity.
 - 100% net-zero building energy standards by 2030
 - 100% zero emission passenger vehicles by 2030
 - 100% fossil-free transportation by 2050
 - This includes aviation, heavy-duty vehicles, and rail.
- Clean air and water need to be a right
 - National clean air attainment
 - Cut methane leakage by 50% by 2025
 - National lead pipe replacement and infrastructure upgrades
 - Guarantee access to affordable drinking water
 - Protect two million new miles of waterways
- Restore American landscape
 - Reforest 40 million acres of public and private land by 2035
 - Restore 5 million acres of wetlands by 2040
- Urban sustainability and resilience
 - Modernize urban mobility and mass transit
 - Zero waste by 2040
 - Capture 50% of wasted methane by 2040
- A GND is a job creator
 - The goal is to create 10 million new jobs over the first 10 years through employment and training programs associated with GND grants and projects
 - They say a job guarantee is a legal right that obligates the federal government to provide a job for anyone who asks for one and to pay them a livable wage.
 - A GND requires a massive workforce for the construction, operation, and administration of projects and a federal

job guarantee program can ensure there are enough workers to meet that need.

- Justice requires a GND
 - “There has been great progress over the past 50 years of environmental regulation tackling air quality, water quality, lead, and hazardous materials - and yet millions of Americans, especially children, continue to be exposed to toxins in the environment.”
- Can we afford it?
 - “We can’t afford not to!”
- [The Green Party’s summary of a GND](#)
 - The Economic Bill of Rights
 - 1) The right to employment through a Full Employment Program that will create 25 million jobs
 - 2) Workers rights including the right to a living wage, to a safe workplace, fair trade, unions...
 - 3) The right to quality health care through a single-payer Medicare-for-All program.
 - 4) The right to a tuition-free, quality, federally funded, local controlled public education system from pre-school through college.
 - 5) The right to decent affordable housing, including an immediate halt to all foreclosures and evictions.

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United States total primary energy consumption by fuel in 2017

- Petroleum (37%)
- Natural Gas (29%)
- Coal (14%)
- Nuclear (9%)
- Renewable energy (11%)

Renewable energy contribution to the United States total primary energy consumption in 2016 by source. Renewable energy was 12.2%

- Biofuel (22.4%)
- Other biomass (24.4%)
- Hydro (24.4%)
- Wind (20.8%)
- Solar (5.8%)
- Geothermal (2.2%)

Manipulation

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