



PRESS RELEASE

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Reimagine Appalachia coalition unveils path to nearly half million new jobs Ohio could gain 235,000 Jobs

The Reimagine Appalachia Coalition in partnership with Policy Matters Ohio and the Keystone Research Center today released a report highlighting a path for Ohio and Pennsylvania to gain nearly half a million new jobs. The virtual press conference released findings from the Political Economy Research Institute's (PERI) economic and job impact analysis of the Reimagine Appalachia blueprint in these two key swing states.

[READ THE REPORT HERE.](#)

The coalition's plan included several steps to create jobs:

Expand opportunity through public investments: The Reimagine Appalachia blueprint modelled in the new report would drive federal resources into Appalachia for needed infrastructure improvements, and attach requirements for strong wages, benefits, diversity requirements and union rights. This could create good union jobs, give extractive industry workers priority for new jobs, and build pathways into union jobs and family-sustaining careers for women, Black people, indigenous people, and other people of color. The new report provides specific estimates of the new jobs that national climate change legislation and federal economic stimulus packages could create.

Repair damage done over the last century: With enough federal resources, we can put people to work plugging orphan gas wells, repairing pipeline leaks, fixing dams and levees and other jobs repairing damaged and dangerous lands. Reclaiming abandoned lands and putting them back to good use could create over 7,000 jobs in Ohio and 9,000 in Pennsylvania. The plan would also provide health care and secure pensions for coal workers, especially those with black lung disease.

Modernize the electric grid: By upgrading our antiquated electric system, decentralizing generation, expanding broadband, and making our homes and businesses more energy efficient, the states can cut emissions, save money, and create new jobs. Investments in this sector could create about 150,000 jobs in Ohio and 156,000 in Pennsylvania.

Expand manufacturing by making it more energy efficient and clean: Federal investments can repurpose shuttered coal plants, turning them into eco-industrial parks. Together, we can spur more energy efficient manufacturing and reduce operating costs in a way that doesn't involve lowering wages. Modernizing manufacturing systems could create over 17,000 jobs in both Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Build a more sustainable transportation system: By laying rail and expanding infrastructure for electric vehicles fueled by renewables, policy and investment can create good jobs, while putting half of our region's energy dollars to better use and create new jobs for transit

Policy Matters Ohio is a nonprofit, nonpartisan state policy research institute with offices in Cleveland and Columbus.

workers and laborers. These new systems could create roughly 12,500 jobs in Ohio and 20,000 in Pennsylvania.

Relaunch the Civilian Conservation Corps: The absorption of carbon, when done via carbon farming, can put people to work expanding our forests, wetlands and sustainable farms. This work can help heal our society by creating hiring priorities for returning citizens caught up in the “war on drugs” and the opioid epidemic. Reviving the CCC can create pathways to family-sustaining jobs for people who are more likely to be discriminated against by prospective employers. These programs could create 50,900 jobs in Ohio and 53,070 in Pennsylvania. Speakers included:

- Amanda Woodrum, Senior Researcher, [Policy Matters Ohio](#)
- Steve Herzenberg, Executive Director, [Keystone Research Center](#)
- Robert Pollin, [Political Economy Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst](#)

In his remarks Pollin said, “These studies develop a recovery program for Pennsylvania and Ohio that is capable of exerting an effective counterforce against the region’s economic collapse in the short run while also building a durable foundation for an economically viable and ecologically sustainable longer-term recovery. We show how investing in the areas of clean energy, public infrastructure, manufacturing revival, land restoration and agriculture at about 4 percent of GDP will generate nearly 500,000 new jobs in the two states. We also develop just transition programs for workers and communities that currently depend on the fossil fuel industry for their livelihoods. Just transition must be a centerpiece of any viable recovery and long-term development project for the region.”

Herzenberg added, “Pennsylvania could sure use 250,000 plus middle-class jobs many of which can be performed safely outside right about now. Our jobs crisis and our climate crisis are both urgent and this report shows that investing in federal climate stimulus based on the Relmagine Appalachia blueprint is the perfect recipe for our region.”

Woodrum concluded, “If enacted, this plan would bring Ohio’s unemployment rate back down to 4%, while also laying the foundation for a more sustainable 21st century economy going forward.”

Earlier this year, the [Relmagine Appalachia](#) Coalition [released a policy blueprint](#) to create a vibrant region for all people, whether they are white, Black, Brown or Indigenous. The blueprint envisions an Appalachia where everyone is paid enough to support themselves and their family, future generations can put down roots, and all people have clean air to breathe and water to drink. Relmagine Appalachia campaign leaders will join the report author to go over the study’s findings. Future reports by PERI for Relmagine Appalachia will estimate job numbers for West Virginia and Kentucky, the two other states that overlap the Ohio River Valley where the campaign launched in mid-July. Over 90 diverse organizations have now endorsed the Relmagine Appalachia blueprint.

The coalition will be hosting a rally on Thursday, October 22nd at 6 pm, registration for the event is [here](#). A link to view [recording of the press conference on Zoom is here](#).

Contact: snow@pennbpc.org to receive a copy of the report(s).

Get more information on the coalition website here: <https://reimagineappalachia.org/>