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Thanks Ken, and thanks to Sean and Jill and the rest of the team that put this conference together. It really has been impressive. I've enjoyed being here.

Like Joe, I'm not an expert in environmental matters. My background is a union organizer and a union leader. I've learned a lot since I've been here. The questions that they've asked me to address in this session have to do with examples of union organizing on climate crisis, here and overseas. What kind of alliances unions are making around global warming? How can environmental issues contribute to union resurgence?

I thought of four examples that come from my union as well as some other unions in The Change to Win Federation. I think they suggest a menu of opportunities that we as trade unionists have, to make a difference in the climate change work. I don't think they end up being the "grand plan." I really rely on the environmentalists and the environmental justice people to come up with the "grand plan." It's up to us in labor to help make it happen. I think that these stories can help us think about what best practices may be around union organizing and climate change.

The first is something that unions can just do all on their own. We don't need coalitions. We don't need allies to do it. It has to do with our own work places where our members work. I noticed a resolution that was adopted in Europe among cleaning unions, SEIU, our union represents janitors. They call them "cleaners" in the rest of the world. It was with the Federation of the Cleaning Bosses and the Cleaning Unions in Europe, nineteen countries and they have social dialogue and social partnership there, which is something that those of us in the US have no experience with. In this case, UNI-Europa and the Federation of Cleaning Industries came up with a resolution to encourage cleaning of commercial office buildings to happen during the day instead of at night. It's better for workers to be able to go home and be with their families at night. Seventy-five percent of these cleaners were women. They weren't with their children, raising their children at night. It's a better job if it's during the day.

For the employers, it was a huge money-saver. That's how they framed it. It saved money for the employers. It helped in their workforce development, in their terms which is, "recruiting and keeping good employees was easier to do if they worked during the day and could be with their families at night."

For the unions it was a no-brainer that that was something the workers wanted. What they didn't say in their resolution is that it was also good for society. Saving that much electricity by cleaning during the day instead of having to have the lights on at night would make a huge difference in Europe in energy conservation.

In the US, as we think about this in SEIU, we don't have a social partnership. We don't have a table like that that we can go to. We can start to negotiate these kinds of things with employers. I had our research department just do this quick back-of-the-envelope calculation. If all the commercial buildings in the United States converted to day cleaning, the savings would be between one and two billion dollars. *All* of that savings is about electricity.

This is a no-brainer. It's not about union growth. It's something that each of our unions can do every time we go to the negotiating table is brainstorm with our committees. Each workplace is a little different about things that improve things for workers, improve things for our environment. We all can do it just in our regular day-to-day work.

The second example I want to give is an example about how trade unions and the environmental activists have common adversaries, but we're frequently doing separate battles. Thinking about how much more powerful we could be if we figured out how to combine those battles. There are many missed opportunities because we are all busy off doing our own thing. There may be ways that if we can really deepen our understanding of each other's organizations and the battles that we're doing, that we might be able to combine power to have a better solution.

A lot of you have heard about the incredible work that the National Resources Defense Council and the Environmental Defense did down in Texas, where the Dallas-based TXU's big energy

provider there had put into build eleven new coal-burning power plants. These environmental groups had been fighting against this hard for a long time. A moment came and a smart strategist at NRDC and at Environmental Defense realized that this was *the moment*. Which is, TXU the energy company based in Texas that they were dealing with, was just about to be bought out by two of the huge private equity players in the United States, Texas Pacific and KKR. They knew at the moment that this deal was about to come down was a moment of leverage. They used that moment very smart. Essentially, KKR and Texas Pacific said “We are not making this purchase,” it was a 45 billion dollar deal, “if we’re going to keep having people harping at us all the time.” It actually mattered in this deal; they were able to negotiate a deal. They cut, they rescinded eight of these applications for these coal plants down to three. They agreed to several other measures including: forgoing plans to build conventional coal plants in other states, reducing carbon emissions, doubling the company’s spending on energy efficiently. There is something about these private equity companies who are really wheeler dealers. They have very little ideology. They want thing to go smoothly for their money. This group of environmentalists were very, very savvy about leveraging and made a *huge* difference at that moment.

While this was going on, the same private equity company, Texas Pacific, was acquiring a company called Gate Gourmet that does the concessions in airplanes. You may have seen them? They’re the ones who put the bad food on the airplane. They do it less and less in the United States because we don’t get fed on airplanes any more. They’re a big global player. At the same time this was going on with the coal plants in Texas in the environmental movement, our brothers and sisters at Gate Gourmet unions in the UK and Germany were having huge fights with Gate Gourmet who was doing union busting that really had not been seen in those two countries in the transportation industry in a very, very long time.

Those battles were fought separately. Nobody asked each other to do anything. There were no disappointments. They were just doing separate things. Afterward, you think about this and think, “what opportunities are there out there if we have a better understanding of what common adversaries we have and what potential there is.” This kind of financial and corporate connection across industries, across countries and across movements is unprecedented today. No

time in history has the corporate and financial connect been so broad. That brings all of us and many others into proximity to dealmakers who have a lot of money to play with. I just offer that up as something for us to imagine and to encourage us to continue to deepen our relationships. It takes trust. It takes knowing each other's work to get to the point that you could figure out what you would do with this opportunity if it were to come around again.

This third story is what I call "solidarity." In the trade union movement this is an important premise of what we do, is solidarity. Sometimes you can get some quid pro quo on this solidarity. "I'll do something for your organization and sometime later you'll do something for mine." We're friends. We're allies. We do things for each other's organizations.

There's a long-standing very important campaign that our sister union, UNITE HERE! has to represent workers at SINTAS, a big uniform company. It's a very big player. It's a very anti-union player from my home town of Cincinnati, Ohio. We know them very well there. This is a campaign that UNITE HERE! is in until they win it. It could be a very long time. Those of us who were around when they went after J.P. Stevens, when they get their hands into somebody who's important in the sector, UNITE HERE! will stay until the end. Those workers deserve a right to have a voice on the job. They started a corporate campaign, as we often do with a big important employer, to get that employer to allow its workers to choose to form a union. It's necessary. As part of the corporate campaign, it's not really good enough in our country anymore to just say "workers are getting messed over, therefore the public should be on our side." We need more tricks in our book than that. Part of the strategy was to attack this company, which it deserved, on environmental issues as well. They deserved it all over many different communities across America.

The Sierra Club has always been a very good friend of labor, a very good friend of UNITE HERE! and was very happy to be part of this campaign. This was an environmental bandit just as much as it was a worker's bandit. Together they worked on a lot of different pressure points against SINTAS, and they won a lot of them. From 2003, 2004, 2005 in many communities, the Sierra Club and UNITE HERE! worked together hitting on this company.

During the same period, UNITE HERE! promoted green public policy initiatives in political arenas. They didn't promote something they didn't believe in. They may have put more resource into promoting this thing, moved it up on their ladder. Not as an explicit quid pro quo, but because they were having such a good relationship with the Sierra Club around workers' issues, they pushed up on their agenda the green public policy initiatives.

This is all good. It is solidarity. It hasn't been enough to bring this company to its senses yet. UNITE HERE! is in for the long haul. I would say that for Sierra Club, they will always want to be helpful, but it's not as high on their agenda. I think that's fine. Sometimes that's the case. I think the kind of solidarity assistance that this describes, which we're getting better at in our movements, has that as a tension. That something that's a top priority for one may be a lower priority for the other. How do you balance those things? I think that solidarity assistance kinds of issues always raise those questions. That's my third example.

The fourth I put in here is the "sweet" spot. I think that's the spot we would want to get to. It's a story that's not finished yet so there's no bragging rights on it. We don't know if it comes out with a happy ending or not. It has to do with real mutuality. It's a partnership that's beyond solidarity. It's a partnership where all the allies, all the partners in this fight have equal stake in the outcome, equal stake in the outcome. It actually has to do with the campaign Joe talked about in the ports. So the Ports Campaign, the Longshoremen focus on the shipping and what's coming off of the ships and the pollution caused in that part of it. The next part of that line of production is the truck drivers who take it after it gets unloaded at the port and drive it to wherever it's getting sent out around the country. That's the Teamster's jurisdiction. The Teamsters, I'm no expert on this particular campaign, Joe knows far more about it than I do. Ron Carver, who is here, (Schneider queries, "is he still here?") knows way more about it. He asked me to say one thing which is, "the Teamsters and Change to Win are very proud to be part of this campaign along with the ILWU and the ILA on the East Coast. It really is a campaign that has great importance for our work and our future work together.

The Teamsters organize these port drivers. After trucking de-regulation in the '80s, these drivers became independent contractors. They didn't work for any company. They were considered

independent contractors; therefore under the law, unable to collectively bargain. Standards went way down when that happened. These port drivers worked more than twelve hours a day. They make less than ten dollars an hour. There are low standards, not just pay in hours, but all kinds of health and safety quality, environmental matters. Until we can change the structure, it is a heavily immigrant workforce, it's almost all Latino, until we can really change the structure of their work, it's going to be hard to solve all these other problems.

Here's the example of it. The ILWU did the pioneering work on cleaning up the ports and really thinking about this with the shipping companies. This campaign for the drivers, I think, was inspired by the work that they did there. For the drivers, the key environmental improvement is to replace twenty and thirty year-old trucks that the drivers are driving with green trucks. They can't afford this on ten dollars an hour, that's why they're driving the old trucks. There is nobody to buy them for them; they don't work for a company. This is your dilemma. They are very polluting trucks. There's lots of them and they're running all the time.

In LA, the National Resource Defense Council, the Coalition for Clean Air, and the Long Beach Alliance for Children with Asthma had been doing incredible organizing around this for quite some time. They actually succeeded in getting a proposal from the shipping companies. The big shippers that Joe referred to, including Wal-Mart who does a lot of shipping, they would just give each driver a brand new green truck. They got pretty far with convincing essentially the employers there that this was a problem and that the green trucks were the solution; that everybody should just get a new truck. This proposal died. It died when the dialogue deepened between the truck drivers and their unions and the environmental groups. They pointed out that this was not a sustainable solution. That without fixing the underlying labor issues in the port drivers, the new green trucks would be a very hollow victory. It costs more to repair a green truck, to maintain it, to replace it. These workers would never be able to do that if they didn't change the very basics of their employment set-up. It is to me a huge hope that you could figure out how we can do more and more of these where the environmental movement understands that getting the worker thing right is what's going to make the environmental success lasting and that the workers understand the same on the flip side.

I would just say in conclusion, *that* to me would be the best Blue-Green work that we can imagine. We should challenge ourselves to imagine. It's joint campaigns where we win for workers and with the communities where they and their families and other citizens live when we build both movements stronger by joint action and victories where we have mutual interest in the outcome, not one helping the other as an ally in solidarity.

The unions really need to up our engagement in climate change action for a couple of reasons. First, because it's essential to our social justice mission. Our members and future members need to breathe clean air, drink clean water, and as the sister said before, that it's working people who suffer most when that doesn't happen. It is our members' children and grandchildren who will inherit this earth who we are responsible for. We ignore our respective organizational needs at our peril. If we can't turn around the decline of union density and power here in the US and around the world, labor will lose our ability to promote a social justice public policy agenda.

This is not, "crying wolf." This is true. Our partners in the environmental movement have to understand that central fact of our reality when we seem at times irritatingly single-minded and single-focused on our growth agenda. Really, it's this understanding that I heard at a round table that the Sierra Club took the heat from one of its members when it asked them to lobby for the Employee Free-Choice Act. They said, "That's not an environmental thing. Why should we be lobbying for it and why should you be spending Sierra Club resources on it?" They took the heat and explained it. I want to give them great credit for that.

At the same time the unions need to appreciate the organizational needs and opportunities of our friends in the environmental movement and in the environmental justice movement. That's equally important if we're going to get this done right. We need to rejoice in their rising success, momentum, visibility, attraction of young activists that will serve us all very well as my generation turns this work over to the next.

Thank you.