

2026

FOUR COUNTY INITIATIVE

DELAWARE | LANCASTER | INDIANA | WESTMORELAND



UNION
ENERGY

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On behalf of Union Energy PA, we are pleased to share the framework for a portion of our 2026 strategic plan to advance worker-centered energy policy through a focused four-county approach. The Union Energy Officers and Board identified and approved these priorities during our meeting in December 2025. The decision followed a careful review of policy objectives, workforce impacts, and alignment with Union Energy's mission.

We look forward to working with you and our collaborative partners to implement these priorities locally and build a scalable model for labor-led leadership on the issues across Pennsylvania identified by our working groups.

The following plan is just one of the initiatives Union Energy PA will focus on in 2026. Thank you for your continued partnership and commitment to this important work.

In Solidarity,

Angela Ferritto
President

Rob Bair
Secretary-Treasurer

Jim Snell
Executive Vice President

2026 UNION ENERGY FOUR COUNTY INITIATIVE

Entering 2026, Union Energy PA will build durable labor-led infrastructure to advance worker-centered energy policy throughout key Counties in Pennsylvania. The four identified Counties are central to this project: Delaware, Indiana, Lancaster, and Westmoreland. Together, these counties represent a strategic cross-section of Pennsylvania's industrial, agricultural, suburban, rural, and infrastructure sectors, positioning them as key anchors for advancing Union Energy priorities.

For Union Energy to be successful, there will be ongoing outreach to Central Labor Councils, Local Building Trades Councils, Faith Institutions, Student Groups, Farmer Organizations, Union-Friendly Businesses, and Environmental groups that have presence in those geographic areas or are affected by policies driven or implemented within those jurisdictions.

To ensure consistency and accountability, Union Energy Steering Committees will be established in each County. This structure will track progress and ensure alignment among unions and partner organizations. Union Energy will actively engage in educating the public and policy discussions while remaining nonpartisan.

UNION ENERGY WORKING GROUP/BOARD

The Pennsylvania Union Energy Working Groups were established based on the findings and recommendations of the Cornell Climate Jobs study, which identified key sectors where energy policy can drive job creation, strengthen labor standards, and support a just transition. The Pennsylvania Union Energy Working Groups are the oversight body directing strategic direction and priorities. Below are the priorities identified by each of the seven working groups.

2026 PRIORITIES

Just Transition Working Group

Chair: Chuck Knisell, UMWA

Vice-Chair: Phil Glover, AFGE

1

Build the Coal Lands Redevelopment Pipeline (Map → Inventory → “Shovel-Ready” Sites).

Deliver a usable statewide (Western/Southwestern-focused) inventory of active/inactive/abandoned mine lands with acreage totals and site readiness so PA can compete for major private investment and directly plug sites into the states \$500M site development program.

2

Convert Coal Lands into Strategic Energy & Jobs Assets (Developers & Hybrid Energy Model & Community Benefits).

Market reclaimed mine lands as energy-adjacent development hubs—especially near pipelines and with on-site power potential—targeting private data center developers and other industrial users. Integrate “politically durable” add-ons like solar-on-reclaimed-land, Community Benefit Agreements, and local power-bill relief where feasible, and clarify/control key rights (e.g., coalbed methane) to enable hybrid redevelopment models.

3

Protect Reliability and Worker Leverage During the Transition (Coal Bridge & AEPS Bargaining, Stop Harmful Conversions, Stabilize Workforce)

Advance a coordinated strategy to delay retirements where needed for grid stability (e.g., Keystone, Conemaugh, Seward), use AEPS reform as the negotiating bridge that keeps workers “driving the bus,” preventing irreversible gas conversions that hollow out union strongholds (e.g., Harrison), and confront the mining workforce collapses, so the system can be executed.

2026 PRIORITIES

Energy Working Group

Chair: Frank Muia, IBEW

Vice-Chair: Chuck Knisell, UMWA & Brad Mickatavage, Boilermakers

1

Build Firm Power Fast (Nuclear & Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)).

- Move from announcements to build-ready baseload: AP1000s and SMRs with realistic 2030–35 timelines.
- Lock in supply chain and workforce needs early (steel, concrete, copper, manufacturing capacity, skilled labor).
- Execute a site strategy that prioritizes existing licensed nuclear sites while advancing new site licensing near major load growth.

2

Unlock Projects by Fixing the Bottlenecks (Licensing & Federal Advocacy)

- Drive NRC/FERC licensing and fee reform that accelerates approvals and doesn't price SMRs out of existence.
- Maintain constant federal intelligence and rapid-response coordination, so labor helps write policy, not just react.

3

Modernize the Grid to Create Capacity (GETs & ATTs)

- Scale Grid Enhancement Technologies (GETs) to increase usable transfer capability quickly and reduce congestion.
- Deploy Advanced Transmission Technologies (ATTs) to speed interconnection, improve reliability, and unlock generation and large-load development.

4

Deliver Large-Scale Infrastructure with Shared Benefits (Mach2 & LNG/Pipelines/Generation & CBAs & Mobilization)

- Stabilize and defend Mach2 to protect funding and investor/end-user confidence.
- Advance Eddystone LNG as the anchor for pipeline upgrades and new generation to support economic redevelopment and major loads.
- Implement equity-based CBAs (community equity stake, recurring revenue, labor governance role) and mobilize union/community support through disciplined public engagement and framing.

2026 PRIORITIES

Industry Working Group

Chair: Bernie Hall, USW

Vice-Chairs: Kris Anderson, IBEW & Tommy Carden, UE

1

Green Steel: Build a “Good Neighbor Agreement” pathway for Southwestern Pennsylvania

- Organize an early-2026 summit convening labor, community, environmental, students, and faith stakeholders in Pittsburgh/Southwestern Pennsylvania to align around a Good Neighbor Agreement (GNA), led by the USW.
- Produce a concrete post-summit plan of action that advances: employment security for USW members, local/diverse construction hiring pathways, measurable pollution reductions and public-health benefits, and protections/enhancements to local tax bases.
- Center the investment case on long-term competitiveness through the electric arc furnace (EAF) and direct reduced iron (DRI) modernization. Develop a comprehensive narrative and communications toolkit (fact sheets, slide deck, infographics, talking points) to lay the groundwork for a broader 2026-27 public campaign.

2

Locomotives: Scale the Erie “green locomotive” manufacturing agenda into a flagship jobs-and-industry win

- Advance a two-phase growth case for Wabtec’s Lawrence Park facility: Phase 1 (500 green locomotives/year) and Phase 2 (1,000/year) - including Tier 4 diesel-electric and battery-electric platforms - with major job upside if battery manufacturing is added on-site.
- Anchor this priority around measurable outcomes: net employment gains at Lawrence Park and across Erie County, plus strong wage/benefit and job-quality standards tied to any expansion.
- Maintain a live watch on federal/regulatory shifts affecting rail procurement and emissions standards while building a coordinated state/federal engagement plan through UE/IBEW/USW alignment.

2026 PRIORITIES

Industry Working Group, cont.

Chair: Bernie Hall, USW

Vice-Chairs: Kris Anderson, IBEW & Tommy Carden, UE

3

Nuclear Supply Chain: Organize Pennsylvania union manufacturing to capture AP1000 and next-build demand

- Map and mobilize Pennsylvania's union manufacturing capacity tied to Westinghouse AP1000 buildout and adjacent components (with known participation already underway in the supply chain).
- Convert the opportunity into an execution plan: supplier readiness, skilled labor pathways, and targeted state/federal advocacy that prioritizes build readiness and Pennsylvania sourcing wherever feasible.

4

Circular Industry & Permitting with Labor Standards: Make industrial wins easier to build and harder to offshore.

- Drive a bipartisan strategy for a solar panel recycling facility and legislative pathway that locks in union job standards.
- Pair emissions integration (hydrogen blending, methane capture) with a disciplined approach to permitting reform—tracking reforms, intervening early, and attaching labor standards wherever possible.
- Use Union Energy policy support as the integration point so advocacy stays synchronized across all industrial work streams.

2026 PRIORITIES

Buildings Work Group

Chair: Matt Yarnell, SEIU Healthcare

Vice-Chair: Michael Maguire, AFSCME

1

Launch a PA-Only Buildings Efficiency Strategy (Budget & Agencies & Legislation)

Build an entirely Pennsylvania-driven framework led by DGS/DCED and the legislature - focused on what PA can control in 2026-2027.

2

Make Thermal Efficiency the Centerpiece (Geothermal as the Flagship where Feasible)

Prioritize geothermal, heat pumps, envelope upgrades, and HVAC modernization—framed as cost containment and reliability for critical facilities.

3

Fund and Execute Feasibility Studies as the Immediate Deliverable

Compile priority facility lists (public first, then union private), run DGS-led/state-funded studies, and convert findings into budget asks and bill language.

4

Scale to Private Facilities Through Guardrails and Existing Programs (SITES/DCED)

Target union-represented employers first, require prevailing wage and labor standards, prevent private system control, and actively steer projects into underused SITES/DCED funding.

2026 PRIORITIES

Agriculture Working Group

Chair: Wendell Young IV, UFCW

Vice-Chair: Michael Maguire, AFSCME

1

Lock in a “No Independent Agency” Cannabis Framework

- Hold the line against creating a standalone cannabis authority.
- Keep cannabis governance inside existing, accountable state structures to prevent revenue leakage, regulatory capture, and labor-rights carve outs.

2

Advance the Hybrid Marijuana Model: Agriculture Permitting & PLCB Retail/Revenue Control

- Dept. of Agriculture: licensing/permitting for growing and processing; fee structure for facilities.
- PLCB: wholesale purchasing/distribution, retail oversight (medical, adult-use), pricing controls, enforcement/penalties, fee collection, and tax revenue directed to the General Fund.
- Make “state control and reliable revenue” the core negotiating frame to outflank industry pressure.

3

Hardwire Union Standards and Real Enforcement into Any Bill

- Bake in the strongest possible card-check neutrality / labor-peace style provisions, and—critically—require the regulating entities to use licensing leverage when companies violate labor commitments.
- Reconstitute the marijuana roundtable/workgroup early in 2026 to align affiliates and present a unified labor platform to House/Senate leadership and the administration.

4

Scale Ag Energy and Workforce Protections: Digesters & Farm Labor

- Move an urban digester pilot (Philadelphia region) from concept to a funded, “buildable” project with union job expectations for construction and operations.
- Track and push farm worker relief/protections at the federal and state level; reinforce the message that PA’s food system (including major poultry processing) depends on a protected, documented workforce—and reject narratives that destabilize that workforce.

2026 PRIORITIES

Infrastructure Working Group

Chair: Jason Pakech, CWA

Vice-Chair: Kris Anderson, IBEW & Keith Koppenhaver, IUOE

1

Stop Water & Sewer Privatization, Protect Union Standards

- Maintain pressure to keep systems public and block buyouts that lead to “pay twice” rate impacts.
- Strengthen the pro-public, pro-union coalition (PUC relationships and external consumer/utility watchdog capacity).
- Track and intervene early on proposed acquisitions; prioritize protections that prevent union-busting during transitions.

2

Pass a Grid Modernization Package Built Around GETs and ATTs (With Control and Labor Standards)

- Advance Pennsylvania legislation for Grid Enhancing Technologies (GETs) and Advanced Transmission Technologies (ATTs) while pushing back on PJM/utility attempts to dictate terms.
- Ensure implementation includes transparent planning, enforceable workforce standards and procurement pathways that keep the work in union jurisdiction.
- Build a rapid feedback loop across business managers to flag proposals that shift work away from represented labor.

3

Target Broadband Dollars to Rural Dead-Zones Using Union Contractor Mapping

- Move from scattershot deployment to targeted carve-outs where service is worse and union contractors can deliver.
- Compile and circulate lists of signatory contractors and represented telecom entities to strengthen the case with legislators and agencies.
- Use real-world proof (service failures, legacy copper, unusable speeds) to justify prioritization and accountability.

2026 PRIORITIES

Infrastructure Working Group, cont.

Chair: Jason Pakech, CWA

Vice-Chair: Kris Anderson, IBEW & Keith Koppenhaver, IUOE

4

Win the Underground Utility Bill & Rate-Case Accountability (Consumer-Cost Frame)

- Collect “hard stops” from OEs and other crafts to unlock Senate negotiations while protecting core outcomes.
- Drive a consumer-first strategy against unjustified rate hikes (e.g., “modernization” rate increases without clear spending accountability).
- Package these as affordability, reliability, and safety wins—positioned for an election-year bipartisan lane.

2026 PRIORITIES

Transportation Work Group

Chair: Wence Valentin III, UAW

Vice-Chair: Ross Nicotero, ATU

1

Make V2G and fleet electrification economically viable in PA. Establish statewide rules/tariffs that enable fair compensation for exported power (not wholesale-only), resolve net metering barriers, and clarify ownership/market rights so transit agencies can participate without legal ambiguity.

2

Secure “critical load” reliability protections for transit and public-serving facilities. Develop a PA/PJM strategy so transit depots (and other essential infrastructure) are treated as critical—preventing multi-day curtailments that would cripple transportation systems and associated services.

3

Solve interconnection and substation constraints with a buildout plan and funding stack. Create a practical pathway for depot electrification that addresses substation access/ownership constraints, reduce “100% customer- paid substation” roadblocks, and leverages state economic development funding (including site-readiness style programs) for enabling infrastructure.

4

Tie transportation electrification to a PA industrial jobs agenda and scale statewide through labor leadership. Align fleet electrification with PA-first procurement, green steel, and hydrogen-related manufacturing opportunities—then use ATU’s statewide influence (largest local and conference board) to replicate pilots across the Commonwealth and lock in union job standards.

UNION ENERGY STEERING COMMITTEES ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Union Energy Steering Committees will serve as the central coordinating body, providing structure and strategic direction to advance Union Energy priorities within each targeted County. The committee will remain strictly nonpartisan and focus on education and advancing a worker-centered energy strategy.

UNION ENERGY'S STEERING COMMITTEE GOALS

These priority areas were formally identified and approved by the Union Energy Officers and Board during their December 2025 meeting, following review and discussion of policy objectives, workforce impacts, and strategic alignment with Union Energy's mission.

Program Goals

- Establish a Steering Committee in each County to coordinate strategy in coordination with Union Energy PA and advance Union Energy programs and priorities within its jurisdiction.
- Build structure to advance program priorities
- The Steering Committee will be formally established through a founding meeting to launch its work.
- The purpose of the Steering Committee is to create structure, coordination, and accountability to move Union Energy priorities forward.
- Union Energy is and will remain strictly nonpartisan.

MOBILIZATION TACTICS

Union Energy Expert Panels will serve as a key educational and strategic resource to support the work of the Steering Committees. These panels will bring together subject matter experts from labor, industry, academia, and allied organizations to provide timely analysis, technical guidance, and workforce-focused insights on priority issues.

Roundtables will create space for real stories and lived experiences from workers, community members, students, and faith leaders to inform and strengthen Union Energy's work. These roundtables will elevate the on-the-ground perspectives on how energy policy, infrastructure decisions, and economic transitions affect families and communities.

Town Halls will be public-facing platforms to inform the broader community about Union Energy's policy priorities and raise awareness of the workforce and economic impacts of energy decisions. These town halls will provide clear, accessible information on key energy issues, highlight labor's perspectives, and create opportunities for public dialogue.

Communications will prioritize building strong, trust-based relationships between labor and the communities most affected by energy policy decisions. Union Energy will work with neighborhood organizations, faith groups, educators, students, and local advocates to share information, listen to concerns, and identify common ground through the following tactics.

- Podcasts
- Letters to the Editor
- Social Media
- Newsletter
- Op-Eds
- Radio