



**Jerome Ringo  
President  
Remarks to U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Education and Labor's  
Subcommittee on Workforce Protections  
Tuesday, March 31, 2009**

Chairwoman Woolsey and members of the subcommittee, thank you for inviting me here today to talk about an issue of crucial importance to our nation's future.

For Americans this is a time of daunting challenges and boundless opportunities. We have become more and more dependent on foreign oil, putting our national security and economic future at risk. We have seen a collapse of the financial sector that has had rippling effects on the rest of the American economy. And we have seen the growing threat of climate instability and all its economic, environmental and human costs.

Nevertheless our energy, climate, and economic crises also present tremendous opportunities. The Apollo Alliance offers a unique perspective on the issue before this committee, "Green Jobs and their Role in Our Economic Recovery." As a coalition of labor, business, environmental, and social justice leaders and organizations, we believe our nation can and must achieve a triple bottom line: energy security, climate stability, and broadly shared economic prosperity. My goal today is to illustrate how clean energy and good jobs go hand in hand.

In 2003, the Iraq War impressed upon the country the need for energy security, and the climate change debate was in full force. The founders of the Apollo Alliance believed they could capture the interest of the Bush administration by talking about economic stimulation through green jobs, and under that umbrella, address climate change and energy independence. They catalyzed the conversation about green-collar jobs and tried to impress upon the powers that be that the polemical discussion that pitted jobs against the environment was false and old. The past administration didn't want to listen. But change has come and President Barack Obama understands that investment in a clean energy economy means jobs and economic prosperity.

Last time I was in Washington, D.C. something happened that made me so excited. It was when President Obama signed the executive order on middle class communities. He walked up to me and grabbed my hand. I said, "Mr. President, I'm Jerome Ringo." He said, "I know who you are. You're the president of Apollo Alliance. You guys are doing great work. Keep up the good work."

The reason why I was so excited is that the message the Apollo Alliance has been working on for six years – the message of clean energy, good jobs – is now *the* economic message of our times.



The Apollo Alliance’s comprehensive economic development strategy, *The New Apollo Program*, recognizes that great challenges bring with them great opportunity. We say no to business as usual and yes to a new path that will build a clean energy economy that creates millions of jobs – high-quality jobs that pay decent wages and support families. We say yes to a climate stability agenda that also strengthens national security. The Apollo Alliance estimates that an ambitious \$500 billion in federal spending over 10 years would create over 5 million jobs. This includes a broad range of activities such as building efficiency, renewable energy investments, smart growth, advanced grid technology, research and development initiatives and a “cap and invest” program to reduce climate change pollution.

What are green-collar jobs? Green-collar jobs are well-paid, career track jobs that contribute directly to preserving or enhancing environmental quality. They run the gamut from low-skill, entry-level positions to high-skill, higher-paid jobs, and include opportunities for advancement in both skills and wages.

Green-collar jobs tend to be local. Building retrofits, solar panel repairs, transit line construction – these jobs can’t be outsourced. Most of these jobs are in industries that already exist, but that are just now getting involved in the green economy because of policy changes and public commitments to energy efficiency, renewable energy, and transportation.

Green-collar jobs are here and growing and exist in many of the states of this committee’s members.

A new report by the Political Economy Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst says that investment in energy efficiency retrofits, a smart electrical transmission grid, rapid transit and renewable energy will yield over 37,000 jobs in Congressman Grijalva’s state of Arizona and in Congressman Kline’s state of Minnesota.

Environment California predicts that by meeting California’s Renewable Portfolio Standard goal of 20 percent by 2010 - 119,000 person-years of employment will be created at an average salary of \$40,000. And there are two measures on November’s ballot that would raise the portfolio standard.

The clean energy economy is present in Pennsylvania, Michigan, New Jersey, Oregon, South Carolina and nearly every other state in the union. There is no doubt that investment in the clean energy economy creates and retains jobs - jobs like the ones held by workers at Republic Windows and Doors in Chicago. The company’s fortune is evidence of the success of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and its considerable investment in weatherization and energy efficiency.

In early December 2008, 260 members of United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America Local 1110 lost their jobs at the window company. Last month, Kevin Surace, the chief executive officer of Serious Materials, a Sunnyvale, California-based manufacturer of ultra energy efficient windows, reached agreement with the plant’s former owner and with United Electrical Workers and purchased the Chicago factory. He also committed to honoring the union contract and to eventually rehiring all of the plant’s union





workers. In late March 2009, President Obama commended Mr. Surace for his work to reopen another window plant in Vandergrift, Pennsylvania where 150 people once worked.

The potential of the clean energy economy is evident. What's not evident is whether we have the human capital or the political will to ensure the jobs are American. In 2005, a National Association of Manufacturers study found that 90 percent of survey respondents expect a moderate to severe shortage of qualified, skilled employees like machinists and technicians. And the National Renewable Energy Lab concurs that a shortage of skilled labor is a large obstacle to an economy with strong renewable energy and energy efficiency industries.

We've had the political will to pass policies that create the demand for the clean energy economy - the Production Tax Credit, Investment Tax Credit, and the ARRA which appropriated more than \$100 billion dollars for clean energy and green-collar jobs.

The missing element is the supply side. We don't make most of the systems involved in producing clean energy. Fully half of America's existing wind turbines were manufactured overseas. And we rank fifth among countries that manufacture solar components, even though the solar cell was born in America. The fact that other countries are prepared to deliver these products - and we are not - means that every new American bill creating demand for renewable energy systems and energy efficiency services actually creates new jobs overseas, even though we have a robust manufacturing infrastructure and a skilled workforce. We have an incredible opportunity to strengthen and expand America's middle class by boosting our clean energy manufacturing sector.

Congress can take advantage of this opportunity by implementing the following:

1. Provide direct federal funding for clean energy manufacturers to retool their facilities and retrain their workers to develop, produce, and commercialize clean energy technologies.
2. Attach standards to funding: condition federal support to manufacturers on their ability to meet labor and domestic content standards.
3. Increase funding for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership, both to expand its role in strengthening the clean energy supply chain and to establish partnerships with regional/local development and manufacturing support organizations.
4. Increase funding for the Green Jobs Act and direct funds administered under the Act toward workforce and skill standards development for the clean energy manufacturing industries.
5. Create a "Presidential Task Force on Clean Energy Manufacturing" to bring together a range of federal agencies to make the manufacturing of clean energy systems and components a national priority.

Only by ensuring that all Americans come out winners will we build enough public support to do what must be done on the scale necessary to boost the economy, stabilize the climate, and achieve energy independence.





If I leave you with one message today, it is this: We're more likely to build a new energy future with good, green-collar jobs for working Americans if we ensure that a new energy policy is an investment strategy as well as a regulatory strategy.

We have called on the "can do" spirit of the original Apollo program in our Alliance's name because we believe the American people are once again ready for a great challenge. Energy is the transformative issue of our generation.

The challenge for Congressional leaders today will be to ensure that we all get there together: working men and women alongside industry, environmentalists, and our national security community.

We're confident this great nation can get the job done; we're confident we can get there with your leadership.

Thank you.