

**Comments by Anne Woiwode, Sierra Club Michigan Chapter Director
April 13, 2011, at the “We ARE the People Rally”, Michigan State Capitol, Lansing, MI**

As the manufacturing capital of the world, Michigan was also the world’s best at protecting our air, our water, our natural resources and our public health.

That wasn’t a fluke – it was because union members and conservationists stood shoulder to shoulder to move our state forward.

Workers and environmentalists demanded safe and clean work places and made sure that toxics didn’t get dumped.

Top notch professionals were hired to protect our water and air, and manage our natural resources, because this was an investment in our economy and our children’s future.

It’s time for Michigan to get back on track – which won’t happen if politicians take away collective bargaining rights that give workers a way to demand safe and healthy conditions; it won’t happen by undermining our air and water quality laws while cutting funding for those who are there to protect us.

I am proud today to represent not just Sierra Club but the BlueGreen Alliance – 10 of America’s largest labor unions and four of America’s most influential environmental organizations.

The BlueGreen Alliance has come together because WE KNOW that TOGETHER we can create good jobs that are safe for workers, for communities and for the environment.

Here is how we’ll do it. Investments in the jobs and industries of the 21st Century, including renewable energy, efficiency, and transportation infrastructure; will fix the American economy and create good middle-class jobs in our state, positioning us to compete in the 21st century economy.

Strong clean energy policies and leadership in Michigan brought over \$10 billion of investments and created more than 100,000 jobs here in the past few years: we need to do a lot more of that, not less.

We know as well that efforts to reverse progress on clean energy, attempts by politicians in Washington to curb the federal government’s authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions, and threats to bargaining rights don’t create jobs.

Our leaders in Lansing and in Washington, DC should focus on our skilled workers, infrastructure and strength of the people of our state by putting Michiganders back to work.

Michigan must make smart investments that will secure our energy future and protect our environment for our children and our grandchildren.

But right now, our state and our country are standing still while China and Europe take the lead—and the jobs that come with it.

We can and must compete for those jobs. We can and must win them. The future of our children and grandchildren depends on us winning.

That’s why union members, environmentalists, community members and private-sector allies, are working together on the Jobs21! Campaign – calling for creating good jobs through investments in industries of the future.

But just creating jobs isn’t enough. We want them to be good jobs that strengthen our economy and our communities — jobs that improve health and safety in the workplace, protect our air, water and land, safeguard public health, and pay a living wage.

This is a fight for our future and a fight we must win: to make America competitive in the 21st century economy, to ensure the revitalization of America’s middle class, and to invest in solutions that will protect the environment for the next generation.

Join with the BlueGreen Alliance and the Jobs21! Campaign. Together we can create good jobs and to build a stronger and more competitive America.