



Towards A Green Economy: Why Unions Must Be Involved

**Work In A Warming World Atlantic
Forum: Saving the Planet and
Creating Jobs
St. Thomas University
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The North American labour movement has been caught in an internal stalemate among:

- (1) Those at risk of job loss due to efforts to deal with global warming; and**
- (2) Those who have not considered global warming an important union; and**
- (3) Those who see the climate crisis as a call for immediate action and an opportunity for sustainable economic development and job growth.**

(Brecher, Costello and Smith, 2006).

Why should climate change be a Union issue?

- **Significant public policy issue**
- **Our economic future depends on it**
- **Being part of the solution**
- **We have to be at the table**
- **Makes union attractive to new workers – they want a green workplace**

What you have to know

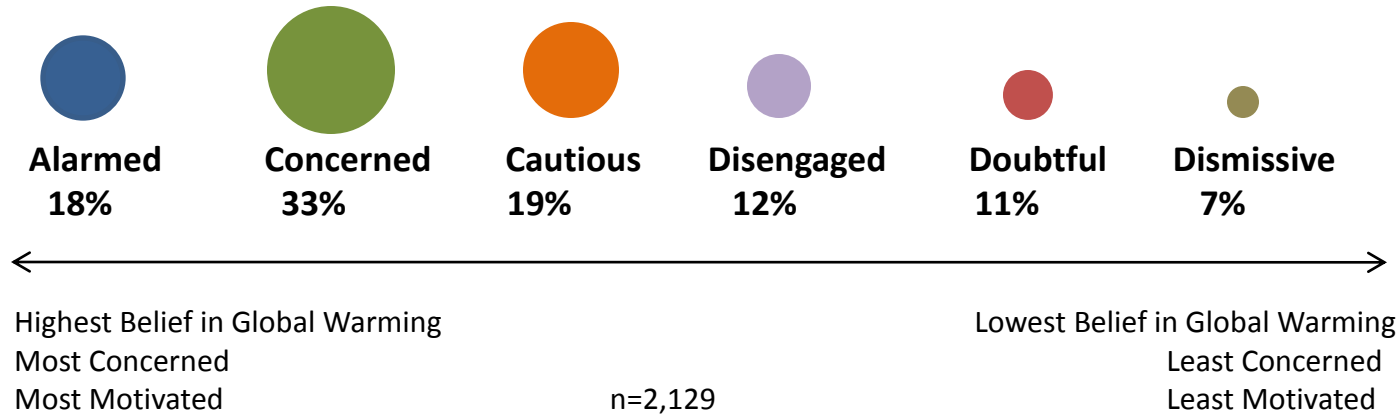
- **Global warming is real**
- **It is underway now**
- **It is caused mostly by human activities**
- **Damage is already significant and irreversible**
- **If allowed to go farther, damage will become disastrous for our quality of life, economic security, national security, etc.**
- **We have the tools to prevent this**
- **We don't have much time**

“ If there is going to be change, real change, it will have to work its way from the bottom up, from the people themselves. That’s how change happens.”

**Howard Zinn
January 16, 2010**

Figure 1: Proportion of the U.S. adult population in the Six Americas

Proportion represented by area



The Alarmed

- Most engaged in the issue of global warming

The Concerned

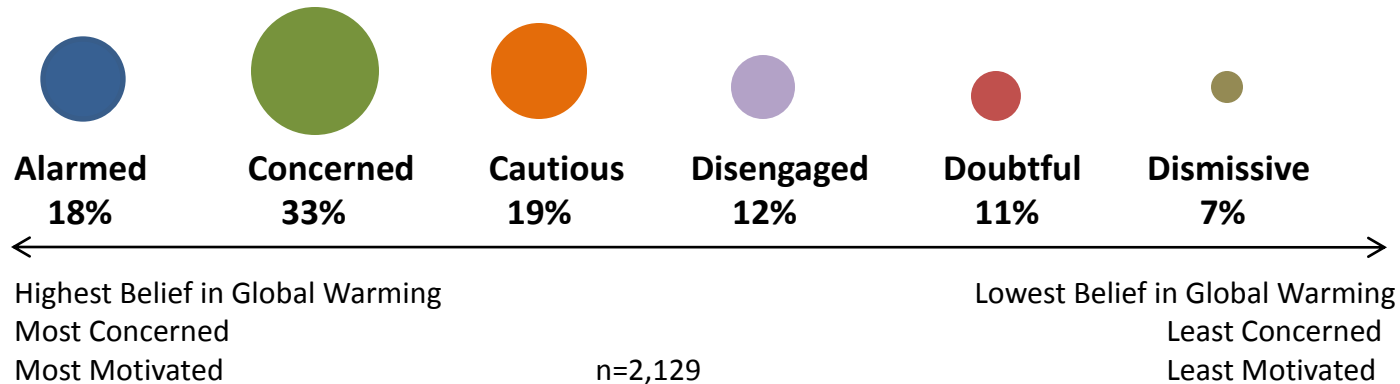
- Convinced that global warming is a serious problem

The Cautious

- Believe that global warming is a problem

Figure 4: Proportion of the U.S. adult population in the Six Americas

Proportion represented by area



The Disengaged

- Haven't thought much about the issue at all

The Doubtful

- Evenly split among those who think global warming is happening, those who think it isn't, and those who don't know

The Dismissive

- Like the Alarmed, are actively engaged in the issue
- But on the opposite end of the spectrum

MORE, MORE, MORE

- 1. More Money: Higher Wages**
- 2. More Leisure**
- 3. More Control Over Working Conditions**
- 4. More Control Over the Supply of Labour**
- 5. More Political Power**
- 6. Taxation Based More on Ability to Pay**
- 7. More Social Security**
- 8. More Legislative Standards for Union Rights**
- 9. More Legislative Safeguards for the Total Environment**

Advancing Membership Goals

1. Collective bargaining

2. Political action, and

3. Legislation enactment

1. Collective Bargaining

Cool
Comforts

BARGAINING
FOR OUR
SURVIVAL

A union activist's
handbook on
global warming

Cool Comforts II

Using
our
capital
to save
our
future

A guide for
union pension
committee
members /
trustees and
investors with
all sized
portfolios



Socially responsible investing refers to a strategy of adopting social and ethical goals into investment strategies. As such, workplace pension funds can (and should) advance a larger social agenda reaching beyond maximizing returns.

2. Political Action



3. Legislation Enactment

Canada is the only country in the industrialized world to:

- **sign and ratify the Kyoto protocol and then announce that it has no intention of honouring its commitments;**
- **return from Copenhagen and announce that it is weakening its targets;**
- **allow its only major federal program supporting renewable energy to run out of money;**
- **allow its only major federal program supporting home efficiency to run out of money; and**
- **work actively to weaken climate change policy in the United States and Europe.**

The Climate Change Accountability Act



On the World Stage

‘Enormous potential for the creation of green and decent work from a successful process of just transition that provides new green job opportunities, anticipates potential losses of economic activity, employment and income in certain sectors and regions, and protect the most vulnerable throughout the economy and the whole world’ (ITUC, 2010).



Clearing the Air

- **Gross Misallocation of Capital**
- **Slow – No Growth (expansion) Economy**
- **Decoupling Economic Growth (jobs) and CO2 Emissions**

you are here →

Be kind to our earth.
It's the only one we've got.

