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GREEN JOBS ARE NOT ALWAYS GOOD JOBS: NEW REPORT FINDS WIDE VARIATION IN QUALITY OF JOBS IN CLIMATE-FRIENDLY SECTORS

Washington, DC, February 3, 2009—As the federal government prepares to spend billions of dollars promoting the creation of green jobs as part of the huge economy recovery bill, a new report warns that the jobs already being created in climate-friendly sectors of the economy do not always measure up in terms of wages and other terms of employment. The report, entitled *High Road or Low Road: Job Quality in the New Green Economy*, was produced by Good Jobs First, a non-profit resource center on economic development accountability. It was commissioned by Change to Win, the Sierra Club, and the Teamsters and Laborers unions. It is online at: <http://www.goodjobsfirst.org/pdf/gjfgreenjobsrpt.pdf>

“Many proponents of green development assume that the result will be good jobs,” said Good Jobs First Research Director Philip Mattera, principal author of the report. “We tested that assumption and found it is not always valid.” The report looks at three sectors: manufacturing of components for wind and solar energy generation; green building; and recycling. “In each sector, we found examples of employers that compensate their workers decently and treat them with respect. Yet we also found examples of purportedly green employers paying substandard wages and not treating their workers well,” Mattera added. “These include two wind energy manufacturing plants where workers initiated union organizing drives in response to issues such as poor safety conditions and then faced union-busting campaigns by management.” Some U.S. wind and solar manufacturing firms are weakening the job security of their workers, the report notes, by opening parallel plants in foreign low-wage havens such as China and Mexico.

The report finds that many wind and solar manufacturing plants are receiving sizeable economic development subsidies from state and local governments. “This use of taxpayer money provides an opportunity to raise wages and other working conditions,” said Good Jobs First Executive Director Greg LeRoy. “Many states and localities already apply job quality standards to companies receiving job subsidies or public contracts. In the report we urge wider and more aggressive use of such standards by federal as well as state and local agencies.”

The report offers other public policy options and urges the private U.S. Green Building Council to consider adding labor criteria to its widely used LEED standards for green construction.

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