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Building a Bigger Team: Explaining Organized Labor's Advocacy for Climate Policy in the American States

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

by

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ABSTRACT

Building a Bigger Team: Explaining Organized Labor's Advocacy for Climate Policy in the American States

by

Geoffrey Lancaster Henderson

Whether your primary concern is saving the planet, promoting economic equality, or even understanding organized groups' decisions, you may have wondered what motivates groups to form coalitions. The stronger the coalition advocating for addressing climate change or creating well-paid union jobs, the logic goes, the more pressure governments will face to pass policies that advance these objectives. I argue that during times when governments cannot pass climate policy due to legislative gridlock, environmentalists have a greater incentive to make policy concessions to organized labor to increase their political resources for current or future policy negotiations. Environmentalists' concessions are more likely to win labor's support when they mitigate the uncertainty characteristic of climate policy's economic impacts.

I demonstrate this theory through comparative and longitudinal case studies of four states in the American West which have been climate policy pioneers. Whereas labor federations have advocated for substantial climate policies alongside environmental groups in

Washington and Colorado, Oregon and California have not witnessed comparable coalitions despite their similar political and economic characteristics. I draw my data from elite interviews, primary and secondary sources, and legislators' environmental voting scores from the League of Conservation Voters (LCV) covering roughly the past two decades.

Chapter 1: Introduction

"If we were going to succeed with climate policy, we needed a bigger team."
--Environmental organization leader, Washington state

"Job-creating 100% clean energy bill advances"
--Headline of a front-page article in The Stand*, a Washington State Labor Council publication*

"Donald Trump thinks that wind turbines cause cancer. Here in Washington, we know they cause jobs."
--Washington Governor Jay Inslee

Whether your primary concern is saving the planet, promoting economic equality, or even understanding organized groups' decisions, you may have wondered what motivates groups to form coalitions. The stronger the coalition advocating for addressing climate change or creating well-paid union jobs, the logic goes, the more pressure governments will face to pass policies that advance these objectives. I argue that during times when governments cannot pass climate policy due to legislative gridlock, environmentalists face greater incentives to make policy concessions to organized labor to increase their political resources for current or future policy negotiations. Environmentalists' concessions are more likely to win labor's support when they mitigate the uncertainty characteristic of climate policy's economic impacts. Reaching agreement on a shared policy proposal requires environmental leaders to invest scarce resources such as money and time, signaling to labor leaders that their partners will not renege on their promises once an opportunity to pass climate policy reemerges.

I demonstrate this theory through comparative and longitudinal case studies of four states in the American West which have been climate policy pioneers. Whereas labor federations have advocated for substantial climate policies alongside environmental groups in

Washington and Colorado, Oregon and California have not witnessed comparable coalitions despite their similar political and economic characteristics. I draw my data from elite interviews, primary and secondary sources, and legislators' environmental voting scores from the League of Conservation Voters (LCV) covering roughly the past two decades, before which climate change was not a highly salient political issue in the United States. I will show that like their overall voting records, legislators' environmental voting records tend to be quite stable over time, suggesting that LCV scores offer a reliable and valid means of measuring political opportunity.

In this chapter I will introduce the intuition behind my argument. I will then provide an overview of the dissertation explaining each chapter's contribution.

Toward a Theory of Interest-Group Coalition-Building

A funny thing happened in Washington state in 2019. The previous year, the state labor federation had been embroiled in a conflict among its members around support for a ballot initiative to place a fee on carbon emissions. Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) President Jeff Johnson had put his legacy on the line to support the policy and came within a hair's breadth of winning his membership's endorsement. After the federation failed to endorse the policy, the carbon-intensive unions that had blocked the endorsement criticized Johnson for devoting federation funds to supporting the initiative. Johnson's intended successor lost her bid for the presidency, ushering in the more moderate Larry Brown of the Machinists union, which had played a role in vetoing the carbon fee. Remarkably, however, just a few months later the WSLC gave its endorsement to a similarly transformative proposal to transition the state to 100 percent clean electricity by 2045. Meanwhile, despite a

longstanding Democratic trifecta just over Washington's Southern border, the WSLC's counterpart in Oregon remained on the sidelines as environmentalists sought to spur a similar energy transition.

The above narrative is puzzling in two ways, one theoretical and one empirical. First, labor federations in industrialized countries include powerful carbon-intensive interests. Yet in some places, these federations form coalitions with environmental groups seeking to enact policies that could impose costs on carbon-intensive sectors. Second, some state labor federations—for instance, those in Colorado and Washington—have played a central role in coalitions with environmental groups lobbying for climate policy, while others—for instance, California and Oregon—have remained on the sidelines.

Interest groups' fundamental purpose is to influence public policy, such as legislation and agency rulemaking, through lobbying (Baumgartner et al 2009; Yackee 2015). Political scientists widely understand that interest groups typically lobby as part of coalitions rather than alone (Hula 1995, 1999). These coalitions often affiliate with political parties to nominate favorable candidates so that they have elite allies eager to champion their proposals (Cohen et al 2008; Bawn et al 2012; Krimmel 2017).

Coalition partners offer interest groups greater resources, increasing the likelihood that their favored policies will pass (Hojnacki 1997; Baumgartner et al 2009). Interest groups' resources include "staff, budgets, membership, diversity, bipartisanship, [and] good connections." Staff perform myriad tasks, not least developing and advocating for the group's favored policies and mobilizing the membership, which can pressure election-seeking politicians to the extent that they can credibly signal their influence at the polls (Hansen 1991). A larger budget permits a group to hire more staff, and to spend more money

on campaign contributions, which can facilitate access to lawmakers (Hall and Wayman 1990; Kalla and Broockman 2016). A group's diversity—partisan, ideological, demographic, or otherwise—increases its capacity for mobilizing and credibly representing electorally influential constituencies and aids the group's leaders in developing effective strategies (Ganz 2000). As legislative success hinges on pivotal representatives (Krehbiel 1998), one strategy often associated with success is leveraging relationships with high-level public officials (Baumgartner et al 2009).

Yet we still know relatively little about when interest groups have an incentive to build their coalitions, with whom they choose to align themselves, and how allies reach agreements on policy design. First, previous theories cannot predict when interest groups have incentive to make commitments to potential allies. Since groups value autonomy and often must make sacrifices to bring allies on board, efforts to broaden a group's coalition are puzzling. Nor does prior research shed much light on how groups identify viable allies. While allies offer greater resources, prior research does not explain why interest groups form coalitions with certain well-resourced groups rather than others. Nor has the extant literature, in McCarty and Schickler's (2018) words, "come to terms with how the coalitions make decisions internally"—groups within a coalition might vote, bargain, delegate, or coordinate in decentralized fashion. If they make decisions through voting or bargaining, it is not yet clear how an interest group gains their ally's support for a policy proposal.

This dissertation represents a first step toward answering these critical questions. It argues that during substantial periods of legislative gridlock—when the majority cannot pass its favored policy proposals—interest groups' incentives increase to pool their resources with other groups (Krehbiel 1998). Gridlock implies to policy entrepreneurs—groups seeking to

enact a policy (Kingdon 1984)—that the current field of "organized combat" among policy-demanding groups is not sufficiently balanced in their favor, requiring additional allies to aid their advocacy for reform (Hacker and Pierson 2010, 2014). In periods with high partisan polarization, policy entrepreneurs' best chance at passing their policy proposals runs through the party with which they most closely associate, and therefore fellow policy demanders within their party orbit represent optimal coalition partners (Cohen et al 2008; Bawn et al 2012; McCarty and Schickler 2018). These prospective partners are more likely to accept groups' invitations to join coalitions when they receive policy concessions that assuage pivotal members' uncertainty regarding the benefits they would receive from the proposed policy (Hula 1999; Esterling 2004). Policy entrepreneurs devote scarce resources—exactly the currency that they seek from their partners—to demonstrating that their commitment to these policy agreements is credible (Weingast and Marshall 1988).

The concessions that policy entrepreneurs offer their partisan allies during periods of gridlock produce path-dependent coalitions, laying the foundation for passing their favored policies when political opportunity reemerges. This insight brings together largely disparate literatures on policymaking institutions and interest groups (for an exception, see Brulle 2018), clarifying the conditions under which political opportunities exist for organized groups. Further, it builds on an emerging literature examining organized labor's role in climate policymaking (Brecher 2018; Hyde and Vachon 2018; Mildenberger 2020; Robinson 2020), showing that labor federations' lobbying strategies and policy positions shift according to the political conditions they face.

It bears emphasizing, as many of my interviewees did, that organized labor is not a monolith. While state labor federations typically represent the vast majority of unionized

workers in a given state, they are not all-encompassing. For instance, in 2004 a group of unions known as Change to Win broke away from the AFL-CIO at the national and state levels due to a disagreement over the federation's strategy for building their membership. The breakaway unions were dedicated to the organizing model, which seeks to expand the movement by organizing non-union workplaces. These unions, such as the SEIU, have at times transformed from an interest group into a social movement, organizing mass participation in disruptive activities outside institutional channels to pursue causes such as a $15 minimum wage (Gamson and Meyer 1996; Featherstone 2021). In contrast, more traditional unions such as the Building Trades adhere to business unionism, an approach that prioritizes jobs and material gains for workers at already unionized workplaces. Despite their conservatism, even those unions often advocate for public policies with relative independence from the state labor federation, as we will see in Chapters 5 and 6. The next section maps out the dissertation, summarizing each chapter's contribution to the argument.

Overview of the Dissertation

In the next chapter, I review extant theory regarding the formation of social movement and lobbying coalitions, generating several alternative explanations that can be tested empirically. I then introduce my theory that legislative gridlock increases the likelihood that policy-demanding groups within a party coalition will lobby together for a shared policy proposal. By increasing the resources necessary to pass a law, gridlock incentivizes interest groups to pool their resources. These decisions set in motion a path-dependent process that encourages interest groups to make concessions to pivotal members within aligned groups, increasing the likelihood of coalition formation. I explain that policy

entrepreneurs demonstrate their credibility to their allies through opportunity costs and audience costs, and are more likely to win allies' support when their policy proposals provide certainty regarding economic benefits.

Chapter 3 lays out a research design to test this theory as well as the alternative explanations. To isolate an independent variable and uncover the mechanisms through which it affects coalition formation, I combine cross-case comparison and within-case process tracing. First, I select four state cases with similar political histories and economies, enabling a most-similar systems design. I select two pairs of cases with comparable characteristics, and within each pair I select one case in which the state federation formed a coalition with environmentalists and a case in which the federation did not join an analogous coalition. Seeking to ensure that the theory applies in both low- and high-carbon economies, I select one pair of each. Oregon and Washington both derive a large share of their electricity from clean sources such as hydropower and have negligible fossil fuel production, yet divergent outcomes with regarding to labor-environmental coalitions. California and Colorado both rely heavily on carbon-intensive industries for employment and economic growth, but they also differ in terms of labor's role in the energy transition. I explain how I measure the independent variable, political opportunity, using scores from state chapters of the League of Conservation Voters derived from legislators' voting records. I supplement these scores with additional data, including responses to public opinion surveys and records of interest group campaign contributions, to compare the four states along multiple dimensions of theoretical interest.

Chapter 3 also describes the data and methods I use to conduct process tracing within cases. I derive my primary data for this study from approximately 60 semi-structured

interviews with labor and environmental leaders and other key informants in my four states. I explain my procedure for interview sampling, which begins with a positional approach and builds from that foundation with snowball sampling. Alongside primary sources including policy memos and secondary sources such as news articles, these qualitative data allow me to unpack the mechanisms intervening between political opportunity and coalition formation.

Having introduced the research design, I turn to the empirical analyses. Chapter 4 leverages the most-similar systems design to compare each pair of states, demonstrating that the states which experienced sustained periods of legislative gridlock—Washington and Colorado—ultimately arrived at labor-environmental coalitions. On the other side of the ledger, the states which did not experience sustained gridlock on climate change—Oregon and California—saw their labor federations remain on the sidelines of climate policymaking. The chapter also tests the alternative explanations that member preferences or power relationships among organized groups account for coalition formation, finding little evidence in support of these hypotheses.

In Chapters 5 and 6, I take a deeper dive into the recent history of energy policy in each state. Chapter 5 recounts the ebb and flow of political opportunity and inter-movement coalitions in Washington state, explaining how the legislative gridlock that emerged after the 2012 election contributed to a labor-environmental coalition that set the state's policy agenda for the rest of the decade. I explain how the coalition initially struggled to agree on a policy that the labor federation could endorse, but ultimately made a breakthrough when it identified labor's pivotal members and offered them policy concessions that increased their certainty regarding the economic benefits they would receive from the energy transition. The section concludes with a cautionary note, however. Comfortable legislative majorities and a gung-ho

governor tempted the environmental movement to abandon its erstwhile coalition partners in the 2021 session, suggesting that political opportunity can be a double-edged sword.

The chapter also recounts the struggle within the Oregon labor movement to stand up for its interests as environmentalists forged ahead on climate policy without limited outside input. While Oregon's environmental groups have engaged in some conversations with labor over the years, they have largely taken their policy cues from legislative leaders and included labor in discussions over policy design only after the policy framework has been firmly established. Left out in the cold, labor federation leaders repeatedly lobbied for labor standards and provisions to keep workers whole without endorsing the primary climate policy mechanisms. In a state with sustained political opportunity, environmentalists' desire to push through an energy transition distracted them from coalition-building.

The analysis turns to carbon-intensive states in Chapter 6, which traces the processes which produced a labor-environmental coalition in Colorado and pushed the labor federation to the periphery of the energy policy network in California. In Colorado, a long lull in political opportunity provided space for movement-building, from a march to a coalition table to a common policy agenda between labor and environmental groups. I explain how the time afforded by the lack of legislative urgency allowed the labor federation to develop a clear set of policies to keep fossil fuel workers whole during an energy transition. Moreover, the commitments forged during the period of gridlock proved vital in the fast-paced policy negotiations that occurred once a window of opportunity opened in 2019. Reacting quickly and in concert with its environmental allies, the Colorado AFL-CIO managed to hold its own in policy negotiations, permitting them to advocate for several pieces of legislation to set the transition in motion.

California comes next in the narrative, representing a state in which early and sustained political opportunity for climate policy left the labor federation behind. The California Building and Construction Trades Council constitutes the exception that proves the rule—the idiosyncrasies of California's environmental law enabled a clever strategy for securing project labor agreements requiring energy developers to employ union labor. This unanticipated form of political opportunity gave the Building Trades a first-mover advantage over other sectors in shaping climate policy, which they consolidated by excluding their fellow labor federation members from their lobbying network. As climate policy has advanced at full tilt in recent decades and the Building Trades have spoken on behalf of the rest of the labor movement, the state labor federation has yet to develop capacity or relationships necessary to participate meaningfully in climate policy debates in California. As an unintended consequence of this process, California is the only state of the four in this study which has yet to pass a law to ensure labor protections for workers during the energy transition.

I conclude the dissertation with reflections on the study's theoretical contributions, policy implications, and external validity. Beyond the study's core insight—that sustained periods of legislative gridlock increase interest groups' incentives to build coalitions—I provide concrete steps policymakers can take to increase labor's likelihood of acceding to climate policy coalitions. Both of these steps involve reducing uncertainty. First, when labor has greater certainty that their environmental allies will not renege on their promise to work together, they are more likely to support environmentalists' policy proposals. Second, when labor has greater certainty that a coalition's policy proposal will benefit their members economically (for instance, through job creation), they are more likely to participate in the

coalition. Finally, I suggest cases for future research that could speak to how the theory applies outside the American West, given regional variation in the historical strength of party organizations that moderate interest group influence.

Chapter 2: Legislative Gridlock Encourages Coalition-Building

"Elections have consequences."

--President Barack Obama

Why do interest groups join lobbying coalitions? In this chapter, I review the extant literature to identify the dominant explanations, advance a critique of these theories, and state my own argument regarding the role political opportunity plays in spurring coalition formation. I also explain why organized labor's engagement in climate advocacy coalitions represents a hard test of the theory, emphasizing that labor federations' primary policy goal at the state level is job creation. I posit that legislative gridlock gives labor leverage to bargain for policy concessions from environmental groups that increase the certainty that climate policy proposals would provide jobs or at least mitigate job losses through targeted benefits. These policy concessions, in turn, increase the likelihood that state labor federations will advocate for such proposals.

Extant Theories of Lobbying Coalitions

This study seeks to identify the conditions under which interest groups join lobbying coalitions. Much of the coalition-building literature focuses on protest coalitions, which form to jointly mobilize participants for instances of collective action (see, e.g., Bearman and Everett 1993, Klatch 1999). While protest coalitions are a necessary condition of social movement emergence (Van Dyke and McCammon 2010), they are not a sufficient condition for policy reform. When the rubber meets the road—when a movement seeks to leverage its grassroots base to enact its favored policies—strategic movement actors must identify the

allies whose support will persuade veto players within the political institutions with jurisdiction over the policy domain in question. For instance, the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) aided the women's suffrage movement with a variety of tactics that put pressure on policymakers—legislative lobbying and testimony; organizing public events; and circulating pro-suffrage literature, articles, and petitions (McCammon and Campbell 2002).

I define a lobbying coalition strictly as a group of organizations that simultaneously advocate for the same policy (Holyoke 2009). Under this definition, two environmental groups with the same overarching goal—for instance, addressing climate change—do not constitute coalition partners if their favored policy instruments for achieving this goal differ. Oftentimes, interest groups form public-facing umbrella organizations, yet nonetheless fail to agree on a comprehensive policy agenda for achieving their common mission. Even if two groups work together—exchanging information, organizing events and actions, or formulating strategy—I do not consider them to be coalition partners unless they publicly declare their allegiance to a shared and specific policy platform.

Extant research provides three potential explanations for lobbying coalitions. First and foremost, interest group scholars attribute interest groups' decisions to their members.[1] Whether shareholders of a firm, workers in a union, or activists in an issue advocacy group constitute the organization's base, extant theory proposes that members constrain leaders' decisions in various ways. The more salient an issue is to the membership's interests, the

[1] Of course, most interest groups in contemporary American politics have no members in the strictest sense (Schlozman et al 2015). My theory would apply to these cases, with some important qualifications. Publicly traded for-profit firms should respond to their shareholders in similar fashion. In cases where an organization has no members or shareholders, rather than the pivotal member's preference determining the interest group's decision, the pivotal executive or staffer dictates the outcome.

greater the constraint members impose within that domain (Holyoke 2009). Even if members do not overtly state their preferences, leaders' anticipation of members' positions can allow members to exert a form of "negative control" over organizational decisions (Nicholson, Ursell, and Blyton 1981). While leaders anticipating members' preferences leaves behind less of an observable signature, we can nonetheless falsify this theory by demonstrating that the organization's decision conflicts with the decisive member's ex ante preference. If this theory explains a group's decision to join a coalition, we should observe that members' ex ante preferences align with the coalition's policy proposals.

An organization's decision-making structure moderates the relationship between members' preferences and leaders' decisions (Barakso 2004). When a group practices direct democracy—permitting its members to vote on whether to support certain policy proposals—it resembles a legislature, in which the distribution of members' preferences around veto points allows for identifying the pivotal voter (Krehbiel 1998). If an organization practices representative democracy—electing (or even appointing) leaders to make decisions on the members' behalf—the pivotal voter is a representative, rather than a member. Representatives' preferences within interest groups are harder to observe, particularly if the organization makes decisions behind closed doors. Still, the same logic applies to these representatives that applies to elected legislators—to win reelection, they must anticipate and satisfy their constituents' potential preferences (Mayhew 1974; Arnold 1990).

The theory's observable implications therefore vary according to organizational decision-making structures. First, group leaders might take positions corresponding with the average member's preferences (Holyoke 2009). This hypothesis follows from Hirschman's (1970) concept of voice, which suggests that members communicate their preferences to

leaders through elections or other channels. However, Hirschman (1970) proposes a second pathway through which members can exert influence—threatening to exit the organization. Research on the Sierra Club suggests that a vocal minority of members can hold veto power over a group's decisions (McFarland 1993), estimating that between a fifth and a quarter of members threatening to exit the organization can be enough to deter organizational leaders from endorsing a policy position.

While an organization's leaders may decide to join a coalition after obtaining their members' consent, in this case alignment with members' preferences would at best constitute a necessary yet insufficient condition for entry into a coalition. Leaders may obtain members' consent for certain decisions, including engaging in solidaristic actions on other groups' behalf, by demonstrating that they can reliably advance the membership's core interests (Sabatier and Weible 2007; Ahlquist and Levi 2013). This "contingent consent" reflects members' accession to, rather than proactive advocacy for, a given organizational position.

Beyond members' preferences, leaders' decisions must accommodate the power relationships among organized groups at the state level. Organizations tend to partner with other groups when they perceive that these groups are pivotal to enacting their policy agendas (Hojnacki 1997). Central to these perceptions are relationships of accountability and access between organized groups and lawmakers, as well as organized groups' ability to win the public over to their side (Dahl 1957; Bachrach and Baratz 1962; Schattschneider 1975 [1960]; Lukes 1974; Hansen 1991). When environmental groups or unions perceive that their respective movements possess substantially greater power than their counterparts, they may believe that they can enact their policy agenda without cross-movement collaboration (Obach 2002). Further, if they perceive business to hold significantly greater power than the

environmental movement, perhaps the labor federation will view collaboration with the environmental movement as more costly than beneficial. Thus, extant theory suggests that labor federations are less likely to enter into coalitions with environmental groups when they perceive a substantial power asymmetry between organized labor, the environmental movement, and/or carbon-intensive business in their state.

Political opportunity also features prominently in the literature as an impetus for a group to forge alliances. Across many different contexts, scholars of social movement coalitions have found that the political opportunity structure plays a role in facilitating or constraining coalition formation. While *protest* coalitions tend to form in response to political threats (Rochon and Meyer 1997; McCammon and Campbell 2002; Andrews, Caren, and Browne 2018), the literature suggests that coalitions advancing a policy agenda are more likely to form when organized groups perceive an opportunity for enacting that agenda. Political opportunities have sparked coalitions around a range of policy platforms, from women's suffrage to reproductive rights and from health care to climate policy (Staggenborg 1986; McCammon and Campbell 2002; Skocpol 2013; Eaton and Weir 2015).

A group enjoys a political opportunity when its elite allies hold authority within governmental institutions. While scholars advance many indicators of political opportunity, most of these indicators—the state's openness to challenge, the relative stability of elite alignments, and the state's capacity and propensity for repression—tend to be relatively stable over time within a democratic polity (Meyer 1993; McAdam 1996). In contrast, as each election cycle could bring new leaders or parties to power, the absence or presence of elite allies is a relatively dynamic element of the political opportunity structure (Meyer 1993). Because they vary significantly over time, the political fortunes of groups' elite allies

could account for a substantial degree of the temporal variation within a case in interest group lobbying behavior.

Scholars' determinations of whether elite allies are present generally rest on judgments about whether the party in power is sympathetic to the movement. For instance, McAdam (1982) contends that activists' recognition that the incumbent Democratic Party relied on black voters to win elections inspired the civil rights movement of the 1960s. In her case studies of protest in Mexico City and Brasilia, Bruhn (2008) examines variation in protest under right- and left-wing governments. Some studies of elite alliances in the United States add another layer of complexity, considering allies in both the executive and legislative branches of government. Van Dyke (2003) considers which party controls the office of the governor and holds legislative majorities at the state level, while Meyer and Minkoff's (2004) study of the civil rights movement considers which party holds the presidency, which party or parties hold Congressional majorities, and the number of black members of Congress.

Shifts in political opportunity may affect interest groups' participation in advocacy coalitions by altering the resources that groups must expend to achieve their primary goal, enacting their policy agenda. Groups seek to partner with other organizations which could provide them with the additional resources necessary to achieve this goal (Hula 1995; Hojnacki 1997; Baumgartner et al 2009). An electoral victory for a group's elite allies might reduce the resources needed to enact the group's policy agenda, thereby increasing the likelihood that a group can find partners that would offer sufficient resources. On the other hand, an electoral defeat might require groups to expend more resources. For instance, the fossil fuel and electric utility industries spend substantially more on climate lobbying when

the Democrats control the U.S. Congress, seeking to prevent legislation that could reduce their near-term profits (Brulle 2018).

While prior theories regarding coalitions focus on political opportunities and threats, they elide a third outcome which occurs frequently in legislative politics in the United States—gridlock, when majorities cannot pass their favored policies (Krehbiel 1998; Mann and Ornstein 2016). Legislative gridlock occurs when the agenda-setting group's elite allies lack the ability to pass the group's preferred legislation, and the group's elite opponents also cannot pass their own proposals. Assuming a unidimensional, single-peaked distribution of policy preferences within a legislative chamber, one can identify two members who play pivotal roles in determining whether a policy will pass. The first pivot represents the ideal point of the legislator whose vote is necessary to pass a policy proposal. The second pivot represents the ideal point of the legislator whose vote is necessary to override an executive veto. When the status quo lies between these two points on the distribution, gridlock occurs, as the majority cannot override a veto. When the status quo lies outside the gridlock interval, policy change is possible—in other words, political opportunity exists, for one side or the other.

While scholarship on advocacy coalitions in recent decades has advanced our ability to explain why they form and why groups join them, it leaves open several important questions. First, given that interest groups' elite allies operate within a diverse array of governmental institutions, social scientists have yet to clearly operationalize political opportunity. Second, prior research does not explain how interest groups choose between potential coalition partners with comparable resources. Third, it does not clearly delineate scope conditions for the above theories. Finally, the literature does not converge on a clear

prediction regarding which members must be persuaded for a group to support a policy proposal.

Legislative Gridlock Increases Policy Demanders' Propensity to Cooperate

I posit that legislative gridlock increases the likelihood that policy-demanding groups within a party coalition will lobby together for a shared policy proposal. I conceptualize a policy entrepreneur as an interest group which introduces a policy proposal and seeks to place it on the party agenda (Kingdon 1984; Baumgartner and Jones 1993). An aligned group, meanwhile, is a group which shares a party coalition with the policy entrepreneur (Bawn et al 2012). I use the term "aligned group" when necessary to discuss these groups' internal and external negotiations; in other instances, I simply refer to these groups as "allies."

By increasing the resources necessary to pass a law, gridlock increases the probability that the policy entrepreneur (Group 1) will seek to pool its resources with allies (Groups 2, 3 etc.). My theory offers observable implications regarding the conditions under which interest groups will join an advocacy coalition. Given a baseline preference among allies (e.g., for job creation), a decline in the political opportunity for acquiring the policy entrepreneur's preferred policies increases allies' leverage in negotiations that could meet their preference. Since the policy entrepreneur must make concessions to secure allies' support, they only do so when they could not pass their favored policies without these allies. However, policy entrepreneurs are more likely to benefit on net from the exchange under conditions of gridlock, as they are not sacrificing an open policy window (Kingdon 1984). Moreover, broader support within their party coalition increases their leverage over pivotal lawmakers

in current and future rounds of policymaking. Thus, the theory suggests that prior gridlock can increase policy entrepreneurs' capacity to capitalize on present political opportunities.

When gridlock occurs, the resources necessary to alter the status quo increase. Extant literature predicts that this situation would put policy change out of reach in the short run, discouraging groups from lobbying together. In contrast, I argue that all else being equal, an increase in the resources necessary to change policy increases interest groups' incentive to pool their resources with other groups. This incentive might increase for three reasons. First and foremost, when the threshold for passing a policy rises, a single group or movement is less capable of enacting its agenda without coalition partners (Obach 2002). Second, when policymaking venues exist outside the legislature, such as ballot initiative processes, groups may yet believe they can enact their agendas by other means (Schattschneider 1975 [1960]; Baumgartner and Jones 1993). Third, in the absence of pressing demands to support or oppose policy proposals, groups have the time to prepare for future legislative battles. Cooperation is more likely and stable when actors place greater value on the future relative to the present (Axelrod 1984). As gridlock extends agenda-setting groups' strategic time horizons, they have incentive to form coalitions with other groups as long as they expect a political opportunity to emerge in the medium term.

Given that the pressure systems in Washington, D.C. and state capitals are replete with interest groups (Schlozman, Verba, and Brady 2012), how do groups choose among the dizzying array of available coalition partners? I argue that in highly polarized periods in American politics, aligned groups—fellow members of a group's party coalition—represent socially proximate and politically advantageous coalition partners.

Over the past two decades, political scientists have increasingly incorporated policy-demanding groups into their theoretical models of parties, as these groups play central roles in determining parties' policy agendas and nominating their candidates for elected office (Cohen et al 2008; Bawn et al 2012). Just as politicians form parties for logrolling purposes (Aldrich 1995), interest groups make concessions to each other to form coalitions that can enact their favored policies (Bawn et al 2012). However, McCarty and Schickler (2018) critique the extant literature for failing to provide a theory of how these groups negotiate shared policy agendas. Coalitions often rely on external brokers, outside actors who forge ties between partner organizations and facilitate trust-building (Rose 2000; McAdam and Boudet 2012). When groups seek coalition partners within their party coalition, they can rely on leaders within the party to serve as brokers. Moreover, under conditions of ideological polarization and party discipline, winning legislative coalitions are likely to come from a unified party (Rohde 1991). Because of the social ties and political advantage parties offer, fellow members of a party coalition represent especially appealing coalition partners during polarized times.

When initiating a coalition, the order of operations is crucial. Rather than writing a policy proposal first and then inviting others to support it, policy entrepreneurs are more likely to attract allies if they invite them to the table before any ink has been spilled. As long as a political opportunity for enacting a policy persists, policymaking will be more likely to flow from the top down, with supportive interest groups scrambling to keep up with lawmakers seeking to enact their party's legislative agenda. When policy entrepreneurs see an opening to pass a policy without expanding the scope of conflict (Schattschneider 1975 [1960]) investing time and money in coalition-building—not to mention sacrificing their

autonomy over policy design—represents a suboptimal choice. As allies are unlikely to endorse a policy proposal that has not reflected their input at an early stage, this situation decreases the likelihood that they will mobilize in support. For instance, if the instrument through which climate policy achieves its intended goal—for instance, a market-based pricing scheme or command-and-control regulation—does not reflect labor's input, the chance that the state federation will endorse the policy is much lower.

Yet when the legislature reaches gridlock on an issue, lawmakers shift their attention to other issues, allowing interest groups time to develop and advocate for their own proposals. Under these conditions, aligned groups can more easily take the steps necessary to agree on their preferences regarding the policy issue in question. Moreover, policy entrepreneurs are more likely to have time to devise a strategy that includes identifying allies whose support could increase the likelihood that the policy will pass. Policy entrepreneurs' incentive to include allies in the coalition changes dramatically. Their only means of strengthening their hand for policy negotiations, aside from hoping for a future electoral victory, is to acquire political resources that are currently available. In other words, as Schattschneider (1975 [1960]) argues, the losing side of a conflict has greater incentive to expand its scope, bringing in additional participants who could support their side. The probability that aligned groups will be able to shape the policy's primary mechanism will therefore increase, in turn strengthening the prospects for coalition formation.

What Makes these Commitments Credible?

Still, even groups which have a political incentive to work together due to common elite allies often rely on credible commitments to enforce policy agreements. Groups value

their autonomy in shaping policy proposals, as independent groups are more likely to develop policies that align with their members' preferences (McCammon and Campbell 2002). Interest groups therefore may be tempted to defect from cooperation when an alternative to the negotiated policy proposal could yield greater benefits for their members. To prevent such defection, coalition members typically rely on credible commitment mechanisms, which impose sanctions for defecting so steep that defection becomes more costly than cooperation (Ostrom 1990). However, interest group coalitions lack the formal rules available to political parties in legislatures—such as committees, caucuses, and the whip system—that discourage defections (Weingast and Marshall 1988).

Interest groups who would benefit from an alliance face three potential dilemmas—incentives to misrepresent, issue indivisibility, and a sequencing problem. First, to gain leverage in bargaining, rational actors tend to mislead their counterparts regarding their capacity to impose costs and provide benefits. Second, some issues do not permit benefits to be distributed among all parties to the exchange. Third, even if a "mutually preferred solution" exists, unconstrained actors will face an incentive to extract benefits at the first stage of an exchange and then defect from cooperation before they need to reciprocate (Fearon 1995).

These dilemmas can arise whenever rational actors operate in an anarchic system (Frieden, Lake, and Schultz 2016). Anarchy aptly characterizes bargaining among interest groups, which lack the institutions available to parties and legislatures that regulate cooperation (Weingast and Marshall 1988). When seeking to build a lobbying coalition, a policy entrepreneur has an incentive to misrepresent their policy proposal's economic benefits for allies. Environmentalists often promise labor leaders that climate policies will

create jobs, often based on projections that hinge on a series of unfalsifiable assumptions about the future. Moreover, environmentalists have limited flexibility to bargain over the distribution of costs and benefits from climate policy because it is virtually impossible to preserve fossil fuel jobs in the long run if such policies must dramatically reduce fossil fuel consumption. As climate activist Bill McKibben stressed to President Obama in 2015, the fact that one cannot negotiate with physics leaves society with a stark choice—reduce greenhouse gas emissions or face severe consequences from climate change (McKibben 2015).

The risk that a coalition partner will defect from their promises deepens when the exchange is non-simultaneous (Weingast and Marshall 1988). In these cases, a sequencing issue arises—the exchange occurs in two steps, allowing the beneficiary from the first stage of the exchange to defect before the second stage (Fearon 1995; Drezner 1999). Specifically, environmentalists may not uphold the promises they made during legislative gridlock when a political opportunity reemerges. "Rational coalition partners" in such a context, Weingast and Marshall (1988) argue, "discount the potential gains from a proposed trade by the probability that these benefit flows will be curtailed by reneging."

These problems require the policy entrepreneur to make a credible commitment to their allies to ensure the latter that they will indeed benefit from the exchange. Policy entrepreneurs can mitigate the sequencing problem by voluntarily sinking opportunity costs and audience costs. To make climate policy divisible and assure their allies that they are not misrepresenting policy outcomes, they can offer policy concessions that increase allies' certainty that they will benefit.

Coalitions are more likely if policy entrepreneurs invest time and money in developing an umbrella organization to broker these policy concessions. When environmental leaders spend their scarce resources on negotiating policy agreements, they incur opportunity costs and audience costs which demonstrate their commitment. First, environmental organizations' principals—such as executive directors or presidents—face significant constraints on their time that demand efficient scheduling. They could spend their time cultivating donors, giving media interviews, meeting with elected officials, or engaging with their members. Sacrificing these opportunities to make compromises with other constituencies signals that a leader is serious about coalition-building. Second, environmental groups are primarily accountable to two audiences—foundations and members—for the donations and dues that enable their collaboration with their allies, as well as their other activities. If environmental leaders reneged on their personal promises to work with labor, they would have to justify this decision to their funders, who can replace them with someone who would spend their money more faithfully.

Policy concessions that increase interest groups' certainty that they will benefit materially from the coalition's proposals can assuage allies' concerns about policy outcomes. As mentioned above, labor leaders tend to worry that reducing emissions will harm their members economically and that the promised benefits from climate policy may not materialize—a devastating combination for a leader seeking re-election (Mayhew 1974; Ahlquist and Levi 2013). Because interest groups lack information before a policy has been implemented about how it will ultimately affect them, they tend to seek policy concessions that mitigate this uncertainty.

Uncertainty hinders advocacy for policy change more than it hampers efforts to resist change. Owing to loss aversion, interest group leaders tend to accept greater risk to avert costs than to obtain benefits (Kahneman and Tversky 1979; Tversky and Kahneman 1981). They are therefore more likely to invest scarce political resources in lobbying against a policy that could harm them than they would in advocating for a policy that could benefit them. Prospective economic winners from a policy proposal who lack certainty that they will benefit as intended are likely to refrain from devoting their resources to advocating for it. Scholars have shown across varied contexts that even powerful political actors face systematic information shortfalls that hamper their ability to maximize their gains (Hansen 1991; Cameron 2000; Grossmann 2012). For instance, Stokes (2020) argues that early policies promoting renewable energy passed across many states because electric utilities did not anticipate that they would pose a challenge to their fossil-fuel dependent business model. Policy entrepreneurs seeking allies must overcome this uncertainty if they are to succeed in building a bigger team.

Policy entrepreneurs often strategically design their proposals to hide costs and emphasize benefits (Arnold 1990). Three policy instrument characteristics through which interest groups can increase certainty regarding economic benefits (e.g., job creation) for their allies include timing, specificity, and clarity. First, the further in the future a policy's projected costs or benefits might arise, the less certain economic stakeholders tend to be about how it will affect them. Therefore, policies with more direct effects offer greater certainty. Second, a more specific policy, such as a policy bounded to a particular economic sector, provides greater certainty regarding its beneficiaries than a more comprehensive policy. Third, policies which involve mandates (e.g., quotas or requirements to use the best

available technology as determined by a regulatory agency) offer greater clarity regarding the distribution of costs and benefits than incentive-based policies (e.g., carbon taxes and cap-and-trade), which are designed to be relatively agnostic about the mechanisms and actors intervening between the policy's enactment and its intended outcomes (Meckling et al 2015).

It is no coincidence that labor leaders across states consistently advocate for two climate policy provisions that provide immediate, specific, and clear benefits to their members—labor standards and transition assistance. Labor standards attached to authorized government spending either mandate or incentivize employers to follow practices that benefit workers, such as paying market-rate wages and providing health insurance. And while labor leaders often decry investment in worker retraining as insufficient, such programs tend to form part of broader transition assistance packages including near- and long-term benefits to compensate erstwhile fossil fuel workers for the wages and pensions they had expected from their former jobs. These two approaches make climate policy divisible, allowing environmentalists to distribute economic benefits to union members—even within carbon-intensive sectors such as coal mining and construction.

Of course, certain but minimal benefits are not enough to persuade allies to come on board. I posit that an interest group will advocate for a policy proposal if it shifts the status quo toward the preference of the group member occupying the pivotal position within their governance process. The identity of the pivotal member depends on the institutions, whether formal rules or informal norms, through which the group makes decisions. Some membership associations make decisions by majority vote, while others require supermajorities or consensus. Still others are governed by oligarchies, preventing most members from influencing decisions (Osterman 2006). If we can array interest group members on a single-

peaked, unidimensional preference distribution as we can with lawmakers, we can use the group's institutional design to identify the pivotal member. My theory predicts that an interest group will join an advocacy coalition when it receives concessions that offer a highly certain shift in the status quo toward the pivotal member's preference (Krehbiel 1998).

Testing the Theory: Organized Labor and Climate Policy

Several scope conditions bound my theory. First, groups' incentives to cooperate with members of their party coalition should be stronger under conditions of high partisan polarization. Therefore, we should observe the theory's implications during highly polarized periods in American politics, which constitute the norm rather than the exception (Han and Brady 2007). Second, groups' incentives to cooperate will be stronger when both groups possess significant resources. Since a membership group tends to derive its power from its base (Han, McKenna, and Oyakawa 2021), interest groups may perceive potential partners with relatively small memberships to lack the resources necessary to build a winning legislative coalition. Therefore, states with negligible labor or environmental movements lie outside this theory's scope. Third, because cooperation in developing policy proposals is costly—in terms of time, resources, and constraints on future strategic decisions—we should expect groups to engage in this cooperation only when there is a strong expectation that a window of political opportunity will reopen. Therefore, my theory applies in states which at least occasionally elect unified Democratic governments, as the Republican Party generally opposes climate policy and imposes discipline on those members who do not follow the party line.

In addition to scope conditions, considerations regarding theory testing inform my choice of theoretical case. First, I must select interest groups or social movements that are embedded within the same political party (Cohen et al 2008, Bawn et al 2012). Second, to test the theory that member influence constitutes the binding constraint on interest groups' decisions on coalition participation, I must select membership groups (Schlozman et al 2015). Third, focusing on economic interest groups, rather than those concerned primarily with social issues, facilitates falsification of the theory. All else being equal, members' preferences on economic issues are easier to gauge given their association with vested interests in established processes for distributing material benefits, such as employment (Sabatier and Weible 2007).

Given these criteria, I select labor federations' collaboration with environmental groups at the state level over the past decade as my theoretical case. The current party system in the United States is highly polarized, organized labor plays a significant role in mobilizing votes for and donating to Democratic candidates, and the locus of climate policymaking shifted to the states after federal climate legislation failed under President Obama and the 2016 election result foreclosed such legislation for the following four years. The labor and environmental movements are both well-established policy demanders within the Democratic Party (Schlozman 2015; Karol 2019), the labor federations have clearly identifiable members, and the fact that these members are unions representing in certain industries implies clear signals regarding members' economic policy preferences. My theoretical case thus meets the necessary criteria for testing my theory.

Legislative gridlock creates an opportunity for labor to bargain for policy concessions that advance their interests, while increasing environmentalists' demand for labor's political

resources. In state-level policymaking, labor typically seeks job creation and greater remuneration for their members, while environmentalists seek mandates, incentives, and spending that contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. When a pro-environmental governor enjoys legislative majorities in both chambers, the resources necessary to win allies and the concomitant potential for sacrifices in climate policy stringency motivate environmentalists to forego coalition-building. In contrast, during times when environmentalists cannot pass policies significantly reducing emissions on their own, environmentalists have greater incentive to incorporate labor into policy design by fulfilling their allies' desired economic goals. When environmental leaders invest time and money in establishing umbrella organizations and negotiating policies which meet labor's terms, labor leaders are more likely to consider their commitments to cooperation credible. Finally, labor leaders are more likely to perceive that they will benefit on net from the exchange when they obtain concessions that increase their certainty about the policy's economic outcomes.

What Does Labor Want from Climate Policy?

State labor federations, as currently constituted, tend to prioritize creating and protecting well-paid union jobs above all other concerns in policymaking. Economic interest groups tend to favor public policies that offer them material benefits, increasing their resources and thus contributing to their survival. State labor federations are no different. Their primary goal—especially in an era of union decline in the United States (Lichtenstein 2013; Dubofsky and McCartin 2017; Greenhouse 2019)—is to expand their membership as a share of the workforce. Greater union density would, all else being equal, increase the influence labor could exert on policymakers through voter mobilization (Feigenbaum, Hertel-

Fernandez, and Williamson 2018; Hertel-Fernandez 2018), as well as their leverage with employers through collective bargaining and strikes (McAlevey 2016, 2020). The inverse of this logic is that the larger the non-unionized share of the workforce, the more easily capital (and political forces aligned with it) can dismiss unionized workers' dissent.

Promoting union jobs constitutes labor federations' primary goal at the state level due to strategic dynamics within the labor movement. The unions within the AFL-CIO—the predominant labor federation in the United States—have largely abandoned the organizing model of membership growth, which involved recruiting non-union workers to the labor movement (Lichtenstein 2013). In contrast, the predominant service model seeks to build membership by creating jobs within industries that have already unionized (Forbath 1991).

Organized labor has historically pursued two strategies to increase union density in the United States—the organizing model and the service model. Labor leaders employing the organizing model seek to bring previously non-unionized workers into the movement by winning union contracts within previously unorganized workplaces (Carter and Cooper 2002; Fiorito 2004). This approach has its roots in the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), a network of unions that sought to bargain for improvements in remuneration (wages and benefits) and working conditions in the factories of the early twentieth century (Schlozman 2015). The service model, meanwhile, characterizes the trade unions which comprised the American Federation of Labor (AFL), which merged with the CIO in the mid-twentieth century. The service model limits unions' "community of fate" to the workplaces or trades they represent, seeking advances in job creation and remuneration for their existing members (Ahlquist and Levi 2013). The merger between labor federations espousing different models set of a decades-long struggle within the movement over strategy which culminated in defeat

for the organizing model. Frustrated with the AFL-CIO's adherence to the service model, in 2004 several prominent unions such as the SEIU quit the labor federation in protest, forming their own coalition known as Change to Win (Estreicher 2006).

The service model's triumph within the AFL-CIO shapes the federation's strategy today. Their state affiliates' support for public policies is constrained by internal rules requiring supermajorities—or sometimes even consensus—and therefore the more conservative trade unions tend to wield veto power over the organization's decisions.[2] These unions, as mentioned above, prioritize jobs for their members and seek improvements in those jobs' wages and benefits. The pivotal role the trade unions play within labor federations' internal decision-making processes means that the federation tends to only endorse policy proposals that produce a clear and positive effect on jobs and remuneration for unionized workers.

Labor federations' desires for job creation and just remuneration both motivate and constrain their support for policies to address climate change. Pursuing this goal under all political conditions, labor federations seek to capitalize on moments in which they can increase their leverage in state policymaking such that they can acquire more jobs and greater remuneration than they would otherwise. As I will explain in this dissertation, legislative gridlock on climate policy increases environmentalists' reliance on labor to build a winning coalition, which in turn strengthens labor's leverage in negotiations over policies that could yield their desired economic benefits. When the environmental movement lacks supportive majorities in the legislature, they are more likely to offer policy concessions to labor that increase labor's expected economic returns. The next section explains that labor's expected

[2] Interview 9, labor federation official; Interview 14, labor federation official

returns from climate policy are a function not only of the distribution of the policy's costs and benefits, but the certainty—or trust—they have that these costs and benefits will materialize when the policy in question is implemented.

Hard Hats, Hard Test

State-level coalitions between labor and environmental groups constitute a hard test of my theory. For decades, the two movements have clashed over concerns that environmental protections will reduce industries' profits, threatening union members' jobs (Obach 2004; Mildenberger 2020). Employers and political elites have strategically constructed a frame pitting the environment against the economy (Kazis and Grossman 1982), with such effect that prominent national surveys from firms such as Gallup often ask respondents whether they would sacrifice economic growth in favor of environmental protection (Jones 2012). This "jobs versus the environment" narrative has gained currency from the crisis currently facing organized labor.

Even in post-industrial economies, path dependence within labor federations affords carbon-intensive unions such as the building trades disproportionate influence. In the United States, the AFL-CIO formed through a merger between the trade unions within the American Federation of Labor and the industrial unions within the Congress of Industrial Organizations. While public- and service-sector unions now dominate the movement's membership, labor federations continue to defer to carbon-intensive unions on climate policy (Sweeney 2013).

Across my four cases, the building trade unions—which are generally carbon-intensive and organized collectively—tend to play an outsized role in shaping labor

federations' stances on climate policy. In line with their history of conservatism and exclusivity, the building trade unions are reticent to organize non-union workers and therefore rely heavily on creating jobs within unionized industries. The building trades—which include electrical workers, sheet metal workers, operating engineers, and other workers involved in construction—therefore tend to be averse to any policies that could attenuate local job creation in the industries upon which they depend. The building trades and environmental groups are especially divided at the state and local levels, as conflicts over specific infrastructure projects or resource extraction sites often find the two movements at loggerheads (Obach 2002, 2004). The unions representing the pipe fitters, for instance, have consistently opposed efforts to transition away from fossil fuels due to their current reliance on pipeline construction and maintenance for their members' employment.

As they represent conflicting economic interests within the Democratic Party coalition, especially at the state level, the labor and environmental movements provide a hard test of my theory. Organized labor has historically served as the anchoring group within the Democratic Party (Schlozman 2015), playing a central role in determining whether other movements would be welcomed into the party coalition. Given labor's established role as gatekeeper to the Democratic Party, environmental groups seek labor's support when they hope to sway Democratic legislators with moderate environmental records.

Environmental groups tend to play the role of policy entrepreneur in state-level climate politics. Several factors converge to place the onus on environmental groups to initiate policy discussions and advocacy coalitions. First, the environmental movement currently has greater opportunity than labor to advance its central mission through state-level policy. In the twenty-first century United States, the mainstream environmental movement

prizes reductions in greenhouse gas emissions above all else (Pooley 2010; Skocpol 2013; Mildenberger 2020). While federal policy is ideal, emissions reductions can be achieved in increments, with certain states becoming early adopters of clean energy technologies with a view toward spurring more widespread adoption (Stokes 2020). Organized labor, meanwhile, primarily seeks labor law reform at the *federal* level to preempt states which have enacted anti-union policies such as right-to-work laws (Feigenbaum, Hertel-Fernandez, and Williamson 2018; Hertel-Fernandez 2018).

A second factor regards the certainty with which each movement expects to gain from a transition away from fossil fuels. For environmental groups, the status quo is untenable, as it will lock in emissions sufficient to cause catastrophic climate change. In contrast, for certain unions—especially the building trades—the status quo may be more appealing as they have a vested interest in incumbent industries. While even the building trades could benefit from policies to build out the clean energy economy, they also run the risk of losing jobs associated with the production and consumption fossil fuels. Therefore, energy transitions are a riskier proposition for the labor movement. While labor federations could benefit from such a transition on net, their internal cross-pressures prevent climate policy becoming a high priority from within. In this sense, labor federations operate similarly to political parties, endeavoring to keep off the agenda any issue that could jeopardize agreement within the coalition (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2005).

Finally, environmental groups tend to be less democratic and therefore more flexible in their decision-making than labor federations. Whereas labor elects their leaders and often requires supermajorities of members to endorse a policy proposal, many mainstream

environmental groups do not face such hurdles to adopting a policy position. This flexibility allows environmentalists to respond more quickly to shifts in political opportunity.

Labor-Environmental Coalitions: Building on What we Know

My theory stands in contrast to previous theories regarding labor-environmental coalitions. Obach (2002) argues that labor federations differ in terms of their "organizational range," the scope of the issues which they consider to be within their purview. He dichotomizes unions as practicing business unionism—a strict focus on the working conditions of current union members—and social unionism—an orientation toward working on issues which transcend the narrowly-defined scope of the workplace. Drawing on cases of labor-environmental relations at the state level, he asserts that federations practicing social unionism are more likely than their counterparts to join coalitions with environmental groups. Just as Han (2014) demonstrates that environmental and health care advocacy groups shift strategies in response to exogenous shifts in political conditions, I posit that labor federations adopt social unionism in response to legislative gridlock, which similarly affects their ability to advance their organizational objectives.

This study's theoretical contribution also builds on more recent research examining labor-environmental coalitions. Robinson (2020) contends that environmental and labor organizations coalesce by capitalizing on complementarities, building relationships that allow for flexible ideologies and hybrid identities, and forming partnerships with bridge-building social justice organizations. While I do not disagree with these conclusions, I argue that legislative gridlock increases the likelihood that the labor and environmental movements will

recognize their ideological compatibility and construct a hybrid identity in order to build a coalition.

Chapter 3: Research Design for Theory-Testing Across and Within Cases

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the theoretical case of labor federations joining lobbying coalitions with environmental groups at the state level constitutes a least-likely case of my theory. Such case studies are useful for testing a theory, as in expectation, evidence corroborating the theory in this class of cases is less probable than in cases where "contrary winds do not blow as strongly" (Odell 2001). Within this theoretical case, I select four U.S. states as empirical cases that can provide the data and comparisons necessary to test my theory. This chapter will describe the research design I will employ to conduct these tests.

I select my cases in a manner suited for a dynamic comparison design, which entails both within-case and between-case inference (Gerring and McDermott 2007). A most similar systems design provides analytical leverage across space (i.e., U.S. states), while process tracing provides analytical leverage across time within each case (Levy 2008). This combination of research designs ensures that the cases follow an experimental logic—there is both an intervention (a substantial change in a causal variable of interest) and a control (a case that does not receive this intervention) (Gerring and McDermott 2007). As a whole, this approach allows for observing both the intervention's effect on the treated unit and the post-treatment outcome for the untreated unit.

I similarly seek to maximize external validity. In this vein, I use the diverse case method to identify cases within the same universe that demonstrate significant variation along a variable that my priors suggest should substantially affect the outcome. This approach increases the representativeness of my sample and the potential generalizability of the theory. If the theory applies across contexts that differ in theoretically relevant ways, I can be more confident that it can travel to other cases as well (Seawright and Gerring 2008). I

therefore select two pairs of most-similar cases which vary on the dimension of energy transition costs, as climate policy's distributional effects have been consistently shown to affect political outcomes (Meckling et al 2015; Mildenberger 2020).

Most Similar Systems Design

To understand variation across U.S. states, I employ Mill's (1875) Method of Difference. This method involves selecting cases that minimize variation on theoretically relevant independent variables while maximizing variation on the dependent variable (Levy 2008). The researcher can thus identify the independent variable(s) which vary significantly across the cases, and therefore plausibly account for the cases' divergent outcomes. Case selection for such a design involves identifying two cases of the same political construct in which the outcome varies in qualitative or quantitative terms. When a study seeks to explain why political actors achieve a normatively ideal outcome, it often compares cases of "success" with cases of "failure" (Odell 2001). This approach necessitates a clear operational definition of the desired outcome so that the coding of cases into these categories can be falsified.

While the cases differ in the value of the dependent variable, they should have proximate values on most of the independent variables that could plausibly explain variation in the outcome. The design thus controls for alternative explanations and identifies the explanatory variable through a process of elimination (Odell 2001). For instance, if there are five independent variables that could plausibly affect the outcome and the values of these variables are quite similar for four of them, the remaining independent variable becomes a strong candidate for explaining the variation in the dependent variable.

Selecting States

I select cases from the universe of high-union-density states with Democratic trifecta governments—in other words, Democratic control of the governorship and both houses of the state legislature—following the 2018 election cycle. I select states with Democratic trifectas because my theory applies in states where interest groups perceive that passing climate legislation is possible, and Republican control of one or more legislative chambers or the governorship significantly decreases the likelihood that climate legislation will pass. I then eliminate any states in the sample with a union density below 10 percent in 2018 as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics,[3] since organized labor is less likely to represent a valuable coalition partner in these states (see Table 1).

Table 1. Characteristics of states in the sample

State	Union density, 2018	State population, 2019	National climate group affiliates, 2019	Public support for state-level climate action, 2018	Labor federation in climate coalition in 2019?
CA	**15%**	**39,536,653**	**127**	**56%**	**No**
CO	**11%**	**5,607,154**	**29**	**54%**	**Yes**
CT	16%	3,588,184	16	57%	Yes
DE	10%	961,939	5	59%	No
HI	23%	1,427,538	5	55%	No
IL	14%	12,802,023	31	58%	No
ME	13%	1,335,907	18	57%	Yes
NV	14%	2,998,039	5	55%	Yes
NJ	15%	9,005,644	22	60%	No
NY	22%	19,849,399	51	62%	No
OR	**14%**	**4,142,776**	**28**	**54%**	**No**
RI	17%	1,059,639	6	59%	No
WA	**20%**	**7,405,743**	**40**	**53%**	**Yes**

Data on state populations are from WorldAtlas and were last updated in August 2019. National climate group affiliates include groups affiliated with 350.org, Citizens' Climate Lobby, the Sierra Club, and the Sunrise Movement. Bolded states are those which were chosen for this study. Data on support for state-level climate

[3] The union density figures reported here represent the percentage of workers in each state who are union members, as of 2018.

action are from the 2018 Yale Climate Opinion Maps. Figures represent the percentage of respondents in each state agreeing with the statement "My governor should do more to address global warming."

An alternative explanation for variation across states is the path dependencies arising from early party organizations in each state. Mayhew (1986) documents considerable disparities between regions in party organizations' autonomy, durability, hierarchy, intervention in elections, and reliance on material incentives for maintaining support. In many states on the East Coast and in the Midwest, such as New York and Illinois, the legacies of machine politics have given rise to relatively strong party organizations, with consequences for these states' political economies. The strength of a state's traditional party organization is associated with its level of government spending, the degree to which its public policy is programmatic, and the strength of its class and ideological cleavages (McCarty and Schickler 2018). Krimmel (2013) and McCarty (2015) extend Mayhew's analysis to the twenty-first century, demonstrating that the states Mayhew identified as having strong traditional party organizations have had lower levels of partisan polarization. In states with weak party organizations, elected officials tend to lack the bargaining power to remain autonomous from interest groups, and thus interest group coalitions are better positioned to exert influence (McCarty 2015). Because states vary widely in terms of how party organizations have developed, I control for this variation by selecting states with similar legacies of party organization.

As mentioned above, I select two pairs of most-similar cases. Since I seek to explain variation in an outcome, I select cases with different values of the outcome of interest. Drawing on secondary sources and key informant interviews, I determine whether labor federations participated in advocacy coalitions in each of the states in my sample. To ensure that I select cases in which labor federations are playing a significant role within the coalition

(as opposed to those in which labor federations are members on paper but do not invest significant resources into coalition work), I select cases in which labor federations have taken on formal leadership roles within climate advocacy coalitions. Among others, these roles may include a position as a co-chair or a member of the coalition's steering committee. In addition, I select two cases in which labor federations are not involved in a climate advocacy coalition.

Second, I select cases which vary in terms of member preferences, which could help explain variation in the dependent variable. As I cannot directly measure these preferences, I rely on a proxy variable—energy transition costs—which is associated with labor federation members' material interest in fossil fuels. Drawing on prior research indicating a relationship between material interests and member preferences (Obach 2002), I consider union members' ex ante preferences to be less favorable to climate policy in states which would face greater costs from an energy transition.

Table 2. Characterizing expected energy transition costs

State	Oil and gas extraction as percentage of total employment, 2014	Fossil fuel percentage of electricity generation, 2014	Expected energy transition costs, 2014
California	<1%	62%	High
Colorado	>1%	83%	High
Connecticut	<1%	48%	Low
Delaware	<1%	98%	High
Hawaii	<1%	83%	High
Illinois	<1%	46%	Low
Maine	<1%	36%	Low
Nevada	>1%	82%	High
New Jersey	<1%	51%	High
New York	<1%	45%	Low
Oregon	<1%	26%	Low
Rhode Island	<1%	99%	High
Washington	<1%	16%	Low

Data used to calculate oil and gas extraction as a share of total employment are from the U. S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis. Data used to calculate the fossil fuel share of electricity generation are from the Energy Information Administration's State Electricity Profiles.

I measure states' energy transition costs by characterizing states along two dimensions, shown in Table 2.[4] First, I calculate the percentage of each state's workforce that is employed in oil or natural gas extraction, to indicate the degree to which the state relies on fossil fuel production for jobs. Second, I calculate the percentage of each state's electricity mix that is produced from fossil fuel sources, to indicate the degree to which workers in the electricity sector could be affected by a shift away from fossil fuels. If at least one percent of a state's workforce is employed in oil and gas production and/or at least 50 percent of the state's electricity mix is derived from fossil fuels, I code the state as facing high energy transition costs.

Table 3. Case selection matrix

	Low energy transition costs	High energy transition costs
Joined coalition	Connecticut, **Washington**, Maine	**Colorado**, Nevada
Did not join coalition	Illinois, New York, **Oregon**	**California**, Delaware, Hawaii, New Jersey, Rhode Island

This matrix sorts cases into quadrants based on their values of the dependent variable (whether the state labor federation plays an active role in a climate advocacy coalition) and a combination of two independent variables (labor's material interests and the power relationship between the labor and environmental movements). I use this matrix to select cases using the diverse case method and the most similar case method. Bolded states indicate the states which I select as cases.

To select states with similar histories of party organization, I select four states in the American West—California, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington. I select these cases using a case selection matrix (Table 3) which sorts states into quadrants according to their values of the two dimensions of interest. I thus select one case with a coalition and low energy

[4] I choose 2014 as the reference year for measuring energy transition costs because at the outset of that year, labor-environmental coalitions on climate advocacy had not yet formed in any of my states.

transition costs, one case without a coalition and low energy transition costs, one case with a coalition and high energy transition costs, and one case with no coalition and high energy transition costs. This design allows me to determine whether the theory's scope includes cases with high energy transition costs.

While a most similar case study design relies on the logic of experimentation (Gerring and McDermott 2007), it bears emphasizing that it can only approximate an experiment's ability to control for unexplained confounders. According to Odell (2001), as "the historical record never provides a perfect set" of identical cases, the method "can never deliver airtight proof for a causal inference." Because virtually any set of two spatially differentiated cases will vary along more than two dimensions, eliminating independent variables with similar values across the cases often fails to reduce the set of alternatives to a single explanation. Variation within a single case over a tightly bounded period of time tends to control for a broader range of independent variables, permitting greater certainty in identifying the causal effect of a particular antecedent variable. I therefore supplement my most similar systems design with process tracing within each case.

Process Tracing

This study's within-case inferences will examine intermediate steps in the process leading to the outcome of interest to identify why and how the dependent variable took on its ultimate value. As discussed further in the next section, this examination will combine elite interviews with primary and secondary sources, including labor federations' public statements and newsletters as well as local and national reporting. This triangulation provides a check on the potential biases associated with different types of sources (Bennett and

Checkel 2014). For instance, interviews can only provide the perspective of the person being interviewed, which can suffer from egocentrism or other forms of social desirability bias (Singleton and Straits 2009; Hertel-Fernandez, Mildenberger, and Stokes 2019). Similarly, organizations' public statements may strategically cast their actions in a positive light, through framing or selective omission (Entman 1993). Finally, news articles not only tend to include an unrepresentative sample of perspectives given the journalistic norm of "fair and balanced" reporting—which incentivizes efforts to incorporate "both sides" without regard to how opinion is distributed in the population of interest (Oreskes and Conway 2010)—but they also tend to occlude events such as contentious negotiations which elite actors strive to hide from the public eye (Schattschneider 1960). Taken together, my original data collection alongside primary and secondary sources permits my study to incorporate a more representative sample of viewpoints than any of these sources would provide on their own (Singleton and Straits 2009).

These data allow for testing the observable implications which follow from the theory as well as alternative explanations. To corroborate a hypothesis, the data should consistently indicate sequences and values of the variables in a case that align with theoretical predictions. Among other advantages, the method allows for considering equifinality—"the possibility that there may be multiple pathways leading to the same outcome" (Bennett and Checkel 2014). Further, process tracing can illuminate causal mechanisms linking the independent and dependent variables under study, which in turn can shed light on the theory's scope conditions.

Not unlike cross-case comparison, within-case inference poses challenges with respect to both internal and external validity. First, examining variation over time typically

yields sequential explanations which assume an ordered process in which X causes Y, which then causes Z. Temporal proximity in the co-variation of two variables suggests an effect, while temporally distant factors appear not to be directly related; at best, these factors might be connected through an intervening variable. However, many political phenomena—including election results and policy enactment—tend to produce effects that are temporally delayed, hence the difficulty of understanding the relationship between political institutions and economic growth (Gerring and McDermott 2007, see e.g., Przeworski et al 2000). Further, all else being equal, within-case designs' focus on a single setting lends less external validity than designs involving multiple cases. I therefore pair the two approaches to offset the disadvantages associated with each.

Data Collection

My case studies draw on a wide variety of data, both qualitative and quantitative. First, I conducted 60 interviews with labor leaders, environmental leaders, coalition partners, policymakers, and key informants in my four states. Interviews ranged from 30 minutes to over 2 hours, though the typical interview lasted roughly an hour. To recruit interviewees, I sampled labor leaders from directories of labor federation officials and board members, and I sampled environmental leaders and coalition partners from member lists on coalition websites. In a positional sampling approach, I sought to contact and set up an interview with every member of each state labor federation's executive board and a high-level staffer or executive for each organization within the predominant state-level coalition of climate policy advocates (Knoke and Yang 2011). Finally, following Lindsay (2008), I used snowball sampling to identify key informants and additional environmental and labor leaders to

interview. Snowball sampling helps mitigate the high degree of non-response to my initial outreach. As is typical of studies involving elite interviews, the response rate to my initial recruitment e-mail was low (Goldstein 2002). I therefore followed up with prospective interviewees multiple times via e-mail, and often leveraged connections forged through prior interviews to gain access.

This strategy yielded a sample that reflected a variety of perspectives. Of my 57 interviewees, roughly half (27) provided the perspective of organized labor. Most of these informants were current or former members or staffers for labor federations, unions, or labor-backed organizations working on climate policy, while several worked closely with labor in a research or legal capacity. The remainder of my interviewees were environmental organization leaders (16), leaders of statewide climate advocacy coalitions (5), leaders of other coalition partners (5), and government officials or their staff (4). Within organized labor, I interviewed 10 leaders or staff within labor federations, 10 leaders of individual labor unions within these federations, and 7 leaders or staff for organizations focused on labor's role in energy or environmental policy.

I supplement these interviews with primary and secondary sources. Labor federation newsletters confirm the federation's support for climate policy and shed light on the reasoning behind such support, while LCV scorecards provide the data necessary to operationalize political opportunity. News articles provide the most prominent secondary source material for my study, permitting me to check ex post accounts of coalition formation from interviews against contemporaneous reporting. News articles also provide more specific and accurate information regarding policy design than can be reliably obtained through

interviews. My case study draws from articles in both local publications such as *The Seattle Times* and national publications such as *Vox.*

Measurement

In this section, I use theory to establish the outcome of interest as well as a set of hypotheses. I draw on extant literature to operationalize my dependent variable and identify types of evidence that could falsify the theory or an alternative explanation. Specifically, I seek to understand how prior research has measured the independent variables associated with the hypotheses, consider the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches, and develop a means of operationalizing these variables for purposes of this study.

I define a labor federation's participation in a coalition as support for a piece of legislation proposed by an umbrella organization involving prominent environmental groups in their state (Holyoke 2009). Therefore, I will code a labor federation as participating in a coalition if they publicly endorse a policy position for which the umbrella organization is actively lobbying. A grassroots interest group's threats to impose electoral costs on legislators rely on constituents' awareness that the group advocated for a policy that a certain representative failed to enact (Hansen 1991). I therefore use a strict operational definition for coalition participation—if a labor federation works behind the scenes to support a certain policy but does not publicly state such support, I will not consider the labor federation to be involved in the coalition.

My conceptual definition of political opportunity focuses on elite allies who could support climate policy. I operationalize political opportunity as a categorical variable that takes one of three values—political opportunity, gridlock, or political threat. Following

Krehbiel (1998), I measure this variable using legislators' ideal points regarding the policy issue in question. I assume that legislators' environmental policy preferences can be arrayed on a unidimensional, single-peaked continuum from 0 (indicating consistent opposition to pro-environmental policies) to 100 (indicating consistent support for pro-environmental policies).

Each legislator's ideal point on this continuum during a given legislative session can be inferred from the score they received from the state-based affiliate of the League of Conservation Voters (LCV) based on their environmental voting record for that session. Prior studies have shown legislators' voting records to be highly stable over time (Poole and Rosenthal 1991; Lott and Bronars 1993) and used scores from the LCV and other interest groups to indicate legislators' policy preferences on the group's core issues (Kenski and Kenski 1981; Calvert 1989; Shipan and Lowry 2001). Shipan and Lowry (2001) explain the measure's criterion validity as an indicator of environmental policy preferences, noting that "members generally recognized as hostile to most environmental issues consistently score at or near 0 while those perceived as friends to such causes consistently score near 100."

Scorecards from state (LCV) chapters allow me to determine whether environmental advocates believed that they faced a political opportunity, gridlock, or political threat during a particular legislative session. Like the LCV itself at the federal level, state LCV chapters select a set of state-level environment-related bills each session to "score." Legislators receive points for votes on these bills that the LCV deems to support environmental protection. A "perfect" record of pro-environmental votes for a session produces a score of 100, while consistent opposition to pro-environmental policies earns the legislator a score of 0. It bears emphasizing that LCV scores more accurately capture the construct of interest

here than the more sophisticated methods of ideal point estimation used by political scientists. Environmental groups generally lack access to these advanced methods, and therefore rely on more rudimentary measures such as LCV scores to gauge political opportunity. Since environmentalists make decisions based on their *perceptions* of political conditions, a measure of political conditions in this study should match the information environmentalists use to evaluate these conditions.

Still, it is worth examining whether these scores reliably indicate policymakers' preferences. Instability in legislators' voting records could pose a problem for inference if its magnitude exceeds the margins between gridlock and opportunity. If legislators' scores in a given session fall far from their lifetime scores, we might question LCV scores' reliability. For all six legislative sessions that I examine in Washington state, Table X lists the average difference between a state senator's LCV score for the session and their lifetime score through that session. I use data only from the legislators who held seats at the outset of the session, since including senators who started partway through a session would systematically bias the results in favor of stability. After subtracting each senator's score for the session from their lifetime score and taking the absolute value of the outcome, I calculate the mean of these differences for each session. Table 4 shows that in a given legislative session, a senators' average distance from their lifetime scores typically falls below 10 points on the 100-point scale. The one exception is the 12.5-point average distance in the 2009-2010 session, which came on the heels of the Great Recession and therefore was exceptionally hostile to environmental regulation. The second-highest average distance comes in the 2013-2014 session, which witnessed two defections from the Democratic caucus that flipped the Senate to Republican control. As the periods of gridlock in Washington and Colorado

witnessed lows of 25 and 27, respectively, even a conservative coding of gridlock accounting for voting instability would not change the results from this study.

Table 4. Estimating Instability in LCV Scores, Washington State Senate

Session	Average distance between lifetime and session scores
2009-10	12.53
2011-12	6.44
2013-14	9.10
2015-16	7.12
2017-18	5.63
2019-20	5.39

By ranking legislators according to their LCV scores, I identify the two pivotal members within the chamber—the median voter and the veto pivot. The median voter is the least supportive legislator whose vote is necessary for enactment absent a veto. It bears noting that some state senates does not allow filibusters as in the United States Senate, therefore a simple majority suffices to pass a bill, with ties broken by the Lieutenant Governor. The veto pivot, meanwhile, is the least supportive legislator whose vote is necessary to override a gubernatorial veto, which requires a two-thirds vote. While no analogous measure to LCV scores exists for the governor, I use State of the State speeches to determine whether governors supported climate policy. Despite deep partisan polarization on climate change in recent years, it bears noting that several recent Republican governors have been climate advocates. I will also consider these Republican outliers to be elite allies.

A political opportunity for enacting environmental policy exists when both the veto pivot and the median voter lie to the left of the status quo.[5] In this situation, the pivotal legislators both prefer a new policy to the status quo, so they are more likely to enact an environmental policy reform. In contrast, a political threat exists when both the veto pivot and the median voter lie to the right of the status quo. In this situation, the pivotal legislators both prefer a more conservative policy, so they are likely to retrench environmental policies. In between these extremes, gridlock occurs when the status quo lies between the veto pivot and the median voter. In this case, the majority cannot enact its preferences because it cannot overcome a gubernatorial veto (Krehbiel 1998).

A Note on Exogeneity

While political opportunity could theoretically be endogenous to interest groups' strategies, prior research suggests that the environment is not typically a high priority for voters—particularly during economic recessions—and that environmental preferences do not predict vote choice as strongly as partisan identification (Zaller 1992; Guber 2001; Carmichael and Brulle 2017; Gallup 2021). If the environmental movement does not typically exert a strong effect on vote choice in elections for the state legislature, we can indeed consider political opportunity (which is primarily a function of election outcomes) to be exogenous to interest groups' strategies. Davis and Wurth (2003) challenge prior studies

[5] While setting the specific position of the status quo within the environmental policy space requires some subjective judgment, I support this judgment through a combination of empirical data and spatial modeling within each case. Specifically, I examine existing policy to determine the degree to which it incentivizes a shift away from fossil fuels. Based on the characteristics of extant laws and regulations in a given state, I estimate the location of the status quo on the ideological continuum. To account for potential error in this estimation, I conduct a robustness check to determine the upper and lower bounds of the status quo estimate within which the same coding of the political opportunity variable holds. If current policy could not reasonably be construed to lie outside the interval between these upper and lower bounds, error in estimating the status quo does not have significant bearing on the results.

showing that voters do not base their candidate choices on environmental issues, demonstrating that voters' preferences for federal expenditures on environmental protection strongly predicted vote choice in the 1996 presidential election. While this finding merits further consideration, it relates to vote choice for the presidency rather than state legislatures, and offers correlational rather than causal evidence. Support for Clinton may have driven support for environmental policies (see Lenz 2012), and Democratic-leaning voters' support for spending on environmental protection may be epiphenomenal to an underlying support for government spending across a range of domestic policy domains. Even Davis and Wurth (2003) show that partisan identification predicts vote choice much more strongly than environmental policy preferences. Despite its stability at the individual level, partisan identification at the aggregate level fluctuates significantly over time, potentially helping explain shifts in party control of government and thus the political opportunity for passing climate policy (MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson 1989; Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 1998).

Observable Implications of the Theory

If the theory is correct, we should expect that the states in which labor federations forged alliances with the environmental movement are those in which a sustained period of legislative gridlock occurred. If gridlock occurred in states in which the labor federation did not join a coalition, or if gridlock did not occur in states where such a coalition formed, this evidence would fail to support the theory. Second, within the cases, a shift from political opportunity to gridlock in one or more legislative chambers preceding coalition formation

would support the theory. In contrast, if coalition formation occurred prior to legislative gridlock, this evidence would fail to support the theory.

I conceptualize credible commitments as costly signals of intent to cooperate. These signals are costly because they constrain interest groups' future decisions by threatening heavy sanctions for defecting from cooperation. Because interest groups cannot directly impose material costs on other groups, the costs of the sanction are reputational. Groups which willingly defect from cooperation will be discredited as members of the party coalition, preventing their participation in future coalitions. For reputational costs to result from defection, the commitment must be observable by outside actors. This expectation produces the observable implication that the labor and environmental movements should form an umbrella organization and assign formal leadership roles to major environmental groups and the labor federation. Further, groups within this umbrella organization should make public statements signaling the costs of defection. Another indicator of credible commitments is the ex-ante negotiation of principles which tie the hands of each movement during bargaining over policy design. Finally, the groups within the coalition should adhere to negotiated agreements with their coalition partners in the face of intense opposition from their members.

I argue that legislative gridlock produces a coalition only if the environmental movement makes credible commitments to cooperate with labor. These commitments should motivate environmental groups to make concessions to pivotal members of the labor federation. Testing this proposition requires identifying the pivotal members' preferences and demonstrating how the coalition's policy proposals shifted toward these members' preferences over the course of legislative negotiations. I draw on interviews with labor

federation officials to characterize the policy preferences of unions within the federation. The interview data, in turn, allow me to estimate unions' ideal points on a single-peaked continuum, much as the WCV scores allowed me to model the preference distribution among legislators. This spatial model indicates the pivotal federation member's identity and environmental policy preference. I use data from interviews and secondary sources to describe how policy proposals' designs changed over time to determine whether these changes brought the proposal closer to the pivotal member's preference.

The certainty associated with a policy's design also has observable implications. First, market-based policies are designed to be agnostic about which industries will benefit, increasing the uncertainty for labor relative to command-and-control policies. Second, policies which authorize spending for specific programs, such as transition assistance, can provide certainty that government revenues will be dedicated toward benefiting labor. Third, sector-specific policies facilitate access to negotiations for the primary stakeholders. In contrast, multi-sectoral climate policies implicate a wide array of labor unions, and it is therefore more challenging to ensure that the policy responds to each stakeholder's preferences and concerns. Finally, policies including provisions limiting how energy development can occur—such as labor standards—increase certainty for unions seeking the resulting employment.

Process matters beyond the substance of a policy in securing labor's support. This facet of coalition-building is observable as well. If process matters, one would expect to see that organized labor participated in early conversations regarding the policy frameworks that they ultimately adopted and that environmental groups were open to revising their initial plans given labor's input.

My theory predicts that if policy concessions bring a policy proposal closer than the status quo to the pivotal federation member's ideal point, the labor federation will endorse the proposal. I therefore expect to observe that after the coalition accepts the terms offered by the pivotal member, the federation will endorse the policy proposal. We should observe this endorsement in their public communications, such as statements in news articles, newsletters, or official webpages.

Observable Implications of Alternative Explanations

An important step in process tracing within a case study is to test the observable implications of alternative theories. One alternative explanation is that a shift in mass preferences, either among the constituents represented by environmental groups or among union members, accounts for the shifts in the decisions of the organizations that represent them. If there was a shift in preferences among constituents, we should expect to see a change in public opinion on climate policy at the state level over the course of the case study. If a shift in union members' preferences explains coalition formation, we should see a shift in union member activism on climate in the years prior to the labor federation's accession to the coalition.

A second theory, and one which has a great deal of purchase in the public conversation around labor-environmental coalitions, is that labor leaders sympathetic to climate policy can steer their movement toward a transition. Typically, state labor federations have two or three leaders at the highest level of the organization. First, each of the four labor federations in this study has an elected President and an elected Secretary-Treasurer. In some cases, such as Colorado, the federation has an unelected Executive Director with significant

policy-related responsibilities. If leadership is the decisive factor, we should expect to labor federations to be more likely to join coalitions when their leaders are more supportive of climate policy. Similarly, they should be more likely to leave or abstain from coalitions when their leaders are less supportive of climate policy. I discern leaders' stances from their public statements, news articles, and interviews with them and their colleagues.

A third alternative explanation is that environmental groups relied more heavily on labor due to shifts in each movement's resources. Social scientists typically use union density as an indicator of labor's strength in a state, while participation in grassroots groups affiliated with national climate organizations can serve as an indicator of the strength of the climate movement in that same state. All else being equal, to corroborate the theory we should expect to see an increase in union density or a decline in participation in grassroots environmental groups, either of which would increase environmentalists' reliance on organized labor to enact climate policy. I obtain union density figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and data on participation in environmental groups from interviews with leaders in these groups. Another potential sign of a shift in resources would be an increase or decrease in unions' and environmental groups' campaign contributions to state candidates. All else being equal, a shift toward higher union campaign expenditures and lower environmental group campaign spending would support this alternative explanation.

Chapter 4: A Blessing in Disguise? Out of Power, into Coalition

Why do state labor federations join lobbying coalitions with environmental groups in some states but not others? This question requires a comparative approach. I obtain inferential leverage by examining states with comparable political and economic characteristics but divergent outcomes.

As detailed in the previous chapter, I select states which had Democratic trifecta governments as of 2018, since my theory only applies to states which had a chance of enacting climate policy in recent years. I eliminate states with less than 10 percent union density, as states with relatively weak labor movements are outside the scope of my theory. From the remaining sample of states, I select four states in the American West to control for variation in traditional party organizations, which affect interest group influence in state legislatures (McCarty 2015).

This chapter examines two pairs of states. In addition to their common location in the American West and their shared proclivity for electing Democrats, each pair of states has similar public support for climate action and economic dependence on fossil fuels. In each of the four states, as of 2018 between 50 and 60 percent of adults believe that their "governor should do more to address global warming" (Marlon et al 2018). Oregon and Washington derive most of their electricity from carbon-free hydropower and extract negligible amounts of fossil fuels. Colorado and California, meanwhile, still rely mostly on fossil fuels for electricity and have historically been major fossil fuel producers (EIA 2019).

Despite the similarities between these states, their labor federations differ in their collaboration with environmental groups on climate advocacy. First, I select Washington as a state in which a labor federation faced with low expected energy transition costs took on a

leadership role in a climate advocacy coalition. Washington does not produce oil, natural gas, or coal in a significant quantity, and therefore its workforce does not rely heavily on the fossil fuels industry. Washington also acquires the majority of its electricity from clean sources thanks to its ample hydropower supply. Washington's state AFL-CIO holds a formal leadership position within the state's climate advocacy coalition. Specifically, the Washington State Labor Council was a founding member of the Steering Committee of Washington's Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy (the word "Climate" has since been added to the coalition's name). The Alliance describes its first priority as "passing policies and making investments that effectively and deeply reduce climate pollution." The 2019 legislative session witnessed multiple legislative victories for the coalition, including a law targeting 100 percent clean electricity by 2045 and a phase-out of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs)—a greenhouse gas significantly more potent than carbon dioxide. Washington State Labor Council president Larry Brown hailed the clean electricity bill, stating that "[a] completely clean and efficient grid will power us forward to building a 21st-century clean-energy economy with good, family-wage union jobs, a healthy climate and thriving communities" (O'Sullivan and Bernton 2019).

In contrast, although Oregon's economy would face relatively low costs from an energy transition, the state's labor federation has not joined a climate advocacy coalition. Oregon is not a major producer of fossil fuels and draws only 26 percent of its electricity from fossil fuel sources. While a prominent climate coalition—known as Renew Oregon—lobbies at the state level, the Oregon AFL-CIO has remained outside it. While the state labor federation has participated in discussions with coalition members and praised the coalition's signature legislative proposal for its potential to create high-quality local jobs, it has stressed

that the legislation does not go far enough to promote the interests of labor. Specifically, the federation has called for the legislation's "just transition" provisions to go beyond worker training programs, emphasizing the need for financial assistance for workers who could be laid off as a result of reduced fossil fuel use (Oregon AFL-CIO 2017).

Next, I select Colorado as a state in which a labor federation facing the prospect of high costs took on a leadership role in a climate advocacy coalition. As more than one in fifty workers in Colorado are employed in the coal or oil and gas industries as of 2019, Colorado represents a case in which workers' ex ante preferences are less likely to be aligned with those of environmentalists. Even so, the Colorado AFL-CIO is the co-chair of the People's Climate Movement Colorado, which is also known as the Colorado Climate Movement. The Colorado Climate Movement seeks to "collectively and collaboratively move Colorado into a Just and Equitable Transition into a renewable energy economy." After developing a shared agenda through ongoing dialogue in 2018, labor and environmental groups worked together in 2019 to successfully pass legislation to stimulate an energy transition in Colorado. One such bill establishes a Just Transition Office tasked with drafting a plan to shield coal-dependent communities and workers from the financial costs of the transition away from fossil fuels. Confident that workers would be protected, labor lent its support to another piece of legislation to speed up the retirement of coal-fired power plants (Cohen 2019).

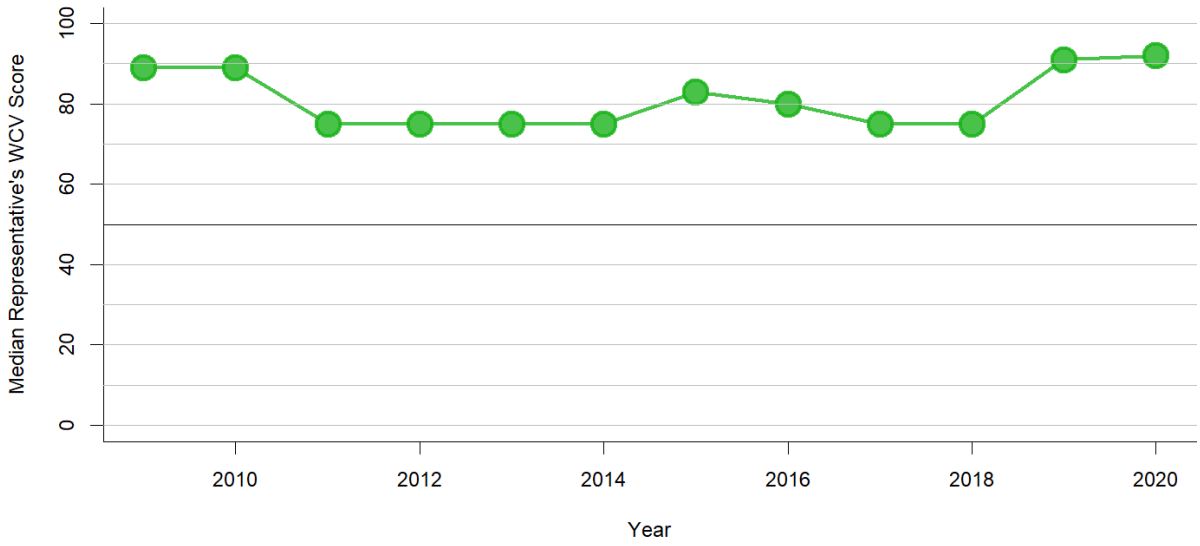
Finally, I select California as a state in which a labor federation faced with high energy transition costs did not join a climate advocacy coalition. In 2014, California drew more than 60 percent of its electricity from fossil fuel sources, suggesting that an energy transition could impose significant costs on the state's labor movement. Further, while the fossil fuel economy no longer accounts for a large share of California's workforce, the state

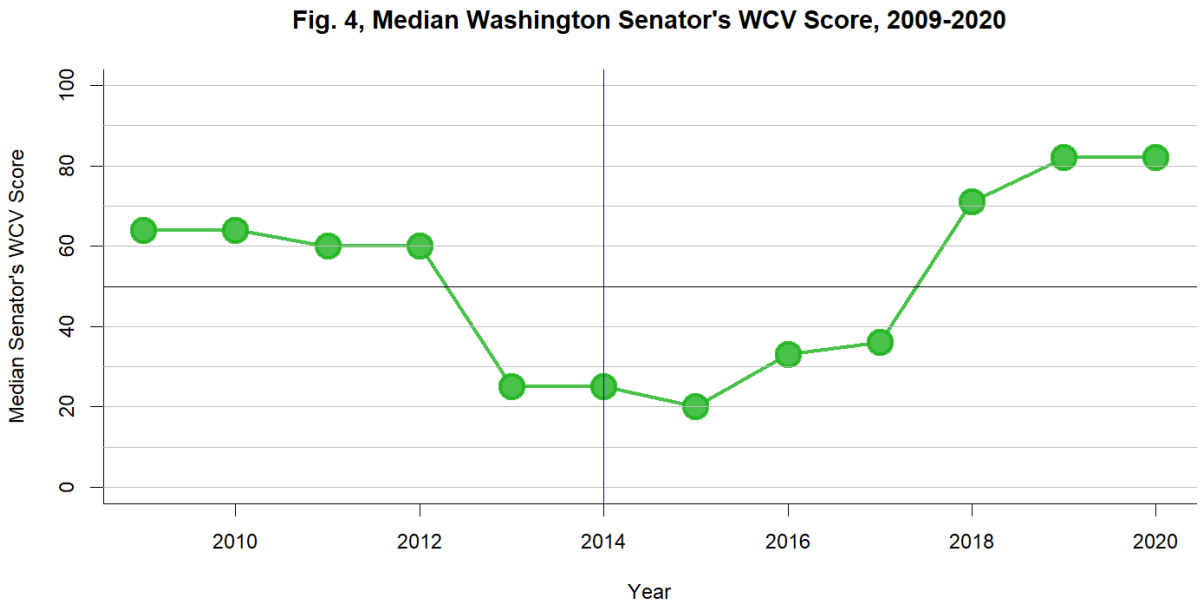
still maintains high levels of oil and gas production. 100% Clean Energy, the coalition supporting the ultimately successful legislation targeting a fully clean electricity grid, counted only one labor union—a local—among its supporters. The California Labor Federation has signed letters expressing support for the continuation of California's cap-and-trade program and has participated in conferences discussing the relationship between labor and the energy transition, yet it has not built sustained partnerships with environmental groups.

Political Opportunity

Measuring political opportunity for passing climate policy at the state level requires identifying the environmental policy preference of the median legislator in each legislative chamber. To track variation in the pivotal legislator's environmental policy preference over time, I assemble a dataset of legislator scores from each state's LCV chapters over the course of the case study.

Fig. 3, Median Washington Representative's WCV Score, 2009-2020





Notes: Figure 4 plots the time trend in the median state senator's Washington Conservation Voters (WCV) score from 2009 to 2020. This score indicates how often a senator voted in favor of major pro-environmental bills. The blue line indicates the year that environmental and labor groups began to discuss coalition formation. The black line indicates the status quo.

Data from Washington state demonstrate how legislative voting records allow me to measure political opportunity. Figures 3 and 4 plot the trends in the median legislator's Washington Conservation Voters (WCV) score from 2009 to 2020. Because the Washington state Senate does not permit filibusters, the median legislator in terms of environmental policy preference is pivotal in each legislative chamber. Further, because Washington state has consistently had environmentally progressive Democratic governors over this time period, the veto pivot will by definition lie above the ideal point of the median legislator. A content analysis of Democratic Governor Jay Inslee's State of the State speeches since his inauguration in 2013 shows that climate change and clean energy are consistent themes in his annual statements on his policy agenda. Therefore, if the median legislator's ideal point lies

above the status quo (which is approximately 50), the status quo will lie outside the gridlock interval, implying a political opportunity to pass climate policy.

As we can see from Figure 3, the median member of the Washington House of Representatives remained well above the status quo throughout the period under study, indicating a political opportunity in that chamber. However, the 2012 election had significant consequences for environmental legislation in the state Senate. During the 2011-2012 legislative session, the median senator was a Democrat, Sen. Mary Margaret Haugen, with a score of 60. Figure 2 shows that support for environmental legislation declined dramatically during the 2013-14 session, the same session in which labor and environmental groups decided to form a coalition. Due to Democratic losses and Sen. Rodney Tom's decision to join the Republicans in a coalition government, Tom became the median senator (along with two others) and voted much more conservatively on environmental issues than he had previously. While his lifetime WCV score at the end of the 2013-2014 session was 66, his score for that session was a mere 25.[6]

[6] The 2012 election had little effect, meanwhile, on the balance of power with regard to environmental policy in the state House, in which the median voter did not shift from their WCV score of 75.

Fig. 3a, WA Senate, 2012

m is pivotal on climate bills: political opportunity

Fig. 3b, WA Senate, 2013

m is pivotal on climate bills: gridlock

Notes: The above figures display spatial models of Washington state lawmakers' environmental policy preferences. The pro-environment end of the continuum represents a perfect Washington Conservation Voters score of 100, while the anti-environment end represents a score of 0. The letter g represents the governor's ideal point, m represents the median vote in the state Senate, q represents the status quo, and v represents the veto pivot. Gridlock occurs when q lies within the interval between v and m, while political opportunity occurs when q lies outside the interval between v and m.

Whereas climate legislation faced an uphill battle during the 2011-2012 session, by 2013 the window of opportunity for passing cap-and-trade legislation had slammed shut. Figure 3 demonstrates the stark contrast in the political opportunity for passing environmental policy before and after the 2012 election. In 2012, both the veto pivot (who received a WCV score of 80) and the median voter (who received a WCV score of 60) lay to the left of the status quo (50). This preference distribution presented an opportunity to enact non-incremental reforms. By the following year, however, the picture had changed markedly. While the veto pivot had moved slightly to the left (83), the median voter had lurched to the

right (25). The status quo thus lay well within the gridlock interval, ensuring that no significant climate policy would pass through the legislature during the 2013-2014 session.[7]

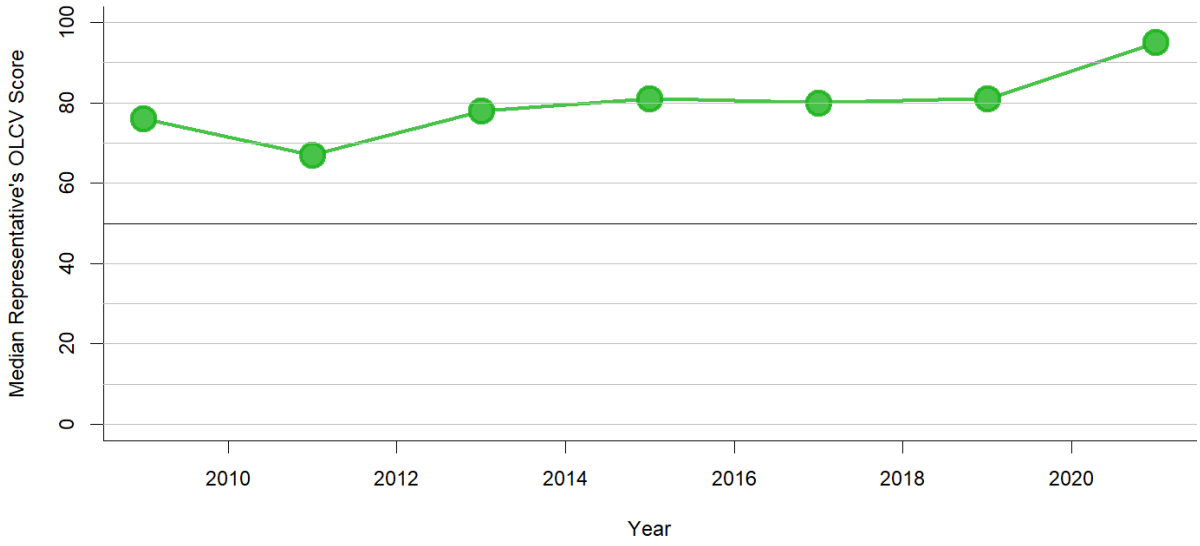
In contrast to Washington state, the Oregon state legislature did not experience gridlock on climate policy. Figure 5 shows that political opportunity consistently characterized the Oregon House of Representatives between 2009 and 2021, with the median representative's OLCV score never dipping below 67. Figure 6 similarly demonstrates that the Oregon Senate did not experience gridlock during this period. While Senate control was shared between the Democrats and Republicans during the 2013 session, the median Senator was Republican Bruce Starr, who received a score of 50 for that session. Consistent with Krehbiel's (1998) case study of President Clinton's economic stimulus package, given that the pivotal legislator's ideal point approximated the status quo, an opportunity existed to enact policies which effected incremental change.

Prior to his resignation during the 2015 legislative session, Democratic Governor John Kitzhaber supported climate policy but did not make it a priority. None of his State of the State speeches between 2011 and 2015 mentioned climate change or clean energy. In contrast, his successor Governor Kate Brown has usually mentioned climate or clean energy in her speeches to the state legislature, suggesting that the issue has a more central place within her policy agenda.

[7] While the status quo's position within the spatial model represents a subjective judgment regarding the stringency of prior climate policy, I demonstrate that a shift in the status quo up to 10 points to the left and up to 25 points to the right would preserve the findings regarding political opportunity. Within 10 points to the left of 50, climate policy could still have passed in 2012, as the median senator (with a WCV score of 60) could have mildly preferred a bill to the status quo. The potential changes would become increasingly incremental as the status quo moved toward 60, but enacting legislation would still be possible through side payments or other means of logrolling. Within 25 points to the right of 50, the median senator in 2013 would still have preferred the status quo to a bill that moved policy in a pro-environmental direction.

While the state Senate failed to pass a major bill promoting clean energy in 2019, this failure resulted from a bizarre ploy by a minority of Senators (all Republicans), who fled the Capitol to break quorum and avoid casting a vote on the bill (Sullivan 2019).[8] This stratagem was so unprecedented that the Oregon LCV did not even issue scores for the legislators who ultimately voted to not bring the bill up for a vote, leaving a missing value for 2019 in my dataset. The Republicans repeated this tactic in February 2020, again obstructing legislation that the Democrats were ready to enact into law (Mena 2020).[9] In June 2021, a bill requiring electric utilities to phase out greenhouse gas emissions by 2040 passed the state legislature (Oregon State Legislature).

Fig. 5, Median Oregon Representative's OLCV Score, 2009-2021



[8] Interview 14, labor federation official
[9] Interview 10, coalition staffer

Fig. 6, Median Oregon Senator's OLCV Score, 2009-2021

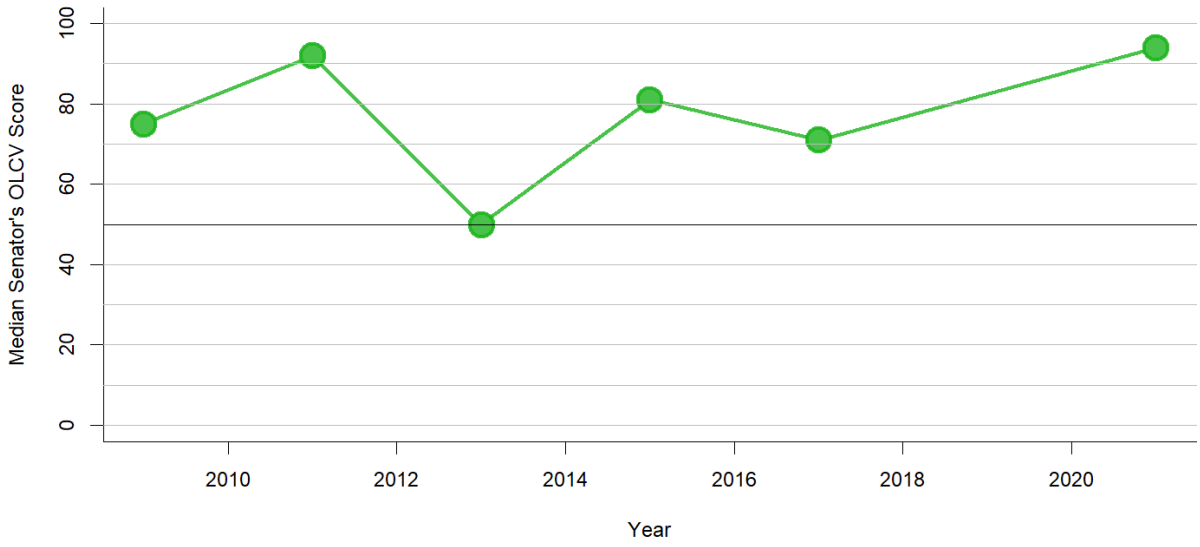


Fig. 7, Median Colorado Representative's CCV Score, 2009-2019

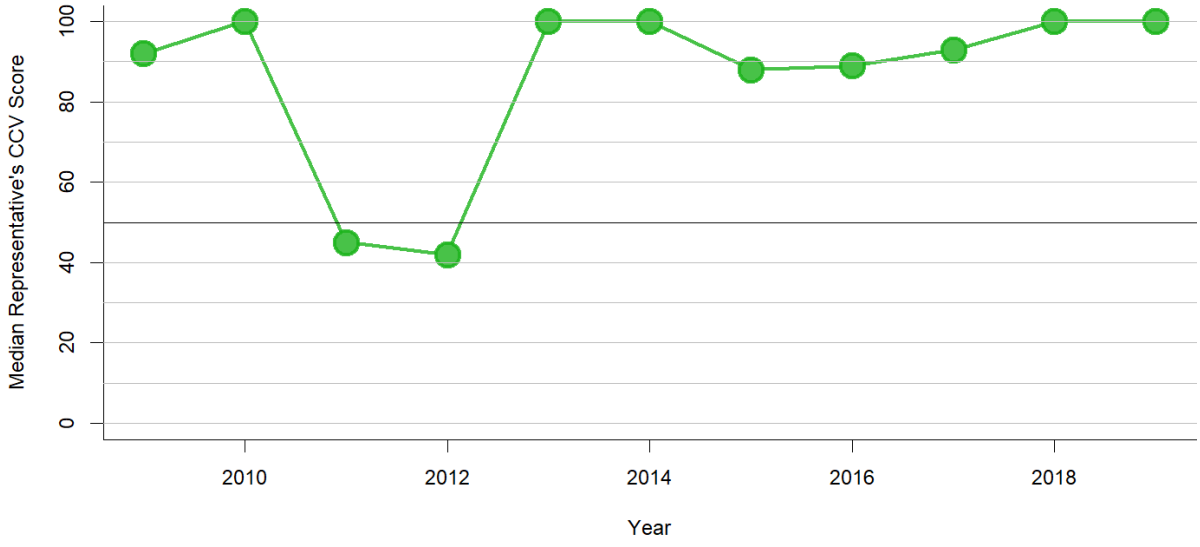
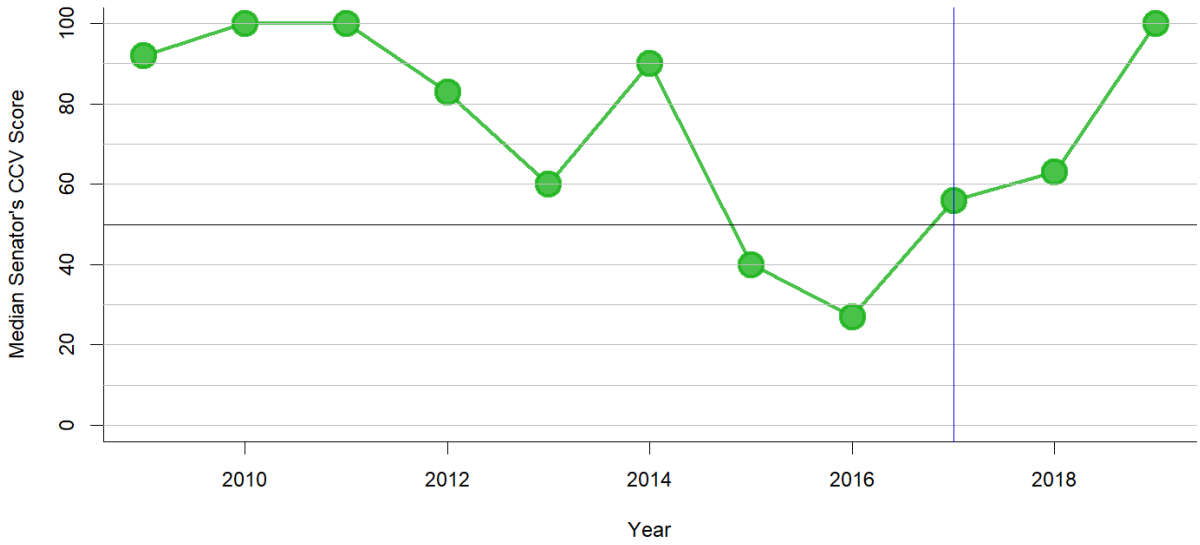


Fig. 8, Median Colorado Senator's CCV Score, 2009-2019



Like Washington state, Colorado experienced multiple gridlocked legislative sessions due to Republican majorities. First, the state House witnessed a brief nosedive in its median CCV score, from 100 in 2010 to below 50 in the following two years—45 in 2011 and 42 in 2012. While the House rebounded quickly toward a strong pro-environmental majority, the Senate entered a sustained period of decline in its median CCV score, which fell to 40 in 2015 and a mere 27 in 2016. While the median senator's score rose to 56 in 2017 and 63 the following year, continued Republican control of the state Senate suggested to labor and environmental groups that party discipline would continue to stymie comprehensive climate legislation.[10] Indeed, as one environmentalist put it, at the time "it was not possible to pass climate policy in the legislature, so we didn't focus [our efforts there]."[11] Even if Democrats had controlled both chambers, Governor John Hickenlooper's reliable alignment with the

[10] Interview 20, labor federation official
[11] Interview 51, coalition member

fossil fuel industry on climate-related bills—for instance, he supported fracking despite widespread opposition among the environmental community—would have put a damper on hopes for state-level climate policy reform (Taylor 2019).

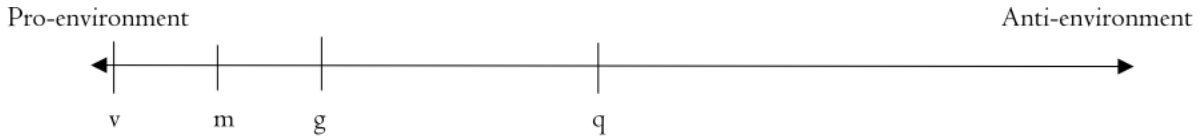


Fig. 11a, CO Senate, 2014

m is pivotal on climate bills: political opportunity

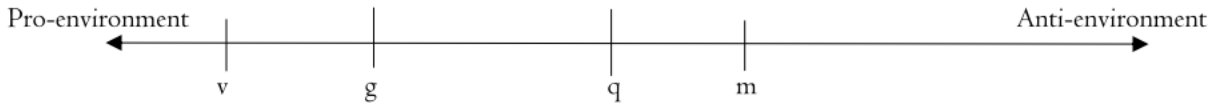


Fig. 11b, CO Senate, 2015

m is pivotal on climate bills: gridlock

Notes: The above figures display spatial models of Colorado senators' environmental policy preferences. The pro-environment end of the continuum represents a perfect Conservation Colorado score of 100, while the anti-environment end represents a score of 0. The letter g represents the governor's ideal point, m represents the median vote in the state Senate, q represents the status quo, and v represents the veto pivot. Gridlock occurs when q lies within the interval between v and m, while political opportunity occurs when q lies outside the interval between v and m.

This period of gridlock set in motion a process culminating in an advocacy coalition between the state labor federation and environmental groups. Starting in February 2018, community groups and labor partnered with both mainstream and justice-oriented environmentalists to organize a march for "Climate, Jobs, and Justice." After the march, this partnership consolidated into a coalition table that met regularly to discuss shared principles

regarding a just transition away from fossil fuels.[12] While the groups did not negotiate a specific policy design, their facilitated discussions promoted shared values, built relationships, and laid the groundwork for collaboration on policy design between labor and environmental groups.[13]

Democrats took back the Senate in 2019, with the median senator's CCV score rising to 100. Newly elected Governor Jared Polis had campaigned on addressing environmental issues more aggressively than his predecessor, suggesting that the time was ripe for enacting comprehensive climate policy (Eason and Lubbers 2019). Polis' 2019 State of the State speech—which mentioned climate change five times and renewable energy seven times—underscored his greater focus on these issues than Hickenlooper, who had featured them less prominently and regularly in his speeches.

Following this shift in the political winds, the coalition built during the years of gridlock enabled the Colorado AFL-CIO to endorse a bill setting new statewide targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.[14] The state labor federation also took the lead in developing and advocating for a companion bill to establish a state-level Office of Just Transition to ensure that workers in carbon-intensive industries, especially coal mining, would be protected as the state moved away from fossil fuels.[15] Many of the environmental groups from the People's Climate Mobilization table, including 350.org and the Sierra Club, testified and mobilized their members in support of the companion bill.[16]

[12] Interview 16, coalition member
[13] Interview 12, coalition member; Interview 16, coalition member; Interview 49, coalition member; Interview 20, labor federation official
[14] Interview 20, labor federation official
[15] Interview 20, labor federation official; Interview 42, labor federation official; Interview 49, coalition partner; Interview 52, coalition member; Interview 12, coalition member; Interview 16, coalition member
[16] Interview 12, coalition member; Interview 16, coalition member

Fig. 9, Median California Assemblymember's CEV Score, 2009-2021

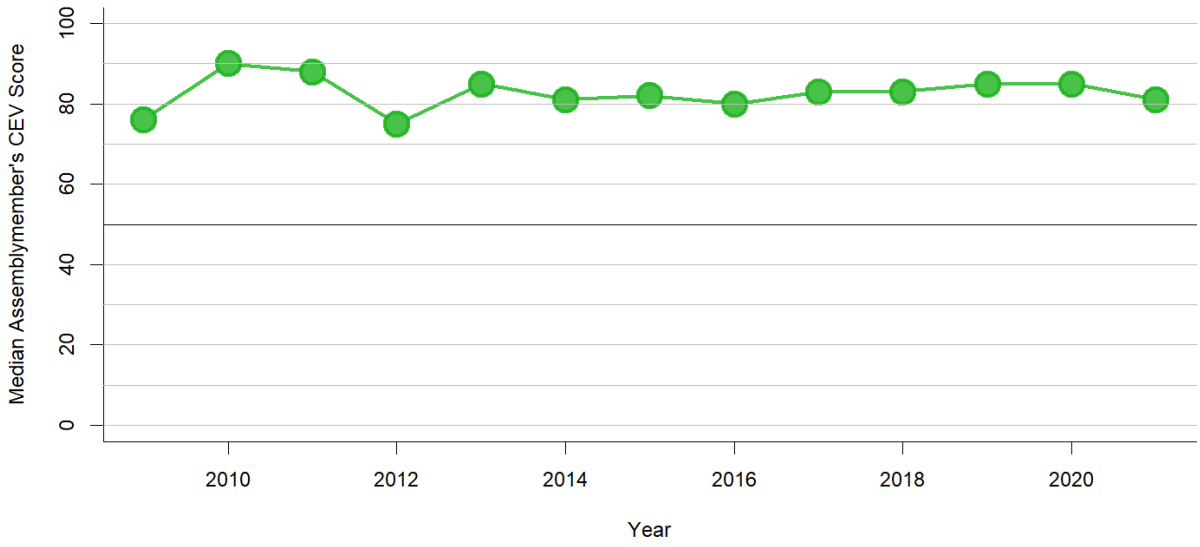
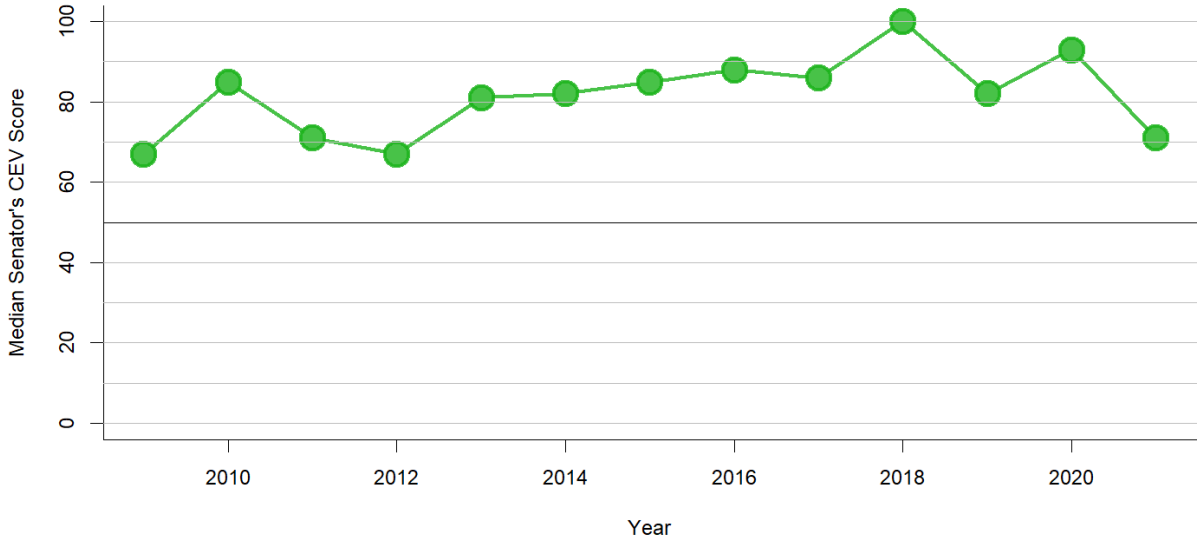


Fig. 10, Median California Senator's CEV Score, 2009-2021



California, meanwhile, consistently enjoyed a political opportunity for passing climate policy. Its median legislator's California Environmental Voters (CEV) score

remained well above 50 between 2009 and 2021. The median legislator's score in either chamber never fell below 67.

There is one notable partisan outlier in the California case, of course. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, who held the office until 2011, is one of few Republican governors to make climate change a high policy priority. While Schwarzenegger's support for other types of environmental policy was much weaker than any of his counterparts in this study (CLCV 2009), his commitment to addressing climate change is the most relevant consideration with regard to political opportunity in this case. Schwarzenegger's free-market ideology implied that any viable climate bill would need to be market-based, as was the case with his signature climate legislation, AB 32. However, during the 2000s, even Democratic governors were universally committed to the same kind of cap-and-trade approach that Schwarzenegger signed into law, suggesting that his policy positions on climate change did not differ dramatically from those of his counterparts in Colorado, Oregon, and Washington. One notable difference was that, in keeping with his free-market ideology, he vetoed a 2010 RPS bill on the grounds that it included a provision known as the "bucket system" which would have virtually required all new power plants generating electricity for California to be built in-state. While climate policy was momentarily gridlocked, the 2010 gubernatorial election was well underway by that point and prohibitive leader Jerry Brown supported updating the RPS with the bucket system included.[17]

Starting in 2011, newly elected Governor Brown took California's climate commitments to new heights. His State of the State addresses reliably mentioned climate change and/or clean energy various times, indicating its importance within his policy agenda.

[17] Interview 47, labor lawyer

Brown campaigned and advocated for stringent emissions reduction targets, transitioning toward electric vehicles, reauthorizing Schwarzenegger's cap-and-trade program, and pushing the electricity sector to adopt cleaner sources (Sommer 2019). Given the strong Democratic majorities behind Brown's agenda, California's state government constituted the most propitious environment for climate legislation in this study.

In conclusion, the data on political opportunity indicate that sustained periods of legislative gridlock occurred in two states—Washington and Colorado—while such gridlock did not occur in California and Oregon. The two states that experienced gridlock also witnessed climate advocacy coalitions in which the labor federation played a central role, whereas the two states which did not experience gridlock witnessed a labor federation at the periphery of climate policymaking. These data thus provide support for the theory that legislative gridlock contributes to coalition formation.

Member Preferences

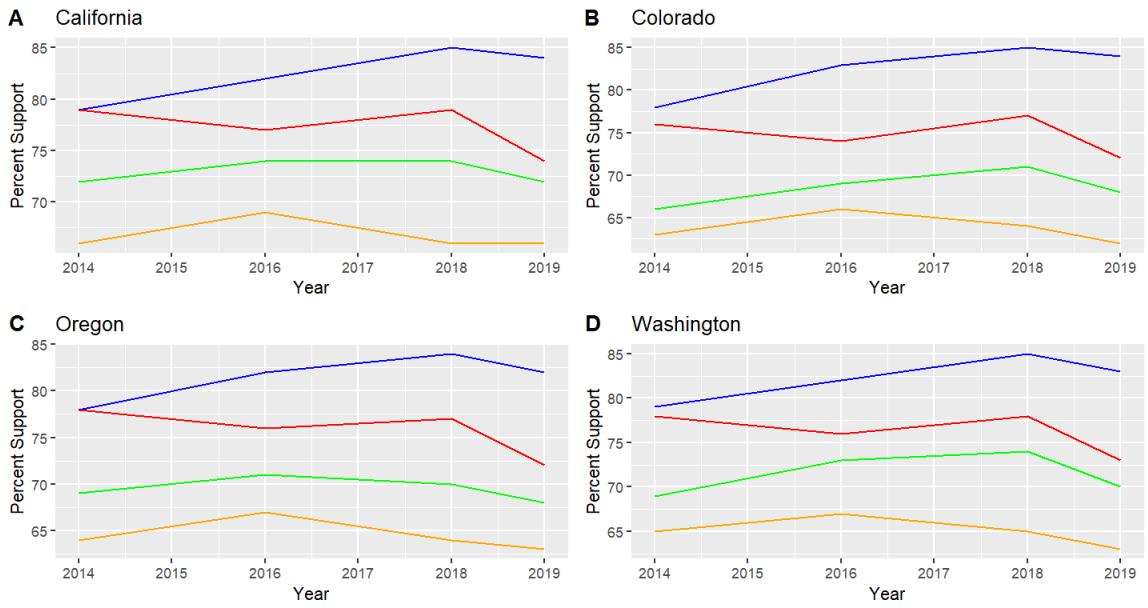
While the political opportunity theory receives support from cross-case comparisons, it is crucial that alternative explanations receive their due. I start by testing the theory which contends that member preferences account for labor federations' decisions regarding whether to join advocacy coalitions.

The constituencies which state-based environmental groups represented did not experience substantial change in their climate policy preferences prior to 2019, the year in which I measured coalition formation. In each of the four states, shifts in public opinion followed a similar pattern and were negligible at best. This observation draws on data on data from the Yale Climate Opinion Maps, which use multilevel regression and poststratification

to downscale survey data from a nationally representative sample to the state level (Howe et al 2015). Figure 1 plots the trajectory of opinion on four climate-related issues from 2014 to 2019 within each of the four states—California, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington. This figure shows that the four states followed very similar trends in opinion on each of the four issues. Importantly, it demonstrates that of the four issues in the four states, not one exhibited a substantial shift in public support between 2014 and 2019.

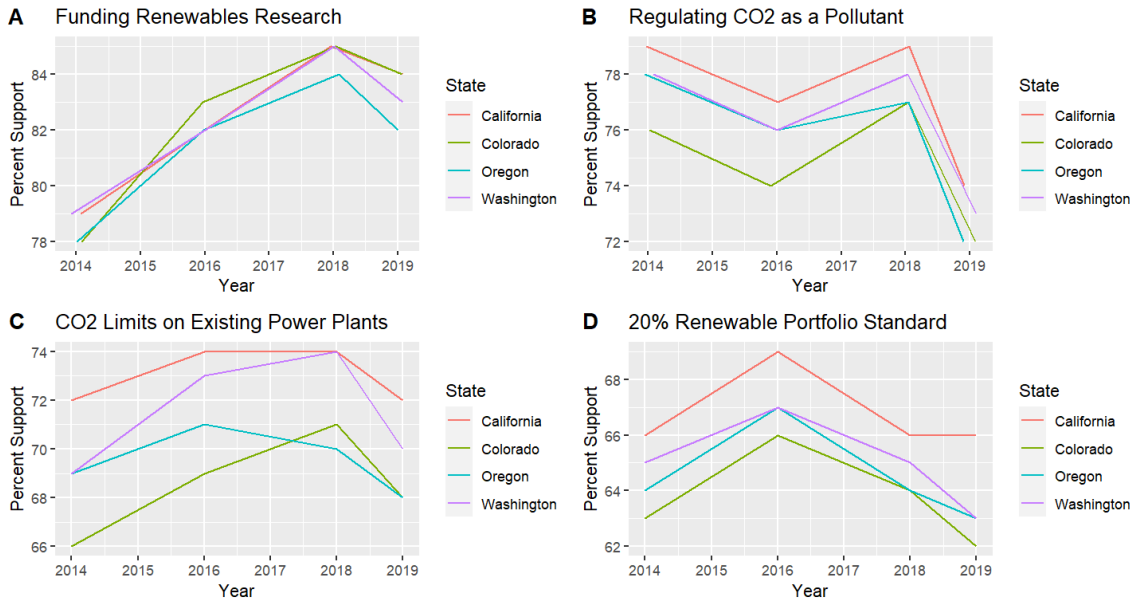
When comparing states within each policy issue, the similarity between the states is again striking. Figure 2 plots the trajectory of opinion on each of the four issues by state. Public support for funding research into renewable energy sources rose from 78 or 79 percent in each state in 2014 to a peak of 84 or 85 percent in 2018, declining thereafter. Support for a renewable portfolio standard peaked in 2016 across all four states, with each experiencing a subsequent decline. Public support for regulating CO2 as a pollutant fluctuated against the political grain, declining during the Obama Administration's efforts to implement federal regulations on greenhouse gases in the electricity sector and rebounding as the Trump Administration sought to roll back those regulations. Finally, support for placing strict carbon dioxide emissions limits on existing power plants rose in each state from 2014 to 2016 before falling again in 2019. Across the four cases over the five-year period, the difference between two paired cases along a particular dimension of climate policy support never exceeded 6 percentage points. These trends suggest that constituents' preferences do not account for variation over time and space in labor federations' involvement in climate coalitions.

Figure 7. Public Support Trends within States Across Policy Areas



Notes: The blue lines represent support for research into renewable energy sources. The red lines represent support for regulating CO_2 as a pollutant. The green lines represent support for strict limits on CO_2 for existing power plants. The orange lines represent support for requiring utilities to acquire at least 20% of their electricity from renewable sources.

Figure 8. Public Support Trends within Policy Area Across States



Even if state-based constituencies did not exhibit substantial variation in climate policy preferences, it is possible that union members mounted a grassroots effort to pressure

their leaders to prioritize climate policy. Rather than responding to calls for change from their members, however, my interview evidence consistently shows that leaders almost invariably drove members' involvement in climate policy advocacy. This top-down process may have either influenced members' opinions or simply mobilized them based on contingent consent—as long as federation leaders were delivering on members' core interests, members may have been willing to go along with leaders' climate policy initiatives (Ahlquist and Levi 2013). Regardless, rather than responding to pressure from below, labor leaders merely sought to take actions that they could explain to their members in terms of core interests such as job creation and compensation for displaced workers.

Washington state illustrates how labor leaders sought to bring their members along. After returning from a labor delegation to the international climate talks in Paris, Washington State Labor Council President Jeff Johnson created a labor caucus on climate representing the leaders of several prominent unions. The purpose of this caucus was to consider the future of organized labor in the context of climate change and develop a detailed plan for a transition away from fossil fuels that would incorporate justice for workers in the industry. Participants included leaders representing the United Steel Workers, the Teamsters, the Building Trades, the Machinists, the SEIU, UFCW, and teachers' unions. Aside from the Building Trades and the Machinists, which dropped out of these talks at an early stage, the caucus represented thought leaders within the state's labor movement on the issue.

Under Johnson's leadership, the Washington State Labor Council underwent a process of organizational learning on climate policy. Johnson brought in multiple speakers to talk about climate change, often in coordination with national organizations seeking to build an enduring alliance between the labor and environmental movements. With funding from

the national BlueGreen Alliance, Johnson himself traveled to Denmark to learn about how workers were protected during the country's transition to clean energy. In addition, Johnson brought in representatives of the Labor Network for Sustainability to talk to the WSLC's affiliates. Johnson's leadership on the issue gained steam in the years leading up to the Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy's effort to pass a ballot initiative placing a fee on carbon emissions.

The WSLC, along with the United Steel Workers (USW), commissioned a study on a just transition for Washington state. This study, entitled "A Green New Deal for Washington State," estimated that an annual investment of $6.6 billion in clean energy would yield between 36,000 and 41,000 jobs per year across a variety of sectors. Moreover, the study projected that this job growth would increase unionization rates, leading to improvements in pay and working conditions. Importantly, it estimated that job losses in industries reliant on fossil fuels would occur at a slow enough rate that "all of these job losses [could] be handled through attrition by retirement when workers reach age 65" (Pollin, Garrett-Peltier, and Wicks-Lim 2017). The USW local in Spokane turned out over a hundred workers to listen to a representative from Governor Inslee's office talk about the governor's climate legislation, and the WSLC led a discussion on issues raised at the meetings of the labor caucus on climate change. At the end of the session, a poll was conducted which showed that a majority of workers believed that labor and management could work together to strike a balance between jobs and environmental protection. This evidence suggested to Johnson that the membership could be brought along with an effort to address climate change.

Members' involvement in climate policy debates similarly flowed from the top down in Colorado. At the outset of Executive Director Dennis Dougherty's tenure at the Colorado

AFL-CIO, relations between the labor and environmental movements were still hostile, a remnant of a debate over clean energy legislation that had arisen a few years prior. However, through a series of internal meetings, the labor federation began to work out the kind of climate policy it could support. During this process, a former president of the environmentally progressive Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union as well as a professor from Colorado State participated in discussions with federation members regarding how a just transition away from fossil fuels might work. As in Washington state (and California as well), Robert Pollin's PERI research institute at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst modeled how policies to reduce emissions from Colorado's energy sector would affect the state's workforce. Through discussions between labor leaders and legislators, the federation arrived at a proposal for three years of wage differential benefits to cover the gap between former coal miners' pay in their current positions and what they earned previously.[18]

While members were on board with the federation's policy proposals, these positions resulted from research and negotiations rather concerted advocacy among unionized workers in Colorado. Labor leaders in California and Oregon similarly note that climate is not generally at the top of members' priorities, and workers within carbon-intensive unions still frequently oppose an energy transition.[19] One labor leader asserted that many of their fellow leaders are not personally opposed to climate policy but are concerned that their members would not support such policies and do not want to "get out in front of them."[20]

The confluence of quantitative and quantitative evidence considered here provides little support for the notion that members drive labor federations' decisions on engaging in

[18] Interview 20, labor federation official
[19] Interview 53, labor federation official; Interview 54, labor federation official; Interview 39, labor federation official
[20] Interview 14, labor federation official

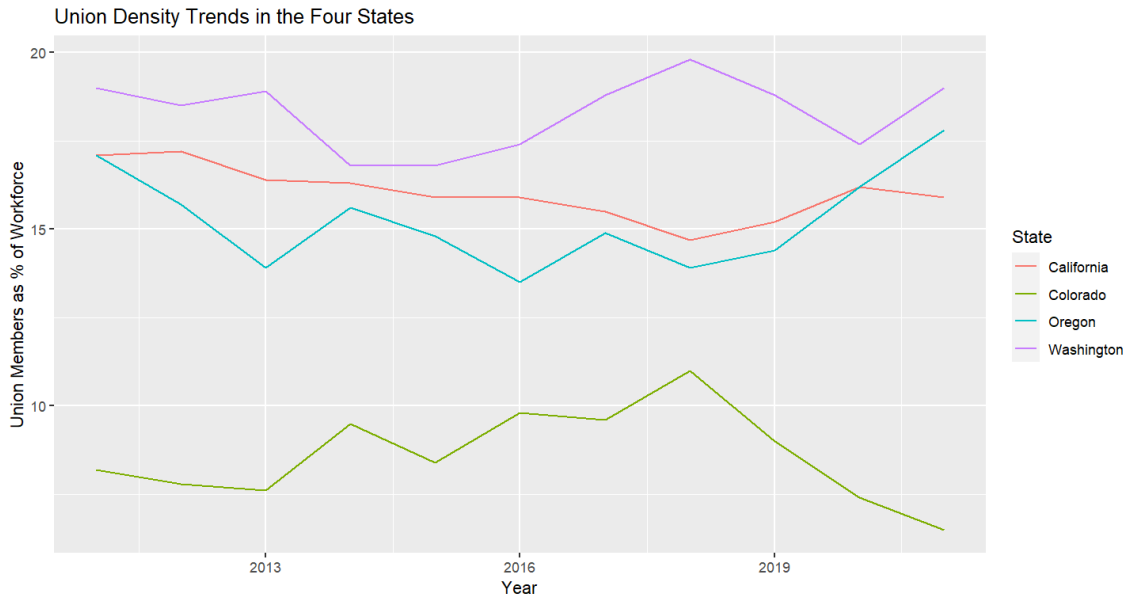
climate advocacy coalitions. Rather, these decisions appear to usually originate from the top down, driven by leaders responding to shifts in their strategic environments. It is to another facet of the strategic environment that we now turn.

Power Relationships Among Organized Groups

Data on the relative political influence of the environmental and labor movements also fail to account for environmentalists' efforts to incorporate unions into their coalition. If shifts in political resources explained this strategy, we would expect that environmentalists had lost membership relative to unions or that environmental groups became more dependent on labor for campaign spending. Alternatively, if labor federations' decisions to join coalitions resulted from a greater reliance on the environmental movement, we should expect to see that the environmental movement grew more rapidly in Washington and Colorado than in California or Oregon. This section considers each of these observable implications.

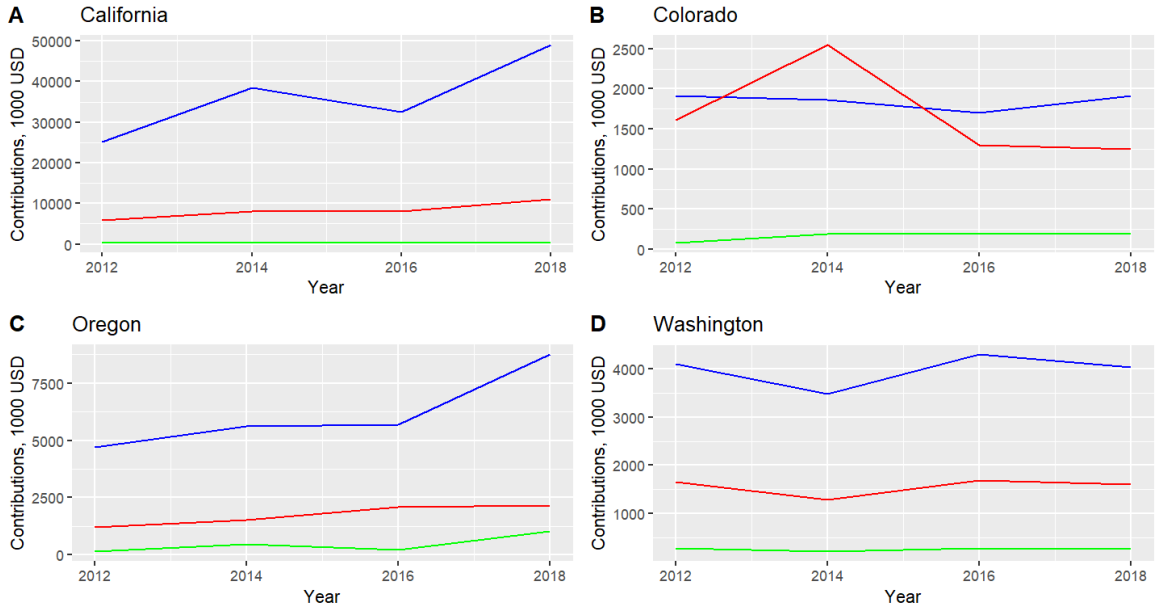
First, the labor movement's stagnation, paired with the climate movement's liftoff over the same period, suggests that environmentalists did not become more reliant on labor for membership resources. Figure 9 plots the trends in union density within each state between 2011 and 2021. I use the Bureau of Labor Statistics' data on union density, measured here as the percentage of a state's workforce that is a member of a union the measure does not include employees represented by a union who do not pay member dues. Across all four states, we see little progress in expanding the unionized share of the workforce. Union density fluctuated but did not change substantially in California, Oregon, or Washington over this period, while union density declined slightly in Colorado. These data do not indicate a movement gaining strength.

Figure 9



At the same time, the grassroots climate movement went from virtually nonexistent, as Skocpol (2013) lamented after the federal failure to enact cap-and-trade, to vibrant during the same decade. Whereas 350.org was an upstart organization in 2011 and the Sunrise Movement was a distant dream, today these groups boast hundreds of chapters (known as local groups or hubs) across the country, especially in progressive states such as Colorado and the West Coast. It would be difficult to plot the increase in grassroots climate groups over the past ten years, in part due to data constraints and in part due to their exponential growth. Robust climate organizing has pervaded each of the four states, with California and Oregon experiencing the upsurge in activism to a similar degree to Colorado and Washington. It therefore seems unlikely that a differential increase in the climate movement's grassroots support explains variation across states in labor's incentive to join a coalition with environmentalists on climate policy.

Figure 10. Union, Fossil Fuel, and Environmental Campaign Contributions



Finally, the data on campaign contributions do not bear out the implication that either movement became more reliant on the other. As Figure 10 clearly shows, environmental groups' campaign spending is negligible in each of the four states, while unions typically provide more direct contributions to candidates in these states than even the fossil fuel industry. With some fluctuation, this situation has remained relatively constant over the past decade, suggesting that a shift in power relationships associated with campaign spending (such as access to legislators) does not account for the emergence of a coalition-building strategy.

Chapter 5: Like a Phoenix from the Ashes

"From a collective perspective, it was a great time to sit back and build partnerships… So that theory of change really came out of the ashes, kind of like a phoenix out of the defeat of carbon pricing."
--Environmental organization leader in Washington state

Testing the Theory Through Within-Case Inference

In this and the following chapter, I draw on evidence from interviews as well as primary and secondary sources to recount the details of each case necessary to test the theory and identify mechanisms. First, I examine variation over time in coalition-building in Washington state, showing that a lack of political opportunity helped set in motion the process through which labor came to lead a coalition advocating for an energy transition. Second, I present the results of process tracing in Oregon which demonstrate that a sustained political opportunity contributed to environmental groups' focus on reducing emissions quickly to the detriment of labor's inclusion in the policymaking process.

Washington: Legislative Gridlock Contributes to Coalition Formation

In this section, I seek to explain variation over time in the Washington State Labor Council's participation in a lobbying coalition with environmental groups. Although labor and environmental groups had engaged in policy dialogues since 2005, they did not begin to collaborate on a comprehensive climate policy proposal until 2014 and did not agree on a policy design until 2019. By early 2021, however, prominent environmental groups within the coalition advocated for a new climate policy without the labor federation's support.

2005-2012: Environmental Groups Go It Alone

From 2005 to 2012, organized labor did not advocate for a comprehensive climate policy. This period coincided with unified Democratic control under Governor Christine Gregoire, which presented a political opportunity for enacting climate policy. The House elections in 2006, 2008, and 2010 delivered Democratic majorities of 28 seats, 20 seats, and 16 seats, respectively. In the Senate, meanwhile, the same elections returned Democratic majorities of 15, 13, and five seats.[21] While members of the labor and environmental movements discussed possibilities for collaboration, these conversations did not produce a commitment to a mutual policy platform until after the pro-environmental majority in the state Senate collapsed.

Given a legacy of conflict between labor and environmental groups over extractive industries, environmentalists generally perceived labor as an obstacle to the rapid and deep decarbonization their members demanded. In the 1980s and 1990s, environmentalists' efforts to protect the old-growth forests in the Pacific Northwest that provided a habitat for the spotted owl sparked what came to be known as the "timber wars," with workers concerned about job losses in the timber industry pitted against environmentalists.[22] The latter's proposals for retraining displaced timber industry workers only exacerbated the distrust between the two movements, as labor unions came to interpret the term "just transition" as synonymous with the decline of their industries.[23] In the wake of this conflict, environmentalists were initially reticent to reach out to labor to collaborate on climate policy.

[21] To ensure that even the five-seat majority presented an opportunity for passing climate policy, I analyze WCV scores for the 2009-2010 legislative session. I find that the median senator for that session received a score of 64, and there were four additional senators below the median senator who received WCV scores over 50 (an estimate of the status quo). This pro-environmental majority widened by one senator in 2010 after a special election (Washington Conservation Voters).
[22] Interview 23, labor federation official
[23] Interview 9, labor federation official; Interview 24, labor federation official

Yet due to their common political opposition to big business and shared support for the Democratic Party, by 2005 relations between the two movements had improved somewhat from their nadir in the 1990s. In 2005, labor and environmental groups established a Washington chapter of the Apollo Alliance, a national organization which sought to build coalitions around a transition to clean energy that would create high-quality jobs. This organization, which later became the BlueGreen Alliance (BGA), operated in Washington until 2009 and worked to mitigate the economic effects of state-level environmental policies.[24] However, according to one former labor federation official, the first iteration of the organization "didn't do a lot," and was more of a "show committee" than an advocacy coalition.[25] Although the WSLC and environmental group Climate Solutions restarted the BGA in 2012, the coalition focused on transportation policy rather than addressing climate change.[26]

As long as environmental groups perceived an opportunity to pass stringent climate policy without labor's support, they resisted sacrificing their autonomy over policy design. Following voters' approval of a renewable portfolio standard at the ballot in 2006, environmentalists sought to establish targets for reducing Washington's greenhouse gas emissions (Roberts 2016).[27] After Gregoire's 2007 executive order set goals for 2020, 2035, and 2050, the legislature enacted these goals into law and formally requested an economy-

[24] Interview 9, labor federation official
[25] Interview 9, labor federation official
[26] After negotiating a transportation bill with environmental groups, Johnson and Washington Building Trades Executive Secretary Dave Myers participated in editorial board meetings and gave speeches around the state advocating for the proposal. While the bill substantially increased the state's gas tax, it was not primarily designed to reduce emissions and received criticism for investing revenues into highway construction and for certain anti-environmental provisions. One such provision, dubbed the "poison pill," would have eliminated state funding for transit and other environmental programs if the state adopted a clean or low-carbon fuels standard (Fesler 2015).
[27] Interview 13, coalition member; Interview 7, labor federation staffer

wide greenhouse gas reduction policy proposal from the governor.[28] Government support for clean energy deepened in 2008, as Washington state faced the prospect of a severe economic recession. At Gregoire's request, legislators introduced a bill known as HB 2815 in the House Committee on Ecology and Parks that would "[provide] for green collar jobs." The new law gave Governor Gregoire the authority to issue an executive order targeting 25,000 such jobs by 2020 (UW News 2008; Hardcastle 2010). However, the law's text only twice mentions labor unions, and only in reference to their participation in identifying and providing workers with the skills necessary for green jobs (HB 12815). Despite creating jobs, the law did not provide certainty that they would be union jobs.

Meanwhile, mainstream environmental groups continued to advocate for cap-and-trade, which the WSLC did not support. As a market-based policy, cap-and-trade was designed to be agnostic with regard to where and how emissions reductions occurred, obscuring any benefits labor leaders could anticipate from the policy. The environmental justice movement, in contrast, opposed cap-and-trade in Washington due to their analysis that California's cap-and-trade system had enabled the worst polluters to perpetuate their practices in communities of color.[29] According to one environmental leader, the advocacy for cap-and-trade was "not exclusively, but largely driven by white-led [environmental] organizations." He explained that the mainstream environmental groups "just had all the power in the climate movement at the time and it was efficient to get across the finish line."[30] While the Democrats held the governor's mansion and both houses of the legislature, they were unable to secure passage of their "cap-and-invest" bill during the 2009 legislative

[28] Interview 8, staffer for elected official
[29] Interview 34, coalition member; Interview 6, coalition member
[30] Interview 4, coalition member

session (Valdez 2009). The bill passed the Senate, but after the House passed it with amendments that removed core provisions, the legislation was put on hold. According to one Senate staffer, deliberations over cap-and-invest became entangled with ongoing proposals to amend the 2006 Energy Independence Act and did not manage to reconcile the two efforts.[31]

The evidence from the first period of the case study aligns with my expectations. Between 2005 and 2012, pro-environmental Democrats enjoyed unified control of the state government, presenting an opportunity to pass carbon pricing legislation. Because the environmental movement perceived that they did not need labor's political resources to enact climate policy, they did not make concessions to pivotal players within labor.

2012-2014: A Gridlocked Senate Inspires a New Strategy

The 2012 state election marked a turning point in organized labor's advocacy for climate policy. While new Governor Jay Inslee would redouble the administration's commitment to addressing the issue (Brunner 2012), the situation in the legislature changed starkly, with the Republicans taking control of the Senate. Catching their own party off guard, in December fiscally conservative Senators Tim Sheldon and Rodney Tom defected from their caucus, forming a coalition with the Republicans that gave the GOP a de facto 25-24 majority (Johnson 2012).[32] This result closed the window of political opportunity for passing cap-and-trade in the legislature. The environmental movement therefore shifted its strategy, seeking to build a broad coalition including labor to advance a ballot initiative. Their commitment to cooperating with labor in developing a policy proposal constituted the

[31] Interview 8, staffer for elected official
[32] Interview 8, staffer for elected official

first step in the process through which the labor federation came to advocate for climate policy.

The environmental movement responded to the legislative gridlock by making entreaties to organized labor and environmental justice groups. Leaders of prominent state-based environmental groups said they believed that enacting climate policy would require a coalition that would broaden the movement beyond its traditionally white, upper-class constituency.[33] In 2014, the Washington Environmental Council/Washington Conservation Voters and Climate Solutions began a series of meetings with environmental justice groups to discuss forming a coalition.[34] An umbrella organization representing environmental justice groups, which eventually became Front and Centered, argued that their relationships with legislative and labor leaders provided them with leverage in negotiations over climate policy that would benefit the mainstream environmental groups' efforts.[35] The original discussion partners soon reached out to WSLC President Jeff Johnson, as they believed that Johnson's support would be sufficient for his federation to endorse the policy they would agree upon.[36]

The 2012 election had significant consequences for environmental legislation in the state Senate.[37] During the 2011-2012 legislative session, the median senator was a Democrat, Sen. Mary Margaret Haugen, with a score of 60. Figure 2 shows that support for environmental legislation declined dramatically during the 2013-14 session, the same session in which labor and environmental groups decided to form a coalition. Due to Democratic losses and Sen. Rodney Tom's decision to join the Republicans in a coalition government,

[33] Interview 4, coalition member; Interview 5, coalition member, Interview 31, coalition member; Interview 13, coalition member
[34] Interview 9, labor federation official
[35] Interview 5, coalition member; Interview 6, coalition member
[36] Interview 7, labor federation staffer
[37] The 2012 election had little effect, meanwhile, on the balance of power with regard to environmental policy in the state House.

Tom became the median senator (along with two others) and voted much more conservatively on environmental issues than he had previously. While his lifetime WCV score at the end of the 2013-2014 session was 66, his score for that session was a mere 25.[38]

Whereas climate legislation faced an uphill battle during the 2011-2012 session, by 2013 the window of opportunity for passing cap-and-trade legislation had slammed shut. Figure 3 demonstrates the stark contrast in the political opportunity for passing environmental policy before and after the 2012 election. In 2012, both the veto pivot (who received a WCV score of 80) and the median voter (who received a WCV score of 60) lay to the left of the status quo (50). This preference distribution presented an opportunity to enact non-incremental reforms. By the following year, however, the picture had changed markedly. While the veto pivot had moved slightly to the left (83), the median voter had lurched to the right (25). The status quo thus lay well within the gridlock interval, ensuring that no significant climate policy would pass through the legislature during the 2013-2014 session.[39]

Multiple environmental leaders invoked legislative gridlock as the reason for building a coalition.[40] In the words of one environmental leader, "there was no climate policy that was going to pass" the legislature in the short run.[41] Still, one window of opportunity remained open to the environmental movement—the ballot initiative process. Passing a ballot initiative

[38] The sudden and dramatic shift in Rodney Tom's LCV score reflects his switch to the Republican caucus and represents an outlier among Washington state senators' generally stable environmental voting records.
[39] While the status quo's position within the spatial model represents a subjective judgment regarding the stringency of prior climate policy, I demonstrate that a shift in the status quo up to 10 points to the left and up to 25 points to the right would preserve the findings regarding political opportunity. Within 10 points to the left of 50, climate policy could still have passed in 2012, as the median senator (with a WCV score of 60) could have mildly preferred a bill to the status quo. The potential changes would become increasingly incremental as the status quo moved toward 60, but enacting legislation would still be possible through side payments or other means of logrolling. Within 25 points to the right of 50, the median senator in 2013 would still have preferred the status quo to a bill that moved policy in a pro-environmental direction.
[40] Interview 31, coalition member; Interview 13, coalition member; Interview 4, coalition member
[41] Interview 4, coalition member

would require appealing to the public against the arguments (and money) of the fossil fuel industry. Environmental justice leaders believed that "the environmentalists [could] not win by themselves," and needed to connect climate change to ordinary people's lived experiences.[42] Leaders of mainstream environmental groups echoed these sentiments. One environmental group leader mentioned that a series of setbacks had convinced the movement that they needed allies to achieve policy victories.[43] Another environmental leader described a "strong sense" among the movement "that if we were going to succeed with climate policy, we needed a bigger team." This belief "really motivated the community to think carefully" about how to "build a broader movement that reflected more interests than just the environment."[44] As one executive director of an environmental organization described the new strategy, the environmental movement sought to build a coalition around the "four-legged stool" of environmentalists, racial justice groups, business, and labor.[45]

Crucially, key players within mainstream environmental groups involved in the early stages of collaboration did not perceive the coalition as a one-time transaction. As one leader put it:

> That's not how social change works. So that's my big takeaway, that you do have to have a long view—it's like civil rights or women's rights or a million other things that are just these multigenerational efforts. And in my opinion, particularly if you want to get good, equitable outcomes, you have to take a long view, you have to think about what movements you're building and how to sustain them across time.[46]

Environmental leaders believed this approach would be necessary for addressing generational challenges such as climate change. As such a long-term strategy required commitments to

[42] Interviews 34, coalition member; Interview 5, coalition member
[43] Interview 31, coalition member
[44] Interview 13, coalition member
[45] Interview 4, coalition member
[46] Interview 31, coalition member

secure allies' participation, environmentalists set about demonstrating that they were serious about coalition-building.

2014-2016: Environmentalists Make a Commitment to Labor

The "four-legged stool" served as the blueprint for a new umbrella organization, the Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy, which formed in 2014.[47] Underscoring their frustration with the gridlocked legislature, the Alliance's first act was to campaign for Democratic candidates in the fall of 2014, seeking to retake control of the state Senate (Roberts 2019). Despite Rodney Tom's decision not to seek re-election, the mostly Republican governing coalition held onto a 25-24 majority.[48]

As the Republicans still controlled the Senate, Democratic efforts to pass cap-and-trade foundered yet again. Despite long odds, Democratic senators introduced a cap-and-trade bill supported by Governor Inslee in December 2014. However, facing a budget shortfall and a Republican majority, the Senate Democrats ultimately decided against including the cap-and-trade system in their 2015 budget plan (O'Sullivan 2015).

Meanwhile, environmentalists made unprecedented policy concessions to labor and environmental justice groups. Having formally launched the Alliance on January 27th, 2015, the coalition's leaders began working on a set of agreements regarding a shared policy agenda (Roberts 2016). In a dramatic departure from their prior position, environmental

[47] The early participants in the conversation decided that the coalition's Governance Board would equally represent communities of color and environmental groups, along with labor representation. As President of the state labor federation, Johnson became the sole representative of organized labor within the coalition. Along with Climate Solutions and the WEC/WCV, the Nature Conservancy represented the mainstream environmental groups on the Governance Board. Immigrant rights group OneAmerica, Community to Community, and Puget Sound Sage represented Front and Centered.

[48] The median vote on environmental bills in the Senate for the 2015-2016 session was Republican Joe Fain, who received a WCV score of just 20. The Democrats held onto a narrow majority in the House, with Democrat Dean Takko (who received a score of 83 from the WCV) occupying the pivotal House seat.

groups decided that they would be willing to deviate from cap-and-trade if it would be necessary to build a coalition with a broader group of stakeholders. While some unions were skeptical about carbon pricing, the strongest opposition to cap-and-trade came from environmental justice groups, who argued that the trading component risked perpetuating pollution in disadvantaged communities.[49] Rather than "trying to organize people around a specific policy," environmental leaders decided to "figure out [which policies were] going to make sense" in the context of the emergent coalition.[50] A second commitment was that the policy had to generate revenue so that the state government could make investments that would address environmental injustice and develop a clean energy sector in the state, which labor leaders hoped would create union jobs.[51] Third, the coalition agreed that 35 percent of the proceeds from a carbon tax would be invested in the communities most affected by climate change.[52]

Importantly, the Alliance's Governance Board consisted of high-level leaders from each member organization, rather than mid-level staff. My interviewees often cited the commitment of leaders—in particular, Washington Environmental Council President Becky Kelley—as a reason for the coalition's rise.[53] The coalition's first seeds were planted in 2014 when Kelley began meeting with Aiko Schaefer, who represented Communities of Color for Climate Action, a coalition of environmental justice groups which shortly thereafter took the name Front and Centered.[54] Climate Solutions' Executive Director Gregg Small soon joined the conversation, as did Washington State Labor Council President Jeff Johnson. The final

[49] Interview 6, coalition member
[50] Interview 4, coalition member
[51] Interview 5, coalition member
[52] Interview 7, labor federation staffer
[53] Interview 4, coalition member; Interview 34, coalition member; Interview 9, labor federation official; Interview 13, coalition member
[54] Interview 9, labor federation official

Governance Board included the Executive Directors of three groups working to advance racial justice and immigrant rights—Rosalinda Guillen of Community to Community Development, Kim Powe of Puget Sound Sage, and Rich Stolz of OneAmerica—as well as The Nature Conservancy's Washington State Director Mike Stevens.[55]

These leaders were not merely involved on paper; in a testament to their commitment, they invested significant amounts of time and money into developing and advancing their shared agenda. The Governance Board was tasked with making policy, budgetary and hiring decisions.[56] The organization began assembling a staff of around twenty employees, including field organizers, communications consultants, and campaign managers.[57] The eight Governance Board members and the staffers would meet twice a week, including day-long meetings on Sundays, for four months to hammer out the fine print of their carbon fee initiative.[58]

As we will see in this chapter, leaders' commitment was not *sufficient* to hold together the coalition, as leaders' latitude for negotiation was constrained by their members. Yet as one board member explained, principals' consistent involvement demonstrated to their counterparts that they were serious about collaboration:

> We [had] the most senior level people in those meetings. You know, it wasn't the organizers. It wasn't part of the climate policy staff. When you look at who was involved [in the Alliance], they were all at the executive level. They were all the principals. And that's the level of seriousness and commitment that I believe that you need to make those kinds of decisions.[59]

Their commitment would soon face a stern test.

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[55] Interview 6, coalition member; Interview 7, labor federation staffer; Interview 9, labor federation official
[56] Interview 15, coalition staffer; Interview 6, coalition member; Interview 13, coalition member
[57] Interview 15, coalition staffer
[58] Interview 9, labor federation official
[59] Interview 34, coalition member

2016: A revenue-neutral carbon tax unites the coalition

Before the Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy had finished crafting their policy, another group had unveiled an initiative of their own, prompting a conflict between grassroots environmental activists and environmental groups' allies. University of Washington economist Yoram Bauman had developed a proposal for a revenue-neutral carbon tax and collected enough signatures—with the help of some environmental groups involved in the Alliance—to place the proposal on the ballot in 2016. The initiative would have placed a tax of $15 on each ton of carbon, collected from consumers at the gas pump and from electric utilities. The tax would have started in 2017, risen quickly to $25 in its second year, and then increased by 3.5 percent plus inflation each subsequent year until the tax reached $100 per ton. The revenue from the policy would have been used to cut the state's sales tax by 1 percentage point, fund a rebate for low-income households, and eliminate the business and occupation tax on manufacturers (Roberts 2016). While the proposal was designed to offset carbon pricing's regressive effects on low-income households and soften the blow to industry, labor and environmental justice groups wanted more than rebates and tax relief for their employers—they wanted a policy designed to ensure union job creation and pollution abatement in communities of color.[60]

Disappointed that Bauman had not consulted them in developing his policy, and therefore had not incorporated the Alliance's commitments to investments in clean energy and community transitions, the Alliance encouraged Carbon WA not to submit their signatures to the state and sought to work out a compromise policy.[61] After crisis talks in December 2015 failed to reconcile the two groups' positions, Carbon WA chose to keep its

[60] Interview 9, labor federation official; Interview 34, coalition member; Interview 6, coalition member
[61] Interview 22, labor federation staffer; Interview 31, coalition member

original initiative, which ultimately lost at the ballot 59-41.[62] Carbon WA's decision to move forward without their input provoked a public backlash from labor and environmental justice groups, with Johnson and Stolz traveling around the state to debate the initiative against Bauman.[63]

The environmental groups within the Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy faced a consequential choice. Would they abandon their partners and seize an opportunity to pass a first-in-the-nation carbon tax, or would they honor their commitment to incorporate workers and communities of color in the process of policy design? Fatefully, the environmental groups within the Alliance largely held firm. Under pressure from their members, who demanded rapid emissions reductions, environmental groups had difficulty expressing outright opposition to the initiative; many such groups, such as 350 Seattle and the Sierra Club, simply retracted their support.[64] Others, such as the Washington Environmental Council, recommended a "no" vote on the initiative, drawing the ire of many of their members.[65] The environmental movement's decision to adhere to their commitment in the face of member opposition reinforced their allies' perception that their commitment was indeed credible.[66]

Between the defeat of Initiative 732 and the Republicans' slender hold on the Senate majority, the 2016 election cemented the environmental movement's coalition-building strategy. While the Democrats formally regained a majority, Tim Sheldon continued to

[62] Interview 15, coalition member
[63] Interview 9, labor federation official
[64] Interview 1, coalition member; Interview 9, labor federation official
[65] Interview 31, coalition member
[66] Interview 31, coalition member

caucus with the Republicans, allowing the GOP to retain control of the chamber.[67] A wishful Governor Inslee introduced his own climate legislation, which included few provisions designed to protect workers in carbon-intensive industries or communities of color. While the Alliance decided to engage with the administration to shape the bill, they simultaneously advanced their own proposal via the ballot initiative process.[68]

After Manka Dhingra's special election victory in the fall of 2017 gave Democrats full control of the state government, a small coalition of labor and environmental groups began advancing legislation in 2018 targeting 100% clean electricity. However, by that time the Alliance had already developed Initiative 1631, and most coalition members remained committed to the ballot initiative.

2016-2018: Without Concessions to Veto Players, Labor Rejects a Carbon Fee

Johnson worked within the WSLC and with the Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy to develop and build support for the coalition's ballot initiative, known as Initiative 1631, which would have invested revenues from a new carbon fee to benefit workers and communities of color.[69] Yet because a pivotal coalition within the labor federation—consisting of the Building Trades and the Machinists—had not contributed to the policy's

[67] In the 2017 legislative session, the median vote on environmental policy was Republican Joe Fain, who earned a WCV score of just 36. The House was also poised on a knife-edge; while the median member was Democrat Brian Blake (with a WCV score of 75), if a bill were to fail to win Blake's vote the next likely supporter would have been Republican J.T. Wilcox (with a WCV score of 27).
[68] Interview 4, coalition member; Interview 9, labor federation official
[69] Interview 6, coalition member; Interview 9, labor federation official. The initiative proposed a $15 fee on each metric ton of carbon emissions, which would begin in 2020 and rise by $2 per year. Unlike a tax, which would allow the government to use revenues however they wished, the policy's designation as a fee ensured that the money it raised would be devoted to a predetermined purpose. Seven of every ten dollars would go into transition assistance for low-income communities, decarbonizing transportation, making buildings more energy-efficient, alternatives for natural gas, and carbon sequestration. One of every four dollars would be devoted to protecting marine habitats, mitigating flood risks, and boosting the state's water supply. Finally, one of every twenty dollars would be directed toward increasing communities' awareness of and resilience to climate impacts.

design, the federation did not manage to obtain the votes necessary to support it. Labor's first attempt at building an advocacy coalition with the environmental movement thus demonstrates that organized labor is unlikely to advocate for climate policy if its pivotal members do not gain concessions during policy negotiations.

Environmental leaders did make significant concessions to labor in developing their policy. The final proposal, Initiative 1631, would have prioritized investments in projects adhering to labor standards and directed $50 million in annual revenue toward a worker transition fund, which would have provided fossil fuel industry workers with wages and benefits to compensate for their jobs phasing out.[70] In a concession to industrial unions, the initiative exempted energy-intensive, trade-exposed industries such as aluminum from the carbon fee, instead requiring them to reduce their carbon emissions per unit of output (Yoder 2018). Finally, the initiative would have created a committee with majority representation of labor and communities of color to decide how to invest the revenues from the carbon fee.[71]

However, not all of the WSLC's affiliates were not on board with Johnson's vision. As one leader of a community organization put it, "While it was unprecedented how much support there was from labor, it was also extremely fractured and really divided the labor movement."[72] In particular, the Building Trades and the Machinists union believed that they had not been "sufficiently consulted," and were not prepared to sign on.[73] The Machinists

[70] For workers planning to retire in five years or less, this fund would have provided "glide paths" to retirement, involving payment of full wages, health insurance, and a pension. Workers who had been employed in the fossil fuel industry for more than five years would have received benefits making up the difference between their current and former wages, while workers who had been in the industry between one and five years would have received as many years of guaranteed income, health care, and retirement contributions as they had worked in the industry (Abramsky 2018). Other provisions included up to two years of retraining at a community or technical college, assistance with relocation costs, and even peer group counseling for workers in the fossil fuel industry.
[71] Interview 9, labor federation official
[72] Interview 6, coalition member
[73] Interview 7, labor federation staffer

and Building Trades expressed concerns about the governance of the revenues from the carbon fee, according to one labor federation official, and were influenced by the oil industry's advertising campaign painting the initiative as a threat to employment.[74]

Johnson had not intended to exclude these unions from the discussion. On his return from the international climate negotiations in Paris in 2015, he had formed a caucus designed to bring together a broad cross-section of the labor movement to develop a worker-friendly climate policy. The caucus represented the United Steel Workers, the Teamsters, the Building Trades, the Machinists, service employees, food and commercial workers, and teachers. The group's remit was to work out the details of what a "humane, just, equitable transition [away from fossil fuels] would look like."[75] The caucus, which met once a quarter, would inform Johnson's positions within the Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy.

In practice, however, the caucus did not represent the diversity of thinking among the labor movement on climate policy. Caucus meetings were voluntary and open to participation from any of the unions in the federation,[76] and Johnson encouraged participants to invite other interested union leaders. One labor federation official acknowledged that the caucus' efforts to promote climate action did not necessarily represent "majority thinking" within the members' unions, explaining that the participants saw themselves as leaders on the issue.[77] In contrast, two carbon-intensive unions did not participate intensively in the caucus. In a sign of divisions to come, the representatives from the Washington Building Trades and the Machinists Local 751 each only showed up to a single caucus meeting.[78] According to

[74] Interview 24, labor federation official
[75] Interview 9, labor federation official
[76] Interview 17, coalition member; Interview 9, labor federation official
[77] Interview 9, labor federation official
[78] Interview 9, labor federation official

one labor federation official, "probably there were some people not at the table that had they been, [there] might have been a slightly different [policy]."[79]

Just before the WSLC's affiliates voted on Initiative 1631, representatives of the Building Trades had returned from their union's international convention, where the conflicts over the Keystone and Dakota Access pipelines had arisen as a major issue.[80] The union's leadership had informed the convention that they would not tolerate opposition to the pipelines, and that union leaders should oppose any efforts outside the bounds of traditional building trades issues.[81] Therefore, the Building Trades representatives in Washington state—especially the Plumbers and Pipefitters—faced pressure from their international union colleagues to vote against carbon pricing. The leaders of the Building Trades voiced concerns about how the initiative would affect their members' jobs[82] and objected that the initiative would raise the price of gasoline, imposing significant financial harm on their members.[83] Although some Building Trades leaders thought the policy could create union jobs, they criticized the initiative for its uncertain economic outcomes. Specifically, they opposed giving discretion in revenue disbursement to committees—rather than dedicating funding in advance to particular purposes—and for contributing to job creation through second- and third-order effects.[84] According to Johnson, the Building Trades "actively organized [a coalition of federation members] against endorsement" of 1631 (NW Labor Press 2018). The Machinists, who represented workers at major local aerospace manufacturer Boeing, echoed the Building Trades' concerns. Having attributed their union's significant job losses in recent

[79] Interview 24, labor federation official
[80] Interview 9, labor federation official
[81] Interview 9, labor federation official; Interview 22, labor federation staffer
[82] Interview 6, coalition member
[83] Interview 9, labor federation official
[84] Interview 46, labor federation official

decades to trade deals, their leaders worried that an energy transition would prompt manufacturers to leave the state.[85]

The public sector unions' unexpected absence from the WSLC's political convention allowed the Building Trades and Machinists to play a pivotal role in the federation's vote. The convention came less than two weeks before the Supreme Court announced its decision in *Janus v. AFSCME*, and therefore most of the representatives from AFSCME and the American Federation of Teachers were in Washington, D.C. for training. According to the WSLC Constitution, every local must be present at the convention for a union to garner the number of votes proportional to its full in-state membership. As a result, many of the public sector unions had negligible voting representation at the convention. The Washington Building Trades and the Machinists alone accounted for roughly 28 percent of the federation's members outside of the public sector, suggesting that unified opposition from these groups and aligned unions would approach the threshold necessary to deny a two-thirds majority. The federation's vote on 1631 was 60.2 percent in favor, falling short of the necessary mark (NW Labor Press 2018).[86] As a result, despite playing a central role in shaping the initiative, the WSLC was not able to offer its endorsement for the policy.[87] Lacking strong support from organized labor and faced with a deluge of negative advertisements funded by the oil industry, Initiative 1631 lost, 56-44, in the state election in 2018 (Roberts 2018).[88]

The WSLC's failure to endorse Initiative 1631 constitutes the exception that proves the rule that environmentalists seeking an alliance with labor must make policy concessions

[85] Interview 22, labor federation staffer; Interview 29, labor federation official
[86] Interview 9, labor federation official; Interview 22, labor federation staffer
[87] Interview 4, coalition member; Interview 24, labor federation official.
[88] Interview 13, coalition member.

to pivotal members within the labor federation. A sustained period of legislative gridlock led environmental groups to commit to cooperating with labor, while Johnson made a similar commitment to his environmental counterparts. Yet because the alliance led by the Building Trades did not participate in policy negotiations, 1631 did not manage to garner sufficiently broad support within labor to secure the federation's endorsement.

2018-2019: With Concessions to Veto Players, Labor Supports 100% Clean Electricity Bill

The 2018 election witnessed a defeat for 1631 but an overwhelming victory for the Democrats. By the 2019 legislative session, both chambers enjoyed comfortable pro-environmental majorities, suggesting that climate legislation would have a good chance of passing. However, mainstream environmental groups had already committed to passing a comprehensive climate policy with their labor and environmental justice partners. Having witnessed the labor federation almost endorse a policy they did not support, the Building Trades and the IBEW participated intensively in developing the WSLC's next proposal, a bill targeting 100% clean electricity. As a result, the WSLC was for the first time able to lobby alongside the environmental movement for a comprehensive climate policy proposal.

Upon replacing Johnson on the Governance Board of the Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy, incoming WSLC President Brown suggested that the Building Trades and United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) should serve alongside him, giving labor (including carbon-intensive unions) greater sway over the coalition's agenda.[89] The Alliance—now with "Climate" at the front of its name—agreed to expand labor's representation, tacitly

[89] Interview 15, coalition member

acknowledging that the WSLC could not act without its pivotal members' support. This move heralded the Climate Alliance's investment in a new proposal designed to win over the Building Trades.

During the previous legislative session, the environmental group Climate Solutions had already begun working with the IBEW on legislation targeting 100 percent clean electricity for Washington state by 2045. While the IBEW had voted against endorsing 1631, they had participated in discussions around the initiative and suggested that they would be open to supporting legislation to promote clean energy (NW Labor Press 2018). Climate Solutions' staff built a case for how such a policy would benefit the IBEW and the Building Trades. Private utility Puget Sound Energy had developed a plan for how they would meet electricity demand for the coming two decades, and one scenario they examined assumed that no new natural gas power plants would be built. They concluded that this scenario would require the construction of battery storage and new pumped hydropower facilities, which would create jobs for the utility sector and the building trades. Climate Solutions took the utility's finding to the IBEW, emphasizing that utility workers could meet electricity demand without new fossil fuel power plants and that the unions' members would benefit from the jobs created from an energy transition.[90]

This increased certainty regarding job creation for electrical workers proved decisive in forging an alliance with the IBEW. One environmental leader recounted the turning point in the effort to win the IBEW's support for 100 percent clean electricity: "Look," he said, "we've been telling you that [you should support] clean energy because this will create jobs for your members. Right here is the proof," he added, pointing to the utility's integrated

[90] Interview 7, labor federation staffer

resource plan that mapped out the required generation capacity under a scenario with no new fossil fuel plants. “It’s not my proof,” he continued, “it’s not my study. It’s a scenario that the utility ran.”[91] As their own employers had published a legally required document stating that they would be required to build new facilities to meet the clean electricity targets, this evidence persuaded the IBEW that they would acquire coveted jobs from the bill’s passage. The IBEW, in turn, would prove the key to unlocking the rest of the labor movement’s support for the legislation.[92]

This conversation began a dialogue between Climate Solutions and IBEW regarding the implications of a 100 percent clean electricity system for workers. These two organizations, along with Audubon Washington, initiated a partnership in 2018 to advocate for legislation that would set such a target. Having regained a floor majority in the Senate following a special election in the fall of 2017, Democrats introduced a bill targeting 100 percent clean electricity in 2018.[93] Despite the IBEW’s central role in shaping the policy, other Building Trades unions such as the Plumbers and Pipefitters vehemently opposed the bill at first. The WSLC, under pressure from multiple union officials while simultaneously working on 1631, initially decided to remain neutral on the legislation.[94] Ultimately, the bill ran out of time as the sixty-day legislative session came to an end.[95] While their favored bill did not pass in the 2018 legislative session, the Speaker of the House Frank Chopp issued a statement calling the bill “a priority” and expressing the hope that “progress” could be made

[91] Interview 7, labor federation staffer
[92] Interview 46, labor federation official
[93] Interview 8, staffer for elected official
[94] Interview 9, labor federation official
[95] Interview 8, staffer for elected official. Utilities’ concerns about costs and compatibility with existing policy, as well as environmental groups’ concerns about the effect of hydropower dams on fish populations, hindered the bill’s progress.

in the subsequent legislative session (Audubon Washington 2018). Senate Democrats echoed these hopes.[96]

After 1631 lost at the ballot, the rebranded Climate Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy decided to take up the clean electricity legislation as their main proposal.[97] Thanks to the previous fall's election outcome, the 2019 session promised to be an opportune moment to pass the clean energy bill. The Democrats had significantly widened their majorities in both the House (57-41) and the Senate (29-20).[98]

These commanding majorities allowed Governor Inslee to act on his promises to address climate change. Inslee was preparing a bid for the presidency and called for a suite of climate legislation to burnish his credentials. During the period between legislative sessions, he convened a series of discussions among the major stakeholders, including environmental groups, labor groups, utilities, and industrial electricity consumers, to hash out a compromise bill.[99]

The legislation which emerged from these discussions became known as the Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA). The legislation required Washington's utilities to phase out coal by 2025, reach carbon-neutrality by 2030—with some flexibility built in—and generate all their electricity from carbon-free sources by 2045. Importantly, the bill incorporated a deal brokered among a set of environmental, labor and industry groups, including the Washington Building Trades, the IBEW, the Laborers International Union of North America, the Operating Engineers, Climate Solutions, and Renewable Northwest.

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[96] Interview 7, labor federation staffer
[97] Interview 9, labor federation official
[98] The median senators in 2019 on environmental bills were Democrats Steve Conway and Mark Mullet, who each earned a WCV score of 82. Meanwhile, the House offered fertile ground for climate legislation. In the 2019 session, Democrats Dave Paul and Jared Mead—both of whom received a score of 91 from the WCV—occupied the median positions within the chamber.
[99] Interview 8, staffer for elected official

These groups negotiated an agreement to renew incentives for renewable energy contingent on the adoption of job quality standards.[100] Under the proposed law, renewable energy developers could only receive the benefits from the incentive program if they met criteria for high-quality job creation. Specifically, the CETA includes a three-tiered incentive structure based on whether employers enter into a community workforce or project labor agreement; pay a prevailing wage; contract with businesses owned by women, minorities, or veterans; hire local labor; contract with businesses without state or federal labor violations; and provide apprenticeships.[101] In an era of strong party discipline, the large Democratic majorities proved sufficient to pass the CETA in a party-line vote, sending it to a triumphant Governor Inslee for his signature (Bernton and Brunner 2019).[102]

The WSLC lobbied for the bill as it advanced through the state legislature and Brown offered a ringing endorsement:

> The Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO is committed to advancing good, equitable environmental policy that is also good labor policy. Building a 21st Century clean energy economy with good, family-wage union jobs is a priority for us and for our community partners. Strong 100 percent policy should meet the needs of our environment, our communities and our workforce, and we are happy to support it (The Stand 2019).

The WSLC was ultimately able to endorse the CETA because the members which had vetoed Initiative 1631 played a central role in shaping the bill.

This policymaking episode illustrates several important lessons. First, instead of abandoning the coalition after the failure of 1631, environmentalists stayed the course, seeking to fulfill their commitment to labor and environmental justice groups to advocate for

[100] Interview 7, labor federation staffer; Interview 24, labor federation official
[101] Interview 31, coalition member; Interview 7, labor federation staffer.
[102] Interview 7, labor federation staffer

a shared policy agenda. The investments they had made in the Climate Alliance proved path-dependent, as another significant climate bill was already in the works that the coalition supported and was well-positioned to advance. Second, while the pivotal Building Trades had not participated in shaping 1631, they had a seat at the Climate Alliance's top table and played a central role in negotiations ahead of and during the 2019 session, when the coalition developed and lobbied for the CETA. Thus incorporated in the coalition in both process and substance, the Building Trades switched from opposing to supporting the Climate Alliance's policy agenda, allowing the labor federation to give its full-throated endorsement. Third, the policy concessions which the Building Trades requested—and which ultimately brought them on board—sought greater certainty regarding job creation for their members.

2021: Their Commitment Fulfilled, Environmentalists' Political Opportunity Erodes the Coalition

The final chapter of the Washington case offers a cautionary tale for coalition-builders. Once the coalition has delivered on its initial commitment, political opportunity again tempts interest groups to favor autonomy over cooperation. In this case, several major environmental groups within the coalition recognized that they enjoyed enough support among lawmakers to pass a cap-and-trade bill without their coalition partners. The labor federation notably did not advocate for the legislation, while most of the environmental justice groups in the coalition condemned the effort as insufficiently attentive to their communities' needs.

After a 2020 legislative session dominated by the response to the coronavirus pandemic, some major environmental groups saw an opportunity to pass cap-and-trade in

2021. With comfortable Democratic majorities in the House (57-41) and Senate (29-20), and a governor intent on establishing his legacy as a champion of climate policy, state legislators introduced a proposal targeting a 95 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels by 2050.[103] Environmental advocates Climate Solutions and The Nature Conservancy backed the proposal, along with the IBEW. Despite the bill's ambitious target for reducing emissions, the *mechanism* for cutting emissions drew criticism from environmental justice and labor organizations. The bill proposed to establish a cap-and-trade system, a market of tradable emissions allowances awarded to emitters through public auctions.[104]

Exemplifying the reputational costs associated with defecting from cooperation, environmental justice groups and labor allies condemned the mainstream environmental groups for violating their agreement not to advocate for cap-and-trade. A broad coalition led by environmental justice groups, which also included unions UFCW 21 and UAW 4121 as well as the Labor Network for Sustainability, wrote a letter to state lawmakers urging them to vote against the cap-and-trade proposal. The letter's authors did not mince words, calling the bill "a throwback to a time before justice and people of color were valued as part of the conversation" (Climate Justice Advocates 2021). Front and Centered, the peak organization for environmental justice groups in the state, panned the "false promise" that cap-and-trade would significantly reduce the state's carbon emissions and improve air quality in communities of color (Yoder 2021).

[103] Interview 31, coalition member

[104] Revenues from the sale of allowances would be invested in renewable energy projects, emissions reductions in the buildings and transportation sectors, and climate adaptation. Further, to assuage environmental justice groups' concerns that a system of tradable allowances would perpetuate disproportionate levels of pollution in communities of color, the bill incorporated regulation to mitigate air pollution in communities with poor air quality (Yoder 2021). This provision, however, was insufficient to win the support of the environmental justice and labor movements.

Unlike the clean energy legislation that had passed two years prior, the WSLC remained silent on the cap-and-trade bill. The only union that participated in shaping the bill, the IBEW, negotiated provisions facilitating investment in vertical construction projects for their members and the other building trades, including electric vehicle charging stations and pumped hydropower.[105] The bill narrowly managed to pass in the legislature and garner Governor Inslee's signature, with Inslee vetoing a line in the bill delaying the cap-and-trade program until the state passed a gas tax increase (Demkovich 2021).

The latest twist in the tale of Washington's climate policy suggests that coalitions are fragile, and new opportunities for legislative victories can undermine the commitments that facilitate organized labor's collaboration with environmental groups. Recent developments thus accord with the theory presented in this chapter that political opportunities incentivize organized groups to favor autonomy over cooperation.

Table 2. Shifting Climate Advocacy Coalitions in Washington State

Proposal	Years on agenda	Advocacy coalition	Labor unions involved in design	Outcome
Initiative 732 (revenue-neutral carbon tax)	2016	Carbon WA, Audubon Washington	None	Lost at the ballot, 41%-59%
Initiative 1631 (revenue-positive carbon fee)	2018	Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy (without the Washington State Labor Council)	United Steel Workers, Teamsters, Service Employees International Union, United Food and Commercial Workers, American Federation of Teachers	Lost at the ballot, 43%-57%

[105] Interview 46, labor federation official

Clean Energy Transformation Act (target of 100% clean electricity)	2018-2019	Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy (including the Washington State Labor Council), Renewable Northwest	Washington Building Trades, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Laborers, Operating Engineers	Passed Senate 28-19, passed House 57-41, signed by Gov. Inslee
Climate Commitment Act (cap-and-trade system)	2021	Climate Solutions, The Nature Conservancy, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers	International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers	Passed Senate 25-24, passed House 54-43, signed by Gov. Inslee with partial veto

This table describes the four most prominent climate policy proposals that arose from 2016 to 2021 in Washington state. For each proposal, I document the year it was on the agenda, the coalition that supported it, the labor unions that played a central role in designing it, and its legislative or electoral outcome.

A second look at the recent history of climate policy in Washington state underscores how the vicissitudes of political opportunity produce instability in interest group coalitions. Table 2 lists four of the climate policy proposals that had the best chance of being enacted over the past five years, along with the organizations that supported them, the labor unions that helped design them and their legislative or electoral outcomes. We see that each of the four proposals received support from a very different set of actors. In 2016, Carbon WA consulted other environmental groups but largely developed its carbon tax proposal on its own, and Audubon Washington was the only major environmental group in the state to join the coalition. Over the next two years, the Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy—which represented the mainstream environmental movement and the environmental justice movement—advocated for a carbon fee which a host of labor unions had helped to shape. However, pivotal carbon-intensive unions—in particular, the Building Trades and the Machinists—did not participate in designing the policy, and therefore prevented the WSLC

from endorsing it. These pivotal unions played a central role in shaping the Alliance's next proposal, a bill promoting clean electricity, and therefore reduced the uncertainty associated with job creation that had kept them from supporting the carbon fee. Finally, in 2021, two environmental groups within the rebranded Climate Alliance, as well as one union, went around the coalition to lobby for a cap-and-trade bill.

Political Opportunity Obstructs Coalition-Building in Oregon

Democrats' stronger hold on the Oregon state legislature ironically frustrated labor's efforts to participate in an analogous climate advocacy coalition. In Washington state, the process of developing climate policy proposals, placing them on the agenda, and negotiating their final language centered around the network of progressive interest groups with a stake in the issue. Because policymakers were not acting, these groups took up the mantle of climate policy entrepreneurs. In contrast, the persistence of Democratic majorities in the Oregon legislature provided an opportunity for lawmakers to set the climate policy agenda. Rallying around Democratic leaders' policy priorities, such as carbon pricing, environmental groups did not incorporate organized labor's concerns into their initial policy designs. As a result, environmental groups essentially asked labor unions and the state federation if they would like to join a coalition to support legislation whose overarching framework had not reflected their input. For instance, as several unions opposed carbon pricing as a policy framework, the state federation was unwilling to endorse the bill, despite advocating for provisions to protect workers from the policy's potential economic impacts.[106]

With the door to climate legislation remaining open in Oregon, the state's predominant climate advocacy coalition—Renew Oregon—took a markedly different form than its counterpart in Washington. Whereas Washington's coalition "very much shared power" between the mainstream environmentalists, environmental justice groups, and organized labor, Renew "was primarily built around the power of the [mainstream] environmental community."[107] While the large environmental organizations would invite other groups to participate on certain issues, these prominent green groups—including the

[106] Interview 14, labor federation official; Interview 10, coalition staffer
[107] Interview 4, coalition member

Oregon League of Conservation Voters, the Oregon Environmental Council, and Climate Solutions—comprised the coalition's consistent core.[108]

Of course, a coalition of purely environmental groups would run the risk of being dismissed "by the media and lawmakers as just another lefty green coalition."[109] To avoid this fate, the environmental groups formed a partnership with two prominent Oregon businesses—private electrical contractor EC Electric and sustainable business coupon book publisher Celilo Media. These companies were well-connected in Oregon politics. Nik Blosser, Celilo Media's CEO, would go on to serve as Chief of Staff for Governor Kate Brown from 2017 to 2020. Within Renew Oregon, this core of environmental and business groups enjoyed authority over decisions such as staffing and budgeting, while other groups—such as businesses, community groups, and a notably small set of labor unions—would lend their signatures on an ad hoc basis in support of a given policy proposal.[110]

As opposed to the challenge in Washington—which was getting wins at all—the challenge environmental groups perceived in Oregon was to "win more and win faster."[111] Apart from a brief interregnum during the 2013 session when the Democrats and Republicans shared the state Senate, the Democrats have enjoyed an unbroken trifecta government in Oregon in recent decades. Predicting that they possessed the political power necessary to pass their policy agenda for the foreseeable future, in 2015 Renew developed a three-policy platform to shift the state toward cleaner energy sources. These proposals

[108] Interview 4, coalition member; Interview 37, coalition staffer
[109] Interview 37, coalition staffer
[110] Interview 37, coalition staffer
[111] Interview 37, coalition staffer

included a low-carbon fuel standard, a plan for replacing coal with clean electricity, and a carbon pricing policy branded "cap-and-invest."[112]

The first two proposals—each of which focused a single sector of the state's economy—did not result from an incrementalist mindset. When the coalition formed, the state's Clean Fuels Program and renewable portfolio standard (RPS) were both due for reauthorization by an obliging Democratic government, presenting an opportunity to pass significant climate policy. The previous governor, John Kitzhaber, had made a clear election promise to reauthorize Clean Fuels before abruptly resigning during the 2015 session due to allegations of corruption. Despite the unexpected change in the governor's mansion, the Democratic majorities in the legislature swiftly sent the clean fuels standard to incoming Governor Kate Brown for her signature.[113]

The following year witnessed the passage of the Clean Electricity and Coal Transition Act, which set a new renewable portfolio standard. The reauthorized policy mandated that the state's largest utilities phase out coal-fired power plants by 2030 and derive 50 percent of their electricity from renewable sources by 2040 (Trabish 2016; Renew Oregon 2020). According to Renew Oregon, the bill also stimulated investment in electric vehicle charging infrastructure, "[committed] utilities to maximizing energy efficiency," and incentivized utilities to make early investments in renewables (Renew Oregon 2020).

While Renew initially believed the RPS reauthorization bill would not pass during the 2016 session, the coalition's threat to put it on the ballot brought the utilities to the negotiating table.[114] Although environmental groups had planned to enact the RPS legislation

[112] Interview 4, coalition member
[113] Interview 37, coalition staffer
[114] Interview 37, coalition staffer; Interview 10, coalition staffer

as part of their multi-year climate policy agenda, the move caught organized labor and community groups off guard. Whereas the grassroots environmental movement in the state generally believed that cap-and-invest would pass in 2016, the mainstream environmental lobby's closer relationships with lawmakers allowed them to discern that it was unlikely to pass during that year's short legislative session simply due to a lack of time to negotiate the details. They therefore decided that the RPS bill was a more realistic near-term priority. According to one labor leader, Renew's decision to back the RPS bill without consulting other progressive constituencies "left a really bad taste in everyone's mouth," and Renew spent the following year attempting to mend its relationships with these communities.[115]

Having achieved their two prior goals, Oregon environmentalists inside and outside government—including Governor Kate Brown and legislative leaders—committed in 2017 to enact cap-and-invest. This proposal would have put in place a cap-and-trade system for greenhouse gas emissions and used the revenues from the sale of emissions permits to further reduce emissions and mitigate the policy's economic costs. While the bill was ultimately designed with some of labor and community groups' concerns in mind, the impetus behind it came from the Democratic leadership and mainstream environmental groups. One environmental organization staffer described this top-down process as follows:

> We were hamstrung by legislators again that said that they wanted to work on cap-and-trade, and that's what they were going to work on. They were going to put all their legislative resources towards that, and you can either come with us or I guess not be working on anything.[116]

[115] Interview 14, labor federation official; Interview 37, coalition staffer
[116] Interview 43, coalition staffer

This quote speaks to the frustration progressive constituencies felt at simply having to respond to legislators' priorities rather than playing an active role in shaping the policy framework.[117]

Of course, these constituencies did not completely lack a seat at the table. Throughout the process of developing the cap-and-invest proposal, the drafters of the legislation hewed to a set of principles and goals that had been established by the coalition's membership. These members included a handful of labor unions, including the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters, Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN), United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 555, and—perhaps surprisingly given the opposition to carbon pricing in Washington—the Oregon Building Trades Council. When legislators removed provisions from the cap-and-invest bill specifying the percentages of the revenues that would be invested in communities of color, Renew responded that it could not support the legislation, as it ran afoul of the agreement among coalition members that these communities should receive more than fifty percent of the policy's revenues.[118] Still, as this example attests, much of Oregon's grassroots left could only react to elite policy negotiations rather than driving the process of policy design themselves.

Although Renew invited labor leaders to planning meetings on cap-and-trade, labor representatives were able to join these conversations only after the fundamental structure of the policy had been decided. This order of operations left the state labor federation in an awkward position, forced to choose between supporting an already-baked bill with minor modifications or withholding their endorsement and resources while advocating for pro-labor

[117] Interview 10, coalition staffer
[118] Interview 10, coalition staffer

provisions.[119] Building on a legacy of labor-environmental collaboration within the Apollo Alliance,[120] Renew and the Oregon AFL-CIO had worked together to establish an Oregon chapter of the BlueGreen Alliance, which involved raising funds to hire a staffer to coordinate the new table.[121] However, this group was still primarily focused on relationship-building, dialogue and education rather than designing a comprehensive climate policy.[122] The table's early discussions had sought to build labor unions' intuition regarding how climate policy could affect their members and how they could represent their members in policy negotiations.[123]

Reluctant to exacerbate the divisions within their membership, the Oregon AFL-CIO—as well as the Oregon BlueGreen Alliance—found themselves unable to endorse the cap-and-invest proposal.[124] Upon the bill's introduction into the legislature, carbon-intensive businesses began their usual backlash and "ramped up" their workers to oppose the policy.[125] Many employers—including oil companies, concrete aggregate producers, food processors, and pulp and paper mills—warned their workers that the bill would hurt their bottom line.[126] In addition, businesses such as Boeing did not take a public position on the legislation but lobbied against it behind the scenes.[127] Under influence from their employers, various manufacturing unions remained opposed to the proposal or rallied against it "late in the

[119] Interview 14, labor federation official
[120] Interview 14, labor federation official; Interview 37, coalition staffer
[121] As of 2020, the Oregon BlueGreen Alliance had grown to include the Oregon Environmental Council, Climate Solutions, the Sierra Club, the Oregon AFL-CIO, the United Steelworkers District Council 12, the Oregon State Building Trades Council, IBEW 48, SEIU 503 and the Amalgamated Transit Workers Union Local 757. Interview 18, coalition staffer; Interview 37, coalition staffer; Interview 14, labor federation official.
[122] Interview 14, labor federation official; Interview 18, coalition staffer
[123] Interview 18, coalition staffer
[124] Interview 14, labor federation official; Interview 21, labor federation official; Interview 10, coalition staffer; Interview 18, coalition staffer; Interview 37, coalition staffer
[125] Interview 21, labor federation official
[126] Interview 21, labor federation official; Interview 10, coalition staffer
[127] Interview 10, coalition staffer

game."[128] For instance, the head of one United Steel Workers local that represented paper mill workers testified against the bill in committee.[129] Meanwhile, the legislation was not a high priority for service- and public-sector unions compared to their bread-and-butter issues such as wages and benefits.[130]

Although the labor federation could not advocate for cap-and-invest, it nonetheless sought to protect its members by lobbying for pro-labor provisions. The Oregon AFL-CIO worked closely with environmental groups, especially the Oregon Environmental Council, to develop labor standards for the legislation.[131] As a result of these negotiations, the bill included a fund to provide financial assistance to workers and communities affected by carbon pricing, including bridges to retirement, pension replacement, extended healthcare benefits, wage differential benefits, moving expenses, and mental health support.[132] Revenues from cap-and-invest for could only be granted to renewable energy developers with project labor agreements, which paid a prevailing (market-rate) wage, which offered health care benefits and pensions, and which provided a registered apprenticeship program.[133] Further, the legislation planned to invest in worker retraining; established targets for recruiting, hiring, and training women and people of color to work on clean energy projects; built capacity within the state government to oversee and enforce the just transition programs; and ensured that labor representatives from various industries would have a seat on an advisory board managing the programs.[134] These pro-labor provisions allowed the Oregon Building Trades Council to endorse the bill, along with the IBEW, the SEIU,

[128] Interview 21, labor federation official
[129] Interview 21, labor federation official
[130] Interview 40, labor federation official
[131] Interview 10, coalition staffer
[132] Interview 14, labor federation official; Interview 21, labor federation official
[133] Interview 14, labor federation official; Interview 21, labor federation official; Interview 18, coalition staffer
[134] Interview 18, coalition staffer; Interview 21, labor federation official

AFSCME, and other public sector unions. The Building Trades' endorsement came after their leaders met with the BlueGreen Alliance, community organizations and environmental groups to discuss the legislation. The Building Trades' new leadership was more favorable to climate legislation than their predecessors and saw opportunities for job creation in the renewable energy sector.[135]

The cap-and-invest legislation was stymied not by internal divisions or an unsupportive legislature, but by an arcane legislative rule that required that a substantial quorum of legislators be present to pass legislation. In June 2019, the Republican caucus walked out of the state Senate before the bill could be brought up for a vote (Axelrod 2019). The Republicans repeated this tactic in February 2020, again obstructing legislation that the Democrats were ready to enact (Mena 2020). Frustrated with Republican obstructionism in the Senate, Governor Kate Brown forged ahead with an executive order known as the Oregon Climate Action Plan which instructed state agencies to use existing statutory authority to achieve the emissions reduction targets from the cap-and-invest legislation (Sickinger 2021). Renew Oregon and its environmental partners cheered the proposal and sought to shape it, advocating for an emissions cap, mandatory targets, and updates to the state's building codes.[136] Notably, the executive order lacked provisions designed to mitigate climate policies' impact on workers in carbon-intensive industries.[137]

As the Democrats had consolidated their majority in the Oregon legislature ahead of the 2021 session, clean energy advocates returned to the table to enact a policy to accelerate the transition away from fossil fuels in electricity production. Labor's engagement in the

[135] Interview 14, labor federation official; Interview 21, labor federation official; Interview 10, coalition staffer
[136] Interview 10, coalition staffer; Interview 4, coalition member
[137] Interview 10, coalition staffer; Interview 14, labor federation official

negotiations over the bill—colloquially dubbed "100 percent clean" following its Washington counterpart of the same moniker—followed more or less the same script that had played out with cap-and-invest two years prior. The state labor federation withheld its endorsement, reserving its advocacy for worker protections resembling those that had been incorporated in cap-and-invest. Oregon AFL-CIO President Graham Trainor's testimony on the bill before the House Committee on Energy and Environment stressed the importance of addressing climate change while protecting industrial jobs yet stopped short of expressing support for the bill (Trainor 2021).[138]

The Oregon case corroborates the theory's prediction regarding the persistence of political opportunity, showing how Democratic dominance in the state legislature permitted elected officials rather than interest groups to set the agenda. Responding to lawmakers' efforts to efficiently pass environmental legislation and lacking a strong incentive to invest significant resources in collaborating with labor, Oregon's mainstream environmental groups largely left labor behind in climate policy negotiations. While the Oregon AFL-CIO developed and advocated for pro-labor provisions, it did not lobby for the policy instruments which would have significantly reduced the state's greenhouse gas emissions. A few labor unions supported certain climate policies due to their expectation that they would create jobs, but the labor federation's exclusion from negotiations around core policy mechanisms precluded the kind of coalition that formed in Washington.

The evidence presented here corroborates this study's central hypotheses—that gridlock makes coalition formation more likely, whereas political opportunity has the

[138] Interview 14, labor federation official

opposite effect. The next chapter will examine how this theory applies in more carbon-intensive economies.

Chapter 6: Explaining Coalition-Building in Carbon-Intensive Economies

"This was the first time labor has really stepped out in leadership on climate."

--Colorado AFL-CIO Executive Director Dennis Dougherty

Their growing pains notwithstanding, Washington and Oregon offer promising examples of emergent energy transitions. However, given the Pacific Northwest's relatively clean electricity mix and lack of a large fossil fuel extraction industry, a comprehensive analysis must consider whether the theories developed in those states can travel to more carbon-intensive economies. As discussed in Chapter 3, Colorado and California each relied on fossil fuels for at least half their electricity and had a history of fossil fuel production. At the outset of this study, these states faced the prospect of higher economic costs from an energy transition such as losses in jobs, tax revenues, and overall economic growth.

This greater economic dependence on fossil fuels facilitates arguments against enacting climate policy. Given labor federations' core interest in creating and sustaining jobs, the notion that labor relies on fossil fuels and other carbon-intensive industries for employment decreases the likelihood that they will support stringent policies to reduce emissions. One environmental advocate in Colorado summed up the substantial challenge facing climate coalitions in these states:

> Everything about doing this is harder when you're coming from a fossil fuel producing state… The coal industry has less of a voice in Colorado now than they used to, but you know, the Colorado Mining Association used to be very formidable and they're still very active at the Capitol and they have a very strong political presence. The oil and gas industry spends flabbergasting, large amounts of money, time and energy touting the benefits of oil and gas production for the state. And it's all the messages that you would typically hear from the fossil fuel industry. You can't run your state without us; without us, your economy would collapse. We support all of these jobs. We support all of these indirect jobs, right? Like we are the reason why you have an economy. We are the reason why you have a state government because

> [without] our severance taxes, you would have no money to run your schools and things like that.[139]

Importantly, employment data provide some support for the notion that these economies currently rely on fossil fuels. In each of these states, more than one in 100 workers is associated with the fossil fuel industry. Now that the political momentum has built toward addressing climate change, the oil and gas industry has contended that they are "a part of the solution," maintaining that natural gas especially will play an important role in the clean energy economy.[140]

This chapter accordingly considers how well the theory travels to carbon-intensive states, examining labor's engagement with climate policy in California and Colorado. As the Oregon case attests, when lawmakers seek to pass climate policy quickly, environmentalists face pressure to leave labor behind in the interest of shaping current legislation. In contrast, legislative gridlock on climate in Washington state bought the labor movement time to develop its climate policy capacity and positions, and to participate in discussions with environmental groups around a shared policy framework. Longitudinal case studies in California and Colorado corroborate the findings from Oregon and Washington, strengthening the claims that legislative gridlock contributes to coalition formation whereas sustained political opportunity increases environmentalists' incentive to forgo coalition-building.

Colorado: Gridlock Gives Time for Coalition-Building

[139] Interview 52, coalition member
[140] Interview 52, coalition member

Colorado's recent history hews closely to the pattern observed in Washington. In the years before a Democratic trifecta re-emerged in 2019, labor and environmental groups convened a table to develop a shared vision for an energy transition. Although some environmental groups did not consider their participation in these discussions as a commitment, the network built during the years of limited political opportunity provided the basis for swift and legitimate negotiations between the two movements once a political opportunity had emerged. As a result, Colorado's state labor federation endorsed a comprehensive policy to reduce the state's greenhouse gas emissions along with a companion bill establishing a state-level office to promote a just transition for fossil fuel workers and communities.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the political opportunity for climate policy in Colorado was limited under Governor Hickenlooper, especially during two periods of Republican majorities within the state legislature. During that period of abeyance in reform, however, environmental and labor groups did not sit around idly awaiting their chance. Rather, they made strategic moves given the constraints they faced. Mainstream environmental groups worked with Hickenlooper and the oil and gas industry to develop regulations on methane released from natural gas production and collaborated with Xcel Energy and the Public Utility Commission to phase out coal-fired power plants in favor of renewable sources.[141] Environmental justice groups took their organizing outside state institutions, focusing on building a grassroots movement. Labor unions, as this chapter will explain, rallied together to ensure they were prepared to shape the transition to come.

[141] Interview 51, coalition member

In January 2018, in spite of a Republican majority in the state Senate, Democratic legislators introduced a bill which would have set a target of 100 percent renewable energy by 2035. When asked how likely they had considered the legislation to pass, one labor leader confidently responded "zero percent, zero percent."[142] Still, the bill signaled Democratic legislators' intent to pass such a policy once they regained the majority. According to Colorado AFL-CIO Executive Director Dennis Dougherty, the legislation "forced the conversation on our end" regarding the kind of clean energy legislation that organized labor could support (Cohen 2019). The labor federation quickly began convening both large-scale and one-on-one conversations with affiliates regarding their interests and priorities in the context of an energy transition.[143] The next month, the Colorado AFL-CIO became the co-chair of a new coalition known as the People's Climate Movement Colorado, or the Colorado Climate Movement (Cohen 2019).

Scanning the country for states in which to develop affiliates, the national People's Climate Movement (PCM) had identified Colorado as a state with the potential for climate action given a broader coalition and more favorable political conditions.[144] They therefore invested in organizing a September 2018 march focused on "Climate, Jobs, and Justice," which by that fall had evolved into a roundtable on a just transition toward clean energy involving environmental justice groups, organized labor, and mainstream environmentalists.[145] According to one participant, these groups "hadn't really had a designated arena to connect before."[146] The early discussions focused on planning,

[142] Interview 20, labor federation official
[143] Interview 42, labor federation official
[144] Interviews 16, coalition member; Interview 12, coalition member
[145] Interview 16, coalition member; Interview 48, coalition member
[146] Interview 16, coalition member

messaging, turnout, communications, and recruitment for the march and rally that would be held in Colorado as part of a national day of action.[147]

The national PCM's funding paid for a facilitator to lead the participants through discussions about the coalition's principles and priorities (Cohen 2019).[148] Due to its affiliation with national PCM member People's Action, the Colorado People's Alliance (COPA) played a central role in organizing the march and the subsequent summit, and many other coalition members had ties with groups in the national PCM.[149] The early members of the coalition, including 350 Colorado, sought to bring in faith and youth groups, leading to the inclusion of Earth Guardians and GreenFaith.[150] The coalition also included the Denver Area Labor Federation, the Service Employees International Union, the Natural Resources Defense Council, Conservation Colorado, and the Sierra Club.

Like in Washington state, this table incorporated high-level participants. Executive Directors Lizeth Chacon of COPA and Dennis Dougherty of the AFL-CIO chaired the Colorado PCM. However, not all groups sent their principals to the group's meetings, suggesting a more tenuous commitment to collaboration. Still, the involvement of 350 Colorado's Executive Director Micah Parkin signaled to labor that the grassroots climate movement was invested in coalition-building.

The coalition did not develop a specific policy platform, seeking rather to build relationships and mutual understanding.[151] Through a series of in-depth conversations in large and small groups, the two movements learned about their counterparts' backgrounds,

[147] Interview 16, coalition member
[148] Interview 16, coalition member; Interview 12, coalition member
[149] Interview 48, labor federation official; Interview 49, coalition member
[150] Interviews 12, coalition member; Interview 16, coalition member
[151] Interviews 16, coalition member; Interview 12, coalition member; Interview 42, labor federation official; Interview 20, labor federation official; Interview 49, coalition member

assumptions, motivations, and concerns regarding a just transition from fossil fuels toward clean energy.[152] Through many hours of discussion, these previously distant constituencies built trust and agreed on a document stating a shared set of values.[153] An environmentalist's recounting of these values illustrates the degree to which climate advocates had internalized labor's perspective:

> We want sustainable communities, we want family-sustaining jobs and wages, we want a livable environment and climate, and we want fair and thorough policies that support both communities and workers that will be transitioning as our energy economy changes rapidly and drastically.[154]

Over the course of the collaboration, the labor representatives revised their initial five-year plan of financial support for fossil fuel industry workers to three years, which aligned more closely with similar policies enacted elsewhere.[155] While the coalition formally met for about half a year, labor and environmental groups remained in close contact as the 2019 legislative session began.

Ironically given the fraught history between the labor and environmental movements, the deepest divisions within the coalition were between environmentalists. The labor federation's position was to defer to the environmental groups regarding the emissions reductions that the science required, yet the two factions within the environmental community did not agree on how quickly the state needed to reduce its emissions.[156] Through negotiations within the Colorado Climate Movement, the coalition agreed on stringent targets aligning with the position held by the environmental movement's progressive wing.[157]

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[152] Interview 20, labor federation official
[153] Interview 49, coalition member
[154] Interview 16, coalition member
[155] Interview 20, labor federation official
[156] Interview 20, labor federation official
[157] Interview 16, coalition member

When the 2019 legislative session offered an opportunity to pass legislation, however, the more centrist environmental groups decided to advocate for a bill, HB 1261, setting more pragmatic targets for reducing the state's greenhouse gas emissions. These groups had not sent their principals to the coalition's meetings, suggesting that they did not view their participation as a commitment. Whereas prior mainstream environmental legislation had typically focused on one clean energy technology or sector at a time—such as a renewable portfolio standard, a community solar policy, and net energy metering—advocates for 1261 sought a comprehensive approach this time given the scientific mandate to transition away from fossil fuels.[158] Led by Speaker of the House KC Becker, the bill's champions included Conservation Colorado, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), and the Sierra Club.[159] Their legislative agenda caught progressive environmentalists by surprise, as their moderate counterparts had not mentioned the bill during the PCM discussions around groups' legislative agendas.[160] Specifically, 1261 aimed to reduce emissions 26 percent from 2005 levels by 2025, 50 percent by 2030 and 90 percent by 2050 (Kohler 2019).[161] The bill targeted emissions reductions on a slower timeline than Colorado Climate Movement had agreed and did not include provisions to protect workers and communities dependent on fossil fuels from the effects of the energy transition.[162]

As the climate goals bill lacked labor provisions, the coalition pressured Democrats to introduce a companion bill, HB 1314, establishing a first-in-the-nation Just Transition Office within Colorado's Department of Labor and Employment.[163] While the Colorado AFL-CIO

[158] Interview 52, coalition member
[159] Interview 52, coalition member; Interview 51, coalition member; Interview 16, coalition member
[160] Interview 12, coalition member
[161] Interview 51, coalition member
[162] Interviews 12, coalition member; Interview 20, labor federation official
[163] Interviews 20, labor federation official; Interview 49, coalition member

took the lead in developing and advocating for the legislation, community and environmental groups also lobbied for it.[164] These groups initially discussed incorporating the pro-labor provisions into the climate goals bill, but eventually—despite tension regarding which bill would be enacted first—decided to advance the two bills separately.[165] By July 2020, the office, which would have its own staff and an advisory committee comprised of labor representatives,[166] would be required to issue a draft plan for protecting workers in coal-dependent communities from the economic impacts of the state's transition to clean energy (Cohen 2019). The state labor federation represented a variety of workers associated with the coal industry, including miners, power plant operators, and coal train conductors.[167] The bill therefore mandated the creation of a template for setting up an early warning system for upcoming closures of coal plants and mines, as well as guidelines for developing plans to ameliorate the impacts of these closures on employment (Eaton and Cates 2019). By the year 2025, the office would begin providing benefits to workers displaced by the transition and issue workforce retraining grants to communities moving away from coal. These benefits include coverage of at least part of the gap between workers' earnings and their previous salaries in the coal industry (Cohen 2019).

By reducing economic uncertainty and providing targeted benefits to coal workers, the companion bill satisfied the state federation's central concerns about how achieving the emissions reduction targets would affect workers in the coal industry, a pivotal constituency within the state's labor movement.[168] This compromise permitted labor and environmental

[164] Interviews 20, labor federation official; Interview 12, coalition member, Interview 16, coalition member; Interview 52, coalition member
[165] Interviews 20, labor federation official; Interview 52, coalition member
[166] Interview 49, coalition member; Interview 16, coalition member
[167] Interview 42, labor federation official
[168] Interview 20, labor federation official

groups from the Colorado Climate Movement to reconvene and provide feedback on the climate goals bill.[169] Once 1261 had incorporated labor's input, Dougherty and the president of the SEIU testified in support of the legislation in committee, an unprecedented occurrence in the history of environmental legislation in Colorado. Environmental groups, including more mainstream groups, joined them.[170]

The Democrats' Senate majority permitted additional climate legislation backed by the state labor federation. First, a bill first introduced in 2017 to speed up the retirement of coal plants and provide funding for communities reliant on coal passed with labor's support during the 2019 session. In a process known as securitization, utilities may trade the debt from their coal plants for bonds backed by ratepayers; the savings from this policy will be reinvested to aid workers and coal-dependent communities. While the coalition advocated for this legislation,[171] Dougherty stressed that these savings would be insufficient on their own to fund a just transition (Cohen 2019).

After the COVID-related lull in climate legislation in 2020, the following year labor lent its support to a bill promoting building electrification that had been a priority for mainstream environmental groups.[172] Not only did it receive backing from Dougherty; a broad coalition of carbon-intensive unions—some of which had long opposed climate policy—voiced their full-throated support. Among the bill's most surprising supporters was Gary Arnold of the Pipefitters union. This was the same Gary Arnold who had appeared in advertisements opposing a ballot initiative to require setbacks from fracking operations just a

[169] Interview 20, labor federation official; Interview 16, coalition member
[170] Interview 16, coalition member
[171] Interview 16, coalition member
[172] Interview 49, coalition member

few years prior.[173] As the building electrification bill was unveiled, he had apparently changed his tune, calling for "new climate-friendly technologies" and committing his union to supporting "the transition to the clean energy economy" (Perl 2021). Other carbon-intensive unions actively advocating for the bill included IBEW Local 68 (representing electrical workers), SMART Local 9 (sheet metal, air, rail, and transportation workers), and the Colorado Building and Construction Trades Council. As in Washington state, labor representatives signed on to the legislative effort in exchange for strong labor standards which would ensure high-quality job creation.[174]

As one environmentalist put it, "we couldn't have done any of the things we've since accomplished without a lot of time together" as part of the Colorado Climate Movement. He emphasized that "you can't just walk into a space" to negotiate a policy proposal and operate from a position of trust from the outset.[175] While the first iteration of the coalition has receded, another organization has taken its place. As the funding lapsed for the Colorado Climate Movement, the BlueGreen Alliance received funding to hire a coordinator in Colorado and started meeting at the state level, essentially replacing the Colorado Climate Movement as the labor-environmental table in the state.[176] Although this coalition has continued to meet and supported incremental bills such as building electrification, some environmental advocates have voiced the concern that labor representatives are not on board with the speed of decarbonization that climate science dictates.[177]

[173] Interview 12, coalition member
[174] Interview 49, coalition member
[175] Interview 49, coalition member
[176] Interview 16, coalition member
[177] Interview 52, coalition member

Colorado's recent climate policy history corroborates the evidence from Washington state that legislative gridlock provides fertile ground for coalition-building. Sensing that Democrats would seek to enact climate policy when they retook office, organized labor and their environmental counterparts took advantage of their time in the political wilderness to demonstrate their commitment to cooperation by investing time and money into thorough discussions around core policy objectives. While a renewed political opportunity prompted some mainstream environmental groups—whose principals had not participated in these discussions—to advance a more pragmatic climate bill, coordinated pressure from labor and grassroots environmental groups won the coalition a seat at the table and ensured that their concerns were reflected in legislation. Having mitigated the uncertainty facing coal industry workers, the Colorado AFL-CIO advocated for significant climate policy.

California: Longstanding Opportunity Leaves the Labor Federation Behind

Just as California has been a first-mover on climate policy, they have also been at the "tip of the spear" in collaboration between unions and environmentalists.[178] Yet as this section will explain, the climate coalition-building among organized labor in California has almost exclusively been the domain of the Building Trades, rather than the California Labor Federation writ large. This section will examine how the early and enduring opportunity for passing climate policy in California precluded the breadth of coalition building among labor that occurred in Colorado.

To understand the Building Trades' dominance over the federation's climate policy positions in California, one must review the history of the Trades' job creation efforts in the power sector. The year 1996 marked a turning point in this history, as legislation enacted that year set in motion the deregulation of electricity generation in the state. Whereas few power plants had been built in the preceding years, deregulation set off a construction boom that lasted roughly a decade. During this time, California added over 60 natural gas power plants to its electricity mix. And importantly, nearly all of them were built by union labor due to a clever strategy to secure project labor agreements (PLAs).[179]

The strategy was developed by a small group of building trades and electrical workers unions which organized under the banner of California Unions for Reliable Energy (CURE). This coalition grew out of the client base of a law firm that represented various building trade unions. While power plants had primarily been built with union labor prior to deregulation, these unions shared the concern that deregulation would undermine established norms favoring union construction in favor of a more laissez faire system. Construction companies

[178] Interview 44, coalition staffer
[179] Interview 47, labor lawyer

seeking to minimize labor costs had increasingly adopted a practice known as "double breasting," in which one firm operates as two ostensibly separate entities so that one of them does not have to hire union labor (Stec 2018). To prevent a drift away from union labor—which would mean that their members would lose out to non-unionized workers in their efforts to secure employment in power plant construction—CURE leveraged their lawyers' environmental expertise. Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), any California resident may comment on a project's environmental review and has standing to sue the state government if the review does not fully comply with the law. Essentially, the unions used the environmental review process to pressure developers to grant PLAs in exchange for project approval. Once they had demonstrated their ability to frustrate firms' construction projects with environmental review, the mere threat of invoking CEQA (not unlike the threat of a filibuster in the U.S. Senate) became sufficient to persuade developers to grant a PLA. By the mid-2000s, this strategy had consolidated the norm that California power plants would be built with union labor.[180]

This steady source of employment gave the Building Trades a vested interest in electricity policy in California. Because the Building Trades operate according to the principles associated with business unionism—rather than the expansionary social movement unionism more common in the contemporary service sector—their primary policy interest is securing jobs for their members.[181] This interest is magnified for the Building Trades because by definition, all construction work is temporary work. Recognizing this challenge, the California Building and Construction Trades Council and its affiliated unions perpetually scan the horizon for new projects and seek to secure PLAs to ensure that their members will

[180] Interview 47, labor lawyer
[181] Interview 45, labor scholar

receive the resulting employment.[182] Not only did the spate of power plants proposed in the late 1990s and early 2000s provide construction work for various building trade unions, the high voltage transmission lines necessary to connect those plants to the grid provided work for the IBEW.[183]

Thus, even before the state legislature enacted California's first renewable portfolio standard (RPS) in 2002, the Building Trades already had an effective strategy for ensuring that their members would build new renewable generation capacity.[184] Environmental groups moved quickly in lobbying for the RPS, and did not take the time to cultivate support from labor.[185] By 2006, when the cap-and-trade bill known as AB 32 came before the legislature, the Building Trades were well-positioned to advocate for provisions that would increase their certainty regarding union job creation. Not only did the Building Trades seek to promote jobs for their members; they also sought to prevent competitors from shaping energy policy. The historical legacy of competition between the Building Trades and the United Steel Workers over jobs at oil refineries had left these two carbon-intensive unions divided against each other.[186] As a result, the Building Trades sought to exclude other unions from policy dialogues so that the United Steel Workers would not interfere with their lobbying efforts.[187]

Given their first-mover advantage, the Building Trades unions managed to establish a policy subsystem that shut out the rest of the labor movement. One labor leader reflected that during the negotiations over cap-and-trade in 2006, "we didn't look at all the industries from a labor perspective," as the Building Trades lobbied alone and did not desire support or input

[182] Interview 38, labor federation staffer; Interview 47, labor lawyer
[183] Interview 47, labor lawyer
[184] Interview 44, coalition staffer
[185] Interview 45, labor scholar
[186] Interview 53, labor federation official; Interview 45, labor scholar
[187] Interview 45, labor scholar

from their fellow federation members.[188] Specifically, the Building Trades supported the policy as a means of raising revenues that could be devoted to public transit projects such as high-speed rail, which would provide jobs for their members. According to one key informant, the Building Trades' support for AB 32 helped sway pivotal lawmakers to secure the bill's passage.[189] Meanwhile, the state federation had been caught flat-footed, too slow in discerning the policy's implications for their members outside the Building Trades to shape the legislation in their favor.[190] When a ballot initiative arose several years later seeking to put the cap-and-trade system on hold pending a decline in unemployment, the labor federation joined the Building Trades in discussions with environmental groups about how to campaign against the ultimately unsuccessful initiative, suggesting that the federation had finally internalized the program's benefits for their members.[191]

Toward the end of the Schwarzenegger administration, climate advocates shifted their focus back toward renewable energy, seeking to move forward the timeline for hitting targets for decarbonizing the electricity sector. Several Building Trades unions initially reacted with trepidation, concerned that non-union renewable developers would replace the unionized developers that built the natural gas plants which had become their bread and butter. Given the consistent political backing for clean energy, however, the Building Trades increasingly recognized that future construction projects in the electricity sector would involve renewables. Efforts to update the RPS gained momentum in 2009, when a bill passed both houses of the legislature.[192]

[188] Interview 44, coalition staffer
[189] Interview 47, labor lawyer
[190] Interview 45, labor scholar
[191] Interview 55, state government official
[192] Interview 47, labor lawyer

Reading the writing on the wall, the Building Trades decided that they would seek PLAs for solar and wind projects just as they had done for gas-fired power plants. The statewide unions wanted the resulting jobs, so they advocated for a provision in the updated RPS bill that would effectively guarantee that most new electricity generation facilities would be built in-state. These efforts faced a tricky legal hurdle—courts have interpreted the Constitution's Commerce Clause to prohibit laws restricting interstate commerce, precluding legislation requiring plants to be built in California. The Building Trades' lawyers therefore devised a complex workaround known as the "bucket system" that practically ensured that most new plant construction would be in-state.[193] As mentioned in Chapter 4, Governor Schwarzenegger objected to this restriction on free markets and therefore vetoed the bill, which his spokesperson described as "protectionist" (Wood 2009). However, the bill's backers bet on strong supporter Jerry Brown in the ongoing gubernatorial campaign. The bill sailed through legislature and received Brown's signature within a few months of his inauguration in 2011.[194]

Just four years later, Brown again sought to accelerate the state's energy transition. His 2015 State of the State Speech declared a new set of targets—50 percent renewables in the electricity mix, a 50 percent increase in energy efficiency, and a 50 percent reduction in petroleum use by 2030. CURE quickly responded with a bill titled SB 350 that would codify each of these targets. While the petroleum target could not withstand the oil industry's lobbying blitz (Chabria 2016), labor advocates resisted numerous attempts from power companies to weaken the bucket system on the grounds that it would impede compliance. In a classic example of policy feedback, the Building Trades "lobbied like crazy" to not only

[193] Interview 47, labor lawyer
[194] Interview 47, labor lawyer

keep the bucket system in place but strengthen it through a requirement that no fewer than 65 percent of retail electricity sellers had to comply through long-term power purchase agreements. These contracts would have to last at least 10 years, ensuring that investors would have ample time to recoup their up-front capital costs.[195] The greater certainty for investors, the Trades reasoned, would accelerate the timeline for new projects and thus offer more jobs for their members. Without attracting attention from the fossil fuel industry—whose lobbyists were distracted by the petroleum provision—the IBEW also tacked on a provision compelling electric utilities to prioritize building charging infrastructure for electric vehicles, securing still more jobs for their members while reducing electricity rates and thus aiding their efforts to negotiate contracts with utilities.[196] Yet again, the Building Trades had pulled off an upset over big business.

In the exception that proves the rule that they remained in the background, the labor federation's most prominent advocacy effort was to lend their signature to a policy memo advocating for SB 398, a bill introduced in 2017 to renew cap-and-trade.[197] Despite their stamp of approval, the labor federation left the task of policy design to the Building Trades, whose industry connections enabled them to negotiate a policy that would benefit both their members and the oil companies which employed many of them. Although SB 398's architects intended to give cap-and-trade pride of place in the state's decarbonization pathway, the Trades teamed up with the oil refineries to bargain for a windfall of free emissions permits, utterly blunting the program's impact on emissions in that sector. When the federation's tacit involvement threatened to disrupt the Building Trades' issue ownership,

[195] Interviews 47, labor lawyer; Interview 44, coalition staffer
[196] Interview 47, labor lawyer
[197] Interview 44, coalition staffer

the Trades used their voting strength at the federation's convention to block an effort to establish a movement-wide climate caucus. [198]

Once renewable electricity started to pick up steam, the Building Trades faced a mounting challenge to preserve their quiet policy subsystem. State Senator Kevin de Leon, who had designs for higher office, championed a bill in 2017 known as SB 100 setting a target of 100 percent clean electricity by 2045 (Roberts 2018). While the bill didn't make it through the legislature that year, it passed the following year with great fanfare.[199] To a greater extent than prior RPS reform efforts, the grassroots environmental movement rallied around the bill. A network of groups affiliated with a table known as Green California formed a coalition called 100% Clean Energy to play the outside game, pressuring state lawmakers in their constituencies to support the legislation.[200]

The coalition attracted groups from outside the Green California table, including not only mainstream environmentalists but also environmental justice advocates, faith groups, and health-related organizations. Environment California's policy director, Dan Jacobson, had a channel of communication with de Leon's office and took the lead in organizing the coalition's weekly strategy calls. The calls started with updates from the policy negotiations in Sacramento and then focused on forming breakout groups to organize particular tactics in response.[201] When the legislation came up for a hearing in committee, the coalition flooded the hearing room with supporters, overwhelming the energy lobbyists in the room.[202] The coalition also collaborated on public education, media communications, meetings with

[198] Interview 45, labor scholar
[199] Interview 11, coalition member; Interview 19, coalition member
[200] Interview 19, coalition member
[201] Interviews 11, coalition member; Interview 19, coalition member
[202] Interview 11, coalition member

legislators, and continuing to broaden the coalition.[203] Yet one labor leader reflected that he could not "recall any effort from environmental groups to involve labor in the 100% coalition."[204]

Amid the cacophonous debate over SB 100, the labor federation yet again stayed silent, preferring to let the Building Trades do the talking. Only one statewide labor union—the Service Employees International Union (SEIU)—signed on in support of the 100% Clean Energy coalition. When the legislation was moving through the state Senate, labor lobbyists sought to incorporate amendments, but de Leon rebuffed these efforts (Roberts 2018).

As with SB 398, the Building Trades had cast their lot with the oil industry. Along with the Western States Petroleum Association, the Building Trades raised the alarm that the 100% Clean Energy coalition was not paying enough attention to the policy's potential impacts on fossil fuel industry workers.[205] While there had been serious dialogues between environmentalists and unions regarding a just transition at the local level in Los Angeles and the Bay Area, these conversations never "rose to the state level" or managed to connect with the Building Trades.[206] When some unions made a motion at that year's labor federation convention to endorse SB 100, the Building Trades blocked it, forcing the labor federation to stay on the sidelines. In the absence of a settlement regarding fossil fuel industry workers, the Building Trades refused to take a position on the legislation.[207] Facing grassroots pressure, an uncertain Governor Brown finally came down on the side of the 100% Clean Energy coalition, allaying concerns that he would veto the bill (Domonoske 2018).[208]

[203] Interview 11, coalition member; Interview 19, coalition member
[204] Interview 54, labor federation official
[205] Interview 54, labor federation official; Interview 19, coalition member
[206] Interview 50, coalition staffer; Interview 54, labor federation official
[207] Interview 54, labor federation official
[208] Interview 11, coalition member

Multiple experts on the California labor movement have noted the state labor federation's striking absence from coalitions advancing clean energy.[209] In many of these cases, the labor federation has deferred to the Building Trades, tacitly supporting their favored policies with little more than stamping their logo on a memo circulated to lawmakers. Unlike its counterparts in Washington and Colorado, the California Labor Federation has invested little to no resources in advocating for climate policy.[210] As a result, California currently lacks a comprehensive "climate policy with embedded workforce policies" to promote a just transition.[211] Of course, the labor federation is not independent of the Building Trades, who hold a great deal of influence within the Executive Committee and have used it to stifle other unions' efforts to tread on their turf.[212]

In the absence of an effort to expand the scope of conflict to bring in the entire labor movement, the Building Trades' stranglehold on labor's climate policy positions persists today. Whereas environmentalists relied on a broad coalition of labor unions to pass clean energy policy in Washington and emissions reduction targets in Colorado, the longstanding political opportunity for climate policy in California did not require efforts to expand the scope of conflict, as such efforts can attract public opposition to renewables which can derail energy transitions (Stokes 2020). One key informant explained that the policy frameworks around which subsequent rounds of legislative bargaining occurred—the RPS and cap-and-trade—were put in place in 2002 and 2006 respectively. Like in Oregon, the early and sustained political opportunity allowed the environmental community to quickly consolidate

[209] Interview 45, labor scholar; Interview 44, coalition staffer; Interview 47, labor lawyer
[210] Interview 44, coalition staffer; Interview 47, labor lawyer
[211] Interview 44, coalition staffer; Interview 19, coalition member
[212] Interview 45, labor scholar

a policy framework and leave behind any labor organizations that did not already have a climate policy agenda of their own.[213]

Signs are emerging that other unions, such as the United Steel Workers (USW), are taking an interest in policies to ensure a just transition for their members in the fossil fuel industry. For instance, USW Local 675—which represents oil refinery workers—partnered with AFSCME Local 3299 and the California Federation of Teachers to commission a study by Robert Pollin's research group at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst intended to provide support for pro-labor policies resembling those enacted in Colorado and Oregon.[214] When the study was released last year, the Building Trades interpreted it as a shot across the bow—sooner or later, the day would arrive when other unions would play a role in shaping climate policy. However, these three groups have yet to craft a policy platform comparable to that of the Building Trades or cultivate the relationships in Sacramento necessary to place it on the agenda.[215]

California's story resembles that of Oregon, in which an early and sustained political opportunity for passing climate policy contributed to environmentalists' decision not to seek the labor federation's support. California's consistent Democratic majorities and climate-concerned governors pressured environmentalists to come to the table before organized labor—aside from the Building Trades—had developed a clear stance on climate policy, leaving the labor federation on the sidelines. Once the Building Trades had secured their place in Sacramento's climate policymaking orbit, they actively sought to exclude their fellow unions from policy negotiations and even began siding with the fossil fuel industry

[213] Interview 45, labor scholar
[214] Interview 53, labor federation official; Interview 45, labor scholar
[215] Interview 45, labor scholar

when climate policy threatened to outpace their objectives. California thus demonstrates the risk of organizing climate advocacy coalitions without offering policy concessions to the labor federation. Organized labor often serves as the wild card in climate policy debates (Mildenberger 2020), and environmentalists' approach in California may have helped the fossil fuel industry block policy expansion in the long run.

Did the Building Trades' involvement in climate advocacy coalitions in California produce policy outcomes similar to those in states where the state labor federation took the lead? While they contributed to early progress, the civic feedbacks associated with the Building Trades' strategy have redounded to the detriment of climate policy (Han, Campbell, and McKenna 2022). The erstwhile clean energy advocates within the Building Trades have shifted their stance toward embracing the fossil fuel industry in the past several years. California's Building Trades have recently sided with the Western States Petroleum Association, and even threatened in 2019 to protest the Green New Deal at the state Democratic Party convention. Meanwhile, multiple interviewees emphasized the open hostility between the Building Trades and the United Steel Workers, two carbon-intensive unions with large memberships. By abstaining from the USW's efforts to craft policies promoting a just transition for oil industry workers and refusing to connect the USW with their legislative allies, the Building Trades are standing in the way of a transition assistance policy analogous to that enacted in Colorado three years ago.

The divisions and policy progress in California contrast with states where the scope of conflict has expanded to the rest of the labor movement. For instance, in Washington state the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) served for two years on the board of the Climate Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy, and in Colorado the SEIU plays a similarly

important role in the climate policymaking network. Broadly speaking, the full incorporation of the house of labor into a coalition reflects a shift toward social movement unionism. As labor scholars indicate, this stance can strengthen a broader progressive community, including for instance environmental justice groups (Obach 2004; Ahlquist and Levi 2013). Despite ostensibly leading the nation in responding to climate change, California has developed a reputation as the poster child for climate policy that neglects environmental justice concerns (Brown 2020; Becker 2021; Tigue 2022). Similarly, a schism emerged between the mainstream environmental and environmental justice communities in Oregon due to a limited scope of conflict over cap-and-invest that excluded the latter from the policymaking table (VanderHart 2021).[216]

Still, California shares one important characteristic with even the states where labor-environmental coalitions have formed. The common denominator of labor's support for California climate policy has been the certainty of job creation for union members. The desire for a clear investment environment attracted the Building Trades to climate policy in California, as they realized that they could enshrine in law guarantees to build most renewable generation capacity in-state, where they had established a norm favoring union labor. According to one key informant with close ties to the Building Trades, "the combination of [RPS] program design" promoting in-state construction and "capturing the individual projects" through project labor agreements (PLAs) "meant members of the Building Trades were getting lots of work." These two pieces of the puzzle together assured the Building Trades that they would benefit on net from early policies to promote clean energy, as these policies would stimulate construction without necessarily cutting into fossil

[216] Interview 32, elected official; Interview 43, coalition staffer

fuel production. Tellingly, Building Trades mobilized desperately to preserve this certainty. In the same negotiations over accelerating the RPS timeline, the electricians secured a quiet victory by incorporating a provision prioritizing utilities' construction of electric vehicle charging stations—again, ensuring jobs for electricians.[217]

The results from these cases corroborate the findings from the previous chapter. Legislative gridlock produced the conditions that gave rise to an advocacy coalition involving the labor federation in Colorado, whereas an early and sustained opportunity to enact climate policy in California left all but the most prepared labor unions behind. In the next and final chapter, I draw theoretical and policy implications from these case studies.

[217] Interview 47, labor lawyer

Chapter 7: Implications for Theory and Practice

From the perspective of theory testing, the case studies reported here provide evidence supporting the hypothesis that political opportunity decreases the likelihood of coalition-building among interest groups. Within a party coalition, defined as a network of policy-demanding groups affiliated with a particular party, the lack of a near-term opportunity to pass these policies incentivizes groups to focus on strengthening their coalitions for current or future rounds of policymaking. Thus, sustained periods of legislative gridlock can ironically contribute to groups' capacity to capitalize on future windows of political opportunity. In contrast, the persistence of allies in government can motivate environmentalists to cut deals to make rapid progress toward decarbonization without building alliances with labor.

This research contributes helps us understand why interest groups join advocacy coalitions and how policy demanders within party coalitions negotiate their policy platforms. It offers a new method for measuring political opportunity and demonstrates how policymaking institutions influence interest groups' behavior. Further, it contributes to an emerging literature on labor's relationship with climate policy, suggesting that worker opposition to energy transitions is not inevitable.

Theories of social movement emergence and coalition formation should incorporate political gridlock alongside opportunity and threat. Especially as gridlock grows more common in the United States and other presidential systems beset by partisan divisions, scholars should consider how gridlock's temporal and spatial consequences shift the terrain upon which leaders mobilize activists and form alliances. Meanwhile, interest group scholars should follow their social movement counterparts in seeking to understand how shifts in

power within government motivate groups' strategies. More broadly, this study suggests that political scientists studying interest groups can learn from sociologists specializing in social movements, and vice versa. Following Burstein and Linton (2002), I wholeheartedly encourage greater integration between these two fields.

The Washington and Colorado cases also illustrate how credible commitments to cooperation can help assure labor leaders that their allies will not defect once a political opportunity reemerges. In both states, high-level environmental leaders invested time and money in developing a shared vision for climate policy, sinking opportunity costs and audience costs. In Washington, an eight-person Governance Board featuring principals from several "big green" groups and organizations working toward environmental justice spent two days a week working together in 2018, as well as a sizeable budget dedicated to hiring a team of twenty staff and waging a communications battle with the fossil fuel industry. In Colorado, funding from the People's Climate Movement facilitated an immersive dialogue including leaders from some of the state's most powerful environmental justice and grassroots climate groups. In both cases, when renegade environmentalists sought to advance climate policy that did not reflect labor and environmental justice groups' concerns, the groups whose principals had participated in extensive dialogue with these groups sprang to their defense. COPA and 350 Colorado rallied to the AFL-CIO's cause to ensure that negotiations over a climate goals bill included a companion bill helping coal workers. And in Washington state, environmental groups made national news when they reversed their endorsements of a carbon tax because it did not reflect labor and community groups' input (Harvey 2016; Hsu 2016; Leber 2016; Roberts 2016).

The findings hold implications for policy as well as theory. While interest groups can take advantage of legislative gridlock to demonstrate their commitment to other members of their party coalition, given the myriad factors that affect election outcomes they ultimately have little control over the dynamics of political opportunity. What interest group leaders do have control over is their budgets, their time, and the design of their policy proposals. My case studies offer intriguing evidence that policy design can facilitate coalition-building by reducing potential allies' uncertainty.

Specifically, I offer two lessons for environmentalists who seek to welcome labor into their climate advocacy coalitions. First, as mentioned above, when labor has greater certainty that their environmental allies will not renege on their promise to work together, they are more likely to support environmentalists' policy proposals. This lesson suggests that significant up-front investments of time and money from environmentalists to facilitate coalition-building can increase labor groups' trust that they will not suffer from defection when windows of political opportunity for climate policy reopen.

Second, when labor has greater certainty that a coalition's policy proposal will benefit their members economically—through job creation, primarily, they are more likely to participate in the coalition. This lesson suggests that standards, quotas, and regulations should be more effective policy tools for attracting support from labor than market-based mechanisms, which tend to offer diffuse benefits whose quantity, timing, and recipients are relatively difficult for economic interest groups to predict. In addition, sector-specific policies provide greater certainty regarding beneficiaries than comprehensive policies, suggesting that an incremental approach focused on one sector at a time is more likely to garner support from affected unions and their labor movement allies. Given labor's central

position within the Democratic Party coalition and the Republican Party's intransigence regarding climate policy, labor federations and unions must guide climate advocates through the narrow path to decarbonizing the United States' economy. Policy proposals that provide stakeholders within labor greater certainty regarding their material costs and benefits will therefore be more politically viable.

To take one example from this study, the proposal for transitioning to 100 percent clean electricity won support from the Building Trades—and, by extension, the labor federation—in Washington state by clearly signaling job creation opportunities for union members. Specifically, environmental groups drew on utilities' models for meeting future electricity demand to demonstrate that new power plants would have to be built to meet the clean electricity target. Once the Building Trades gained assurances that renewable energy developers would receive strong financial incentives for hiring unionized workers and following a series of labor standards, they not only stopped obstructing the policy but invited the labor federation to endorse it. As labor's lobbying has proven pivotal in numerous policy conflicts, this strategy could make the difference in whether climate policy stays on track to meet the global goal of limiting global average temperature rise to below 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Labor and environmental leaders in each of my states echoed this principle. Labor leaders in several states commissioned studies by Robert Pollin's research group at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst to model the economic impacts of an energy transition.[218] This analysis provided critical insights as labor groups drafted policies to secure benefits from the transition and mitigate costs. Multiple labor leaders cited past economic transitions, such as the decline of the auto industry, the defense industry, and the coal

[218] Interview 9, labor federation official; Interview 20, labor federation official; Interview 53, labor federation official; Interview 45, labor scholar

industry elsewhere in the United States and around the world.[219] The Colorado AFL-CIO calculated the precise amount of time that wage differential benefits could feasibly be offered and sought assurances that a Just Transition Office with labor representation would be established before joining environmentalists in support of emissions reduction targets.[220]

In states where the labor federation has remained above the fray, individual unions' advocacy for specific climate policies tends to revolve around the likely prospect of economic benefits. One Oregon environmentalist explained the Carpenters union and the Oregon Building Trades' membership in the Renew coalition with reference to "a potential for work for their members."[221] Describing his desires for the design of cap-and-invest in Oregon, one labor leader used the word "clear" three times in a single sentence, tacking on the word "ensure" for good measure: "It's very important for a policy like cap-and-invest that there was a clear program with clear investments and clear oversight to ensure that workers can successfully transition."[222]

On the other side of the ledger, this study builds to the mounting body of evidence that market-based approaches to addressing climate change are not the political panacea they were once thought to be. Throughout my four cases, carbon pricing's intrinsic agnosticism regarding the distribution of costs and benefits contributed to pivotal unions' doubts regarding these proposals. Environmental advocates did not even attempt to pass carbon pricing in Colorado, having witnessed the failures to win over the labor movement in its cleaner neighbors to the West.

[219] Interview 20, labor federation official; Interview 53, labor federation official
[220] Interview 20, labor federation official
[221] Interview 10, coalition staffer
[222] Interview 18, coalition staffer

Democrats in Washington tried to pass carbon pricing again and again, either through the legislature or at the ballot, and repeatedly ran into opposition from firms and unions in carbon-intensive industries which faced certain costs but uncertain benefits. Even specific provisions regarding revenue distribution such as those incorporated in Initiative 1631 could not mitigate this fundamental uncertainty, which was a feature of the policy's design rather than a bug. While carbon pricing theoretically had the votes to pass in Oregon, ultimately the Democrats were not willing to engage in a protracted war of attrition with renegade Republicans who refused to do their jobs until the bill was off the table. Because no constituency aside from Salem- and Portland-based environmentalists was clamoring for carbon pricing, waffling Democrats had an easy out.

Of course, the cases in this study are all Democratic-leaning states in the American West. To fully decarbonize the United States' economy, labor-environmental coalitions will be required across the country. Therefore, future research should examine how the theory travels to other regions with more entrenched traditional party organizations, such as the East Coast and the Midwest. New York and Illinois, whose legacy of machine politics has been known to frustrate influence from interest groups (Mayhew 1986; McCarty 2015; McCarty and Schickler 2018), constitute critical cases for the theory. The AFL-CIO in 2019 abstained from a coalition advocating for comprehensive climate policy in New York, whereas the state labor federation championed similar legislation in Illinois in 2021. Case studies of these low-carbon economies could be complemented by high-carbon cases such as coalition formation in Nevada and labor's abstention from the state-level climate advocacy coalition in New Jersey.

This study offers labor advocates and public policy experts a set of policy frameworks that could be applied beyond the states studied here. These policies fall broadly into two categories: labor standards and transition assistance. The former seeks to ensure that emerging industries create well-paid union jobs, while the latter seeks to ensure that the workers and communities who lose carbon-intensive jobs remain financially whole and receive benefits which can facilitate their entry into new industries.

Typically, labor standards apply a requirement or an incentive structure to the spending authorized by a new law. Whether mandatory or incentivized, these standards tend to reward employers for adhering to a set of criteria and punish those who do not. Common criteria include offering project labor agreements; paying a prevailing (or market-rate) wage; providing adequate benefits; providing apprenticeships; hiring locally; and contracting with businesses owned by women, minorities, or veterans and which have not violated state or federal labor laws.

Transition assistance, meanwhile, can take a variety of forms. The lowest bar—and one which labor leaders consistently invoke as insufficient—is funds for retraining fossil fuel industry workers. When labor leaders lobby for transition assistance, they often go much further, calling for such policies as bridges to retirement, pensions, health insurance, wage differential benefits, funds to cover relocation expenses, and support for mental health. Wage differential benefits, which laid-off coal miners are now receiving in Colorado, provide these workers with funds making up the difference between their former and current salaries. This policy is designed to ensure that workers do not face a decline in their household incomes as they move into new economic sectors.

My case studies suggest that transition assistance plays a more important role in winning labor's support for climate policy in carbon-intensive economies, while labor standards for clean energy jobs play a more central role in lower-carbon economies. For instance, the Colorado AFL-CIO concerned itself primarily with creating an Office of Just Transition to ensure that workers would receive financial protection as the state moved away from coal-fired power. Meanwhile, given the relative paucity of fossil fuels in Washington, the pivotal unions' primary concern there was whether union members would receive the new jobs in the clean energy sector.

By mitigating the uncertainty associated with a rapid energy transition, labor standards and transition assistance can help assure organized labor that their members will benefit from a comprehensive federal climate policy. With the U.S. Senate currently poised on a knife-edge over the climate spending in President Biden's Build Back Better agenda (Davenport and Friedman 2022), labor standards and transition assistance can contribute to unlocking policies at the federal level to spur energy transitions in states where the window of political opportunity for such policies remains closed. If the United States is to uphold its international commitments to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions, reflected in its Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement, it must significantly accelerate its current trajectory. This decarbonization must occur nationwide, and in far less time than the country could possibly take to heal the partisan divisions which currently frustrate progress in most states. Getting to fifty-one votes for a budget reconciliation bill in the Senate may hinge in part on buy-in from the national AFL-CIO and unions such as the United Mine Workers of America, who remarkably indicated last fall that they would support Build Back Better's climate provisions as long as coal miners received priority for clean energy jobs and

would acquire a series of benefits (UMWA 2021). Climate advocates should consider such provisions a non-negotiable component of any comprehensive climate bill, given the pivotal role that Democrats from carbon-intensive states will likely play in Senate passage.

Since the national People's Climate March in 2014, climate justice advocates have frequently insisted that "to change everything, we need everyone" (Pellow 2017). The case studies reported here provide evidence corroborating this notion. Without the labor federation's endorsement, climate policy stagnated in Washington state, and labor's support proved critical to pushing climate bills over the finish line in Colorado. In contrast, California has yet to pass a bill setting labor standards or providing transition assistance, despite climate having been on the legislative agenda in the state for two decades. Meanwhile, California's environmental justice movement remains critical of the state's cap-and-trade system, which has arguably perpetuated the disproportionate air pollution in communities of color (Brown 2020; Becker 2021; Tigue 2022). While Washington and Colorado—and, to a more limited extent, Oregon—appear poised for climate policy expansion, it is not clear how California's climate movement will take the next step without building a bigger team. Returning to the federal level, the U.S. Congress is unlikely to provide as fertile ground for climate policy as the California legislature, and therefore alliances with labor will likely hold even greater weight in federal policy debates.

Including everyone matters not only for politics but for policy. First, from a climate standpoint, limiting global average temperature rise to below 1.5 degrees Celsius—or even 2 degrees, for that matter—will require unprecedented transitions across all sectors of the economy (IPCC 2018). While the Building Trades feature prominently in debates over the electricity and construction sectors, the science demands that we decarbonize transportation,

manufacturing, and agriculture as well. Shifts away from internal combustion engines in cars and trucks will likely affect the United Auto Workers, especially if emerging electric vehicle producers such as Tesla continue their anti-union practices. Manufacturing unions such as the United Steel Workers have a stake in efforts to shift away from coal and other fossil fuels in production processes, and have already begun to move the needle on climate policy through their leadership within the BlueGreen Alliance. Finally, farmworkers unions such as Familias Unidas Por la Justicia can help ensure that shifts in agricultural practices to reduce carbon and methane emissions reduce health hazards for workers and can put pressure on policymakers to expand climate legislation beyond the energy sector.

Experts inside and outside the academy have argued that labor federations and carbon-intensive unions often seek to water down the very emissions reductions which provide the raison d'etre for climate policy. This is a critique that climate advocates should take seriously. As Mildenberger (2020) shows at the federal level, when policy negotiations incorporate organized labor, carbon-intensive unions tend to exert disproportionate influence on the negotiations given their economic stake in the status quo. Labor's inclusion in negotiations thus often yields compromises, such as carve-outs for certain industries, that reduce the policy's environmental benefits.

However, such sacrifices are not inevitable, as climate policy's benefits are divisible. In Colorado, the AFL-CIO actually supported more ambitious emissions reduction targets than mainstream environmentalists ultimately sought to enact, given that workers and communities reliant on coal would receive transition assistance. Similarly, labor standards sufficed to win labor's support for ambitious clean energy policy in Washington state.

Even if enacting climate policy with labor's support means sacrificing some of that policy's emissions reductions, to the degree that labor's support helps a policy pass, perhaps an alliance with labor is environmentalists' best available alternative. Alliance becomes even more appealing when we consider climate policymaking as a repeated game. A coalition-based strategy to pass a policy can have both policy feedbacks (Campbell 2003; Patashnik 2008; Meckling et al 2015; Stokes 2020) and civic feedbacks (Han, Campbell, and McKenna 2022) that strengthen the constituencies advocating for its expansion in future rounds of policy negotiation. Although environmentalists might preserve emissions reductions in the short run by leaving labor out of their coalition, failure to incorporate labor in one round could foreclose the political resources that would have been available to them in subsequent rounds had they invited labor to the table from the beginning. While history is not destiny, single-issue organizing has not gotten climate advocates very far in the two decades in which they have tried it. I believe that a new strategy is long overdue.

When climate advocacy coalitions include organized labor, their policy proposals are more likely to incorporate provisions designed to protect workers in carbon-intensive industries from the economic effects of an energy transition. These policy design choices help ensure that climate policy solutions do not produce economic dislocation or exacerbate inequality, but rather help to mend the broken ladder of upward mobility in this country. Climate policy opponents, and even skeptical allies, frequently invoke concerns about job losses in carbon-intensive industries. Policies developed in partnership with organized labor can help address these concerns and rebut an influential argument against a rapid and just transition toward a carbon-free economy.

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