



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Kelly Schwinghammer, 612-378-4182**

**Rick Engler, New Jersey Work Environment Council, 201-389-3189**

## **New Jersey Work Environment Council Joins Blue Green Alliance**

### ***Nation's Oldest State-Based Labor-Environmental Coalition Joins Blue Green Alliance as New Jersey Affiliate***

MINNEAPOLIS, MN (June 8, 2009) The Blue Green Alliance announced today that the New Jersey Work Environment Council (WEC) will join the national labor-environmental partnership as a New Jersey affiliate. Formed in 1986 as a result of efforts to pass the state's "Right to Know" laws about hazardous chemicals in workplaces and communities, WEC is the nation's oldest state-based labor-environmental coalition and works to link workers, communities and environmentalists throughout the state of New Jersey.

"We are thrilled to join the Blue Green Alliance and be part of this fast-growing coalition of union members and environmentalists to create good jobs, a clean environment and a green economy," said Rick Engler, Executive Director of WEC. "Ensuring workers' rights is deeply connected to protecting our environment — whether it's negotiating a safer, cleaner workplace or expanding the clean energy economy to create jobs and reduce global warming, and we are pleased to a part of this effort to transform the economy and protect the environment."

"The Work Environment Council has been a leader in bringing union members and environmentalists together," said Larry Cohen, President of the Communications Workers of America, which is a partner in the Blue Green Alliance and a member of WEC. "Labor unions have a long history of working with environmental groups to improve our communities and our workplaces. The blue-green partnership is growing, both in New Jersey through the work of organizations like WEC, and across the United States to create quality jobs and protect the environment."

WEC is a membership alliance of labor, environmental, and community organizations working for safe, secure jobs and a healthy, sustainable environment. The organization grew from a blue-green coalition that helped to enact the state's worker and community right-to-know law in the early 1980s, informing both workers and communities about hazardous chemicals. WEC also helped win first-in-the-country state policies allowing workers at more than 300 industrial facilities to accompany environmental inspectors to point out potential hazards at their facility.

"WEC is a leading organization for advocating policies that keep our communities and our workplaces clean, and this coalition understands the fundamental truth that the best way to fix these problems is to bring together the people who share common concerns about jobs and the environment," said Carl Pope, Executive Director of the Sierra Club, which is also a partner in the Blue Green Alliance and a member of WEC.

The Blue Green Alliance is a national strategic partnership of labor unions and environmental organizations dedicated to increasing the number and quality of jobs in the green economy. Launched by the Sierra Club and the United Steelworkers in 2006, BGA has since grown to include the Communications Workers of America, Natural Resources Defense Council, Laborers' International Union of North America and Service Employees International Union.

"As the Blue Green Alliance grows, and as partnerships like this develop across the country, our efforts to build a green economy become even stronger," said David Foster, Executive Director of the Blue Green Alliance. "With the Work Environment Council, we are expanding our partnership and our reach with the addition of a proven coalition that protects the rights of workers and the environment in New Jersey."