



My name is Rob Walsh and I am so happy with the work I do with Clean Air. **When I first moved to Buffalo two years ago, I was excited to start a job on the same site that my grandfather once worked at during the days of Republic Steel... now Tesla's solar plant.**

***I wanted to work at Tesla because I wanted a job in green energy, a job that could change the world. But it turned out that it wasn't that.*** We were told that as the first class of associates, we would help make decisions that would mold how our workplace operates. Soon everything began to be top-down directives, and our wages were much lower than other manufacturing in the region. We knew we were worth more.



So we decided to take some of our agency back. We began organizing with the United Steelworkers (USW) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). We knew that unionizing was our best chance at providing for ourselves and our families while doing work we could be proud of.

At first the campaign coalition was small, but it began to grow with the help of David Wasiura from the United Steelworkers and Rebecca Newberry & Linnea Brett from the Clean Air Coalition. ***One of the first of its kind, the campaign brought together labor and community with the common goal of environmental justice.***

Together, we built regional, state and national support. Organizations from West Virginia to Montana, Pennsylvania to Kentucky, made up of thousands of members collectively joined to show their support.

***We all knew that a transition to green energy isn't enough if the quality of life for the workers making it happen is deteriorating. The transition must be swift, but it must also be just.***

That's why now I'm working with Clean Air on environmental justice policy. The goal is to strategically build power in our community through the lens of current and future environmental justice policy. ***Just like with Tesla, we must ensure that our members and our people are not only properly represented in the movement, but that they have a seat at the table.***

The longer that polluters can continue their destructive ways, the more the health of our friends, families, and neighbors will suffer. That's why I'm committed to building our base and taking on the challenge of climate justice.

**Small incremental changes are not enough to survive the damage that capitalism has done to the environment. We need to build large-scale, collective power and fight for a world that we believe in. A world where oppressed people are not disproportionately burdened by the pollution of our ground, water, and air, and where our respective communities have the power to make decisions about issues that affect their daily lives.**

I hope that you will read this and realize that together we can build a better, cleaner world. I ask you to join the Clean Air Coalition of Western NY in making this future a reality.