

# CLEEN

## **A Year of Progress!**

### *The CLEEN Project One-Year Report Card*

Our thoughts are with the Ukrainian people. The CLEEN Project stands firmly with them in the face of Putin's horrific and unjust war. As we contemplate how we can all help, it must be remembered that Putin's aggression has been enabled by the world's dependence on fossil fuels. Climate action has never been more urgent. Toward that end, we recently passed the one-year anniversary of both the Biden administration and The CLEEN Project. As members of the climate community, we are more motivated than ever by the clear geopolitical importance of achieving a decarbonized world. And we are highly encouraged by progress made in the last year, notwithstanding stalled legislation. In the first year, the Biden administration passed the Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act and the American Rescue Plan, issued a stream of Executive Orders on climate, and appointed a record number of climate-focused federal leaders who have the experience and authority to push our nation toward dramatic carbon reduction—and they are aggressively pushing through administrative orders, regulatory changes, agency reorganizations and beyond. If the climate provisions of Build Back Better pass, we will of course have even more reason to celebrate. Outside of the administration, the private sector is doing an extraordinary job with record amounts of capital going into climate tech. Public opinion is also changing, with recent polls (George Mason and Yale) showing that the majority of Americans finally support aggressive climate action. As a young organization, it was incredible for The CLEEN Project to play any part in the successes of the last year; in this note, we would like to share our impact over the last year, and more importantly, say thank you.

**The Problem CLEEN Launched to Address:** There existed a treasure trove of ideas from a diversity of experts to cut emissions, increase climate resilience, and create jobs, but they were far from easily accessible and digestible by federal leaders. During past administration transitions, idea sharing had been dominated by a select array of NGOs sharing multi-hundred-page white papers with incoming federal staff, and by well-connected individuals within the beltway via legacy networks.

**The CLEEN Solution:** An open call for submissions and a user-friendly database designed to make it incredibly easy for federal leaders across the executive and legislative branches to find highly actionable ideas to spark job creation in the clean economy. Unlike a traditional NGO, CLEEN was designed to be a temporary, co-operative, and uncompetitive network. Composed of and led by climate leaders of vastly different backgrounds—from energy entrepreneurs, to environmental justice leaders, to seasoned government veterans—CLEEN was designed to democratize and streamline idea sharing and discovery. Despite the subject-matter breadth of ideas received by CLEEN, each was reviewed by the same metrics of impact, feasibility, and equity and, upon successful evaluation by expert reviewers, added to a user-friendly, sortable public database designed specifically for and in consultation with federal leaders.

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**Mission Complete:** Following launch, it quickly became clear that the concept resonated with the climate community. Within a few months, the initiative’s Advisory Board swelled from a handful to a diverse slate of more than [80 well-established leaders](#), each committed to supporting idea generation, evaluation, and sharing, and more than 250 national and international leaders in the clean economy submitted more than 300 idea concepts. At our recent one-year anniversary, our staff collected some key metrics on the initiative’s impact, which we are pleased to share below:

- **20 CLEEN Champions Now in the Administration** – 20 CLEEN Project Advisory Board members and contributors now are serving in the administration (see the list at end of note). These CLEEN champions have been great proponents of the CLEEN Project and no doubt responsible for strong database usage and the large uptake of new ideas being championed across government.
- **50 Big Ideas Implemented—and Growing** – More than 50 CLEEN ideas have been implemented or show substantial progress. Examples include:
  - ⇒ After being nominated in CLEEN’s [second thematic release](#) focused on executive actions to green the building sector, “[The Healthy Home Loan Program: A Clean Energy and Clean Drinking Water Financing Program for Low-Income Homeowners](#),” submitted by Colin Bishopp and Jim Barrett, gained significant traction in conversations with senior Administration officials. Jim Barrett was hired into the DOE Loan Program’s Office to help execute the idea, which if fully realized would provide millions of low-income homeowners with access to ultra-low-cost capital.
  - ⇒ The winning idea of The CLEEN Project’s [first thematic release](#) was “[Civilian Climate Corps – Create a Building Retrofit Division Focused on Low-Income Residential and Small Commercial Properties](#),” by Sara Neff. The concept, building on the framework developed by Governor Jay Inslee’s presidential campaign, was [ultimately integrated into legislation](#) introduced a few months later by Sen. Markey and Rep. Ocasio-Cortez, and this bold vision for the CCC is now central to the Biden administration’s climate strategy. Although slightly different, the DOE also recently announced its [Clean Energy Corps](#) which aims to hire 1,000 diverse individuals to implement the DOE’s new [mandate](#) from the infrastructure bill around clean technology deployment.
  - ⇒ The winning idea of The CLEEN Project’s second thematic release—“[A Building Energy Performance Standard for Federal Buildings](#),” by Veronique Bugnion and Carolyn Sarno-Goldthwaite—is [moving forward](#) and will cut emissions and create jobs across the country.
  - ⇒ Via executive order, the White House established the [Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities and Economic Revitalization](#), which, as Jeremy Richardson called for in his idea “[Creating an Office of Just Energy Transition in the White House](#),” supports economic revitalization in energy communities.
  - ⇒ “[NextGen Highways](#),” a concept long championed by Morgan Putnam, Allie Kelly, Rolf Nordstrom, Joe Sullivan, Russ Elliott and others, was advanced when the Secretary Buttigieg [announced](#) plans to integrate fiber and electric power infrastructure into highway rights-of-way, and continues to [pick up momentum](#).

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- ⇒ Lowell Ungar with ACEEE submitted many excellent ideas to The CLEEN Project. Several of them were included in Build Back Better, but his idea [“Update Energy Efficiency Standards for Manufactured Housing”](#)—the winner of CLEEN’s thematic release focused on using executive authority to deliver environmental justice—[is being advanced](#) using administrative authority.
- ⇒ Peder Osterkamp, Tristan Smith, and Domagoj Baresic’s idea [“US steps up to fill leadership vacuum in International Maritime Organization”](#) was a winner of CLEEN’s thematic release focused on international partnerships. Shortly after the release and its distribution, it was announced that the U.S. would become the second country to make the IMO’s emissions pledge.
- ⇒ Mike Williams’ idea on [‘Buy Clean’ disclosure rules](#) was included in Executive Order 14057 and CLEEN Advisory Board Member Betty Cremmins has joined the Office of the Federal Chief Sustainability Officer in CEQ to champion forward the multi-agency Buy Clean Task Force.
- **10,000+ Database Visits** – The CLEEN Project database was used more than 10,000 times in 2021, with more than half of those uses coming within the D.C. area.
- **Thematic Releases** – CLEEN released [“Best Ideas”](#) on 14 major themes aligned with Biden administration priorities, determined by Advisory Board voting.
- **CLEEN Curated Ideas for Federal Leaders** – Project staff developed and socialized curated lists of ideas for senior staff across the federal government, including at the White House, CEQ, DOE, DOT, DOD, EPA, GSA, HUD, USDA, and key Congressional offices

**The Future: Initiative Complete & The Database Lives On** – The CLEEN Project was founded as a temporary collaboration among climate leaders to create a platform to source expert-vetted ideas for federal leaders and make them easily accessible via a searchable database. The hard work of the Advisory Board members and authors has realized this vision. To continue to support the Biden administration and the broader climate community, the database will remain fully accessible through 2024. While CLEEN was not designed to be a permanent organization, we hope and expect that other organizations and institutions will learn from CLEEN’s successes and adopt aspects of its approach.

Most importantly, we would like to say THANK YOU. The success of CLEEN has been entirely due to the enthusiasm, engagement, and incredible ability of the 400+ person network of idea contributors, reviewers, Advisory Board members, and friends of CLEEN now serving in the Administration. If nothing else, The CLEEN Project puts into focus that the effectiveness of movements is derived from the individuals that compose them—and by that measure the climate movement’s prospects could not be in better shape.

Sincerely,  
Kalen Davison, Co-founder  
Oriana Tannenbaum, Co-founder  
Jeff Tannenbaum, Co-founder

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## **CLEEN Champions Now Serving or Working in the Administration**

Betty Cremmins, Director for Sustainable Supply Chains, Office of the Federal Chief Sustainability Officer, White House Council on Environmental Quality

Christina Bowman, Policy Advisor, White House Council on Environmental Quality

Dan Kammen, Senior Advisor for Energy Innovation at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

Elin Swanson Katz, Director, Office of Public Participation, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Jahi Wise, Senior Advisor for Climate Policy and Finance, The White House

Jennifer Macedonia, Deputy Associate Administrator for Policy, Environmental Protection Agency

Jessica Matthews, Electricity Advisory Committee, Department of Energy

Jigar Shah, Director, Department of Energy Loan Programs Office

Jim Barrett, Senior Consultant, Department of Energy Loan Programs Office

Kate Gordon, Senior Advisor to the Secretary, Department of Energy

Krystal Laymon, Deputy Director for Climate Resilience, White House Council on Environmental Quality

Kyle Winslow, Legislative Affairs lead, Department of Energy Loan Programs Office

Madison Freeman, Senior Advisor on Innovation, Special Presidential Envoy for Climate

Mark Chambers, Senior Director for Building Emissions and Community Resilience, White House Council on Environmental Quality

Michelle Moore, Board of Directors, Tennessee Valley Authority

Oriana Tannenbaum, Policy Analyst, Department of Energy

Rick Duke, Senior Director and White House Liaison, Special Presidential Envoy for Climate

Shuchi Talati, Chief of Staff, Fossil Energy and Carbon Management, Department of Energy

Varun Sivaram, Senior Advisor for Clean Energy and Innovation, Special Presidential Envoy for Climate

## **CLEEN Champions Appointed as City/State Climate Leaders**

Anna Lising, Senior Climate Advisor, Washington State Office of the Governor

Rohit Aggarwala, Chief Climate Officer, New York City

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## **The CLEEN Project Advisory Board:**

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