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**Contact:** Jonathon Dworkin, 202-660-1340 x5, [jonathon@newdealleaders.org](mailto:jonathon@newdealleaders.org)

**NewDEAL Forum Announces New Leaders of Climate Policy Initiative**

*State and local policymakers will recommend practical ways to maximize the impact of historic federal investments in climate change.*

**Washington, D.C.** – Today, the [NewDEAL Forum](#) announced California Sen. Ben Allen, New Hampshire Sen. Rebecca Perkins Kwoka, and Newport News, Virginia, Mayor Phillip Jones as the new co-chairs of the organization’s [Climate Change Policy Group](#).

The next phase of the policy group’s work will focus specifically on how states and localities can maximize the clean energy benefits of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), and other funding streams created during the Biden Administration. The group will pay special attention to IRA, the largest single investment in green energy and climate change in our country’s history, and how state and local leaders can both help ensure those funds are used wisely and enact policies to complement them.

These efforts will build on the group’s past [Climate Solutions report](#), which offered dozens of policy recommendations for state and local leaders to grow a clean energy economy and protect their communities. The new co-chairs take over for the group’s first leaders, former Wisconsin Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes and Norfolk, VA Councilmember Andria McClellan.

Over the coming year, the working group will host virtual policy briefings with issue-area experts, as well as hold in-person meetings at major events of the Forum’s sister organization, the NewDEAL, a network for forward-thinking, results-oriented state and local elected officials from across the country. In addition, the Policy Group plans to issue several briefs to help state and local elected officials make smart, innovative, and workable investments to address climate change.

“The climate crisis is the defining policy issue of a generation,” said **NewDEAL Forum CEO Debbie Cox Bultan**. “Despite the seriousness of the situation, I feel hopeful because I know state and local elected officials like Sen. Allen, Sen. Perkins Kwoka, and Mayor Jones are summoning the technology, innovation, and urgency needed to meet this moment. The world needs leaders who are committed to utilizing every resource to bring about long-lasting change. I want to thank our past co-chairs, Mandela Barnes and Andria McClellan, for their incredible leadership in their communities and nationally, and I can’t think of three more dedicated officials to lead our climate policy efforts going forward.”

Sen. Allen has represented California’s 24th district since 2014 and chairs the Senate Environmental Quality Committee that oversees the state’s climate policy, among many other topics. In 2022, he spearheaded SB54 to dramatically reduce the waste generated by single-use disposable packaging and food serviceware by 2032 through source reduction, recycling, and composting.

“Addressing the climate crisis will take all of us working together at local, state, and federal levels,” said Sen. Allen. “As much as I want to share policies that have worked in California with colleagues from across the nation, I also want to learn about innovations that are making an impact elsewhere. If we all work together, we can leave a cleaner, healthier planet for future generations.”

Sen. Perkins Kwoka has represented New Hampshire’s 21st District since 2020, after previously serving for four years on the Portsmouth City Council. Her work in the state Senate has included a push to invest in offshore wind energy, as well as continuing her focus on affordable and workforce housing. In addition to her legislative work, Perkins Kwoka is Senior Vice President and General Counsel at ReWild Renewables, a solar company.

“Working towards renewables is a win-win for our local economies,” said **Sen. Perkins Kwoka**. “Giving our small businesses options for the purchase of electricity will drive prices down, and the IRA supports investments in communities across America to provide these options. As both a legislator and environmental attorney, I’m honored to help lead this working group to focus on practical, industry-minded solutions. I know how dire the situation is, yet I also know that we have the means and will - and ideas! - to bring about positive change. There’s no time to waste.”

At 33 years old, Phillip Jones is the youngest directly-elected mayor in Newport News history. As a veteran and now as an elected official, he is committed to an innovative, pro-growth vision for the city's future, including through many initiatives to expand opportunity by encouraging small business growth, improving access to quality education, and ensuring affordable, accessible

housing, while recognizing that the ability to address those issues relies on stopping damage from climate change.

“The Inflation Reduction Act is a once-in-a-generation investment in addressing the climate crisis,” said **Mayor Jones**. “Residents of Newport News and the Hampton Roads region have experienced the effects of increased severe weather events over the past several years. We cannot afford to waste a moment or a dollar as we implement policies here and around the nation. I’m excited to work with my colleagues to ensure that we are all doing everything we can to seize this opportunity.”

### **About NewDEAL Forum**

The NewDEAL Forum is a Washington-DC based non-profit organization which identifies and promotes innovative, future-oriented state and local pro-growth progressive policies that can improve the lives of all Americans. By facilitating the identification and spread of policy ideas, the NewDEAL Forum seeks to foster economic growth, reduce barriers to opportunity, and promote good government in communities throughout the country.

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