

Questions to Ask About Different Parts of the Supply Chain

A companion document to our [Solidarity Principles for the Transportation Supply Chain and the Energy Transition](#)

November 2025

All of us living and working along the supply chain can use the following questions to guide our understanding of how we are connected with each other, and point to specific demands that we can make as we unite in solidarity. We intend for this to be a living document that can be expanded and updated to reflect current policy discussions and best practices.

Mining

Are the mines that provide materials for building electric cars, buses, bikes, and other energy transition facilities owned and operated in ways that are consistent with our principles of solidarity? These questions should be asked of existing and proposed mines, in the US and globally.

- Are these mines operating through legally binding commitments to protect human rights, the environment, the rights of workers to join or form unions, and sacred sites?
- Do these mines abide by mandatory human rights and Indigenous peoples' rights due diligence in accordance with national and international protections?¹
- Do these mines adhere to workers' rights in accordance with the International Labor Organization's (ILO) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, as well as stringent environmental standards?

¹ This includes the United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, among other protections.

- Has the mining company engaged with local communities to address concerns and provide community benefits through a binding agreement such as a community benefits agreement?

Sourcing of materials

Are companies that use minerals directly or indirectly in their products sourcing materials in ways that are consistent with our principles of solidarity? A few examples of companies for which we should be asking these questions include: auto makers that source metals and batteries, battery manufacturers that source minerals, and delivery companies that source fleets of vehicles.

- Do companies demonstrate that they have conducted human rights and environmental due diligence over the source of raw materials, and have recognized the rights of workers and communities, including the rights of Indigenous peoples and other directly and disproportionately impacted communities throughout the supply chain?²
- Does the government require companies to recognize human and environmental rights to qualify for federal tax credits, loan guarantees, or related public funds?
- Do companies conduct due diligence to identify and address human rights and environmental abuses in their own operations and supply chains, in line with international principles and standards?³
- Do US-based companies investing in any part of the energy transition mineral supply chain abroad uphold, at minimum, the same environmental, social, equity, labor, and Indigenous rights standards that they uphold at home, subject to enforcement and compensatory social and environmental dumping fees if they fail to do so?

² This includes Indigenous peoples' right to free, prior, and informed consent as well as the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

³ This includes the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct, and the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

Indigenous sovereignty

Do companies, governments, and individuals throughout the transportation supply chain acknowledge and respect Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination in ways that are consistent with our principles of solidarity?

- Has the federal government operationalized the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and ratified the free, prior, and informed consent standards of the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 169 across the energy transition mineral supply chain?
- Does the federal government protect the environment and human rights, as well as Indigenous peoples' right to free, prior, and informed consent, by requiring recipients of federal financial, diplomatic, or technical support to perform ongoing human rights and environmental due diligence across their supply chains in accordance with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples?
- Has Congress confirmed that Tribal nations can exercise their full and inherent civil regulatory and adjudicatory authority over their own citizens, lands, resources, and activities?

Manufacturing

Are the factories that manufacture lithium-ion batteries, electric vehicles, charging stations, and other infrastructure for the transportation supply chain operating in ways that are consistent with our principles of solidarity?

- Do manufacturing companies provide safe working and living conditions for workers, surrounding communities, and the environment?
- Are companies transparent about impacts of their operations on surrounding air and water quality?

- Are workers empowered to make fundamental decisions about their roles in their workplaces, including the right to collectively bargain and form a union?
- Do companies offer equal pay for equal work without tiered structures?
- Do companies acknowledge and address the impacts of the products they buy and sell on other places, including workers, communities, and environments?

Labor

Are workers throughout the supply chain able to work in jobs and conditions that are consistent with our principles of solidarity?

- Do governments and companies ensure wages, benefits, and workplace safety standards that exceed current standards for manufacturing union jobs and keep pace with the cost of living?
- Do state, local, and federal governments—as well as union contracts—implement and enforce the highest environmental and safety standards for workers at each step of zero-emissions transportation?
- Have state, local, and federal governments enacted legislation that makes it easier for workers to exercise their constitutional right to form a union, collectively bargain, and steer the future of their work without fear of intimidation or retaliation?
- Do state, local, and federal governments fully fund workforce training programs to ensure existing workers have the ability to upskill within their craft and maintain high-quality jobs through a transition toward a zero-emission economy?
- Do state, local, and federal governments require that, to be eligible for federal tax credits, loan guarantees, or related financing, companies must demonstrate that they have union contracts for all work in facilities to which incentives are directed, have no tiered pay or benefit structures, and are not creating new tiered jobs?

- Have companies ended tiered pay and benefit structures?
- Has Congress amended the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to reduce the standard workweek from 40 hours per week to 32 hours while retaining full pay by enacting the Thirty-Two Hour Workweek Act?⁴
- Do governments enact incentives that reward union-made transit for commercial, consumer, and municipal purchasers, including transit agencies and school districts?
- Do governments and companies support a just transition that gives timely, focused support to the full spectrum of workers likely to lose jobs or livelihoods in the transition to a zero-emissions transportation sector, including supports such as wage replacement; income and pension guarantees; healthcare benefits; relocation and peer counseling for professional and personal support; education and training for existing and future jobs that are safe and healthy; and planning and technical assistance, as well as replacement revenue for communities facing shrinking tax bases and dwindling public revenue streams as a result of the transition?

Transit equity and sustainability

Is transportation understood as a human right, and do people of all incomes, races, ethnicities, genders, and geographies have equitable access to sustainable transportation that is consistent with our principles of solidarity?

- Have state, federal, and local governments expanded investments in efficient public transit with ambitious design standards to improve mobility?
- Do state, federal, and local governments direct robust investment toward walking, biking, and micromobility infrastructure nationwide, with the goal of achieving 100 percent sidewalk coverage in all Census-defined urban areas by 2030; at least 50 percent cycle path coverage by 2030; and the achievement of “Vision Zero,” or zero bike and pedestrian fatalities on United States streets, by 2030?

⁴ [The Thirty-Two Hour Workweek Act](#) was introduced to the House of Representatives by Rep. Mark Takano in March 2023.

- Do state, federal, and local governments work to ensure local communities are designed and built to encourage a mix of people and population densities high enough to allow for easy walking, biking, and transit use, and to ensure low-income households and communities of color are protected from displacement?
- Do state, federal, and local governments assess existing transit-oriented development policies that prioritize housing for demographics most likely to depend on and use transit, particularly low-income people, and deploy funding for technical assistance programs that would support implementation and replication of these programs around transit lines?

Repurposing and recycling batteries

Do all stages of the transportation supply chain prioritize circular use of minerals that is consistent with our principles of solidarity?

- Are batteries and vehicles designed with end-of-life repurposing and recycling in mind, so that batteries can be safely and easily removed, replaced, and disassembled into component parts for repair and reuse?
- Do workers in recycling facilities for lithium-ion batteries, vehicles, and other transportation infrastructure receive equal work for equal pay, high-quality training programs, and strong safety protections for dangerous processes and materials?
- Do recycling companies develop and operate facilities in ways that are transparent and accountable to workers and communities, especially directly and disproportionately impacted communities?
- Do companies prioritize circularity at every stage of the supply chain, from research and development to construction, manufacturing, and recycling?
- Do companies ensure their recycling processes are as safe and sustainable as possible, protecting human and environmental well-being?

Community benefits and right-to-know

Are communities informed and empowered to make decisions at every stage of the transportation supply chain, to understand impacts before they occur, and to hold companies and governments accountable in accordance with our principles of solidarity?

- Do state, federal, and local governments require companies to provide communities complete and timely information about company operations, including the human health, labor, and environmental impacts—especially before those operations are up and running?
- Do communities have the right to develop strong, binding, effective community benefits agreements that ensure community members receive substantial benefits from projects, especially directly and disproportionately impacted community members?
- Do governments and companies recognize and respect communities' right to free, prior, and informed consent, including Indigenous and other frontline communities?

Right to transportation

Do transit riders have access to safe, affordable, accessible, frequent, and high-quality transportation, and do governments and companies prioritize this access in ways that are consistent with our principles of solidarity?

- Is public transit viewed as a human right, not a private commodity or privilege?
- Are transit riders recognized and respected as key participants in the transportation supply chain?
- Do transit agencies invite transit riders to participate in key decisions about transit planning and operations?
- Do governments and companies support public transit systems and riders and center them in their plans to reduce carbon emissions in the transportation sector?
- Do transit riders have the time and resources to educate themselves and others about the rights they have and should have?