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Insulation experts are the unsung heroes of our clean energy progress - by Jeffrey Saliba

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Jeffrey Saliba

While not as well-known as Nobel-prize-winning economists, politicians, or international climate activists, your local union insulators are essential to reducing harmful carbon emissions across Massachusetts. We're proud to advocate for cleaner energy in the halls of power, as well as do the skilled, physical work in schools, office buildings, and hospitals to upgrade our state's infrastructure and make buildings more energy efficient.

Mechanical insulation is among the most effective tools we have in the construction industry to fight climate change. When installed properly, mechanical insulation makes equipment more energy efficient and it reduces carbon emissions. It's one of the best energy efficiency bargains available.

Across Boston and beyond, union insulators are putting this technology to work for businesses, residents, and our planet. From the Seaport to Suffolk Downs, insulators are retrofitting old buildings and insulating new ones to lower emissions and combat global warming.

And our work isn't done. Local 6 is actively advocating for policies to improve energy efficiency and fight climate change.

At the federal level, we're urging lawmakers to require comprehensive energy audits for all public buildings. Most mechanical systems in the U.S. lack anywhere between 10% and 30% of the mechanical insulation needed to be energy efficient. By auditing and upgrading public buildings, Congress could take a big step forward to fix that and combat change. We also support tax breaks for households and businesses that upgrade their insulation, to incentivize further energy efficiency.

On Beacon Hill, Insulators Local 6 has been a forceful advocate for making Project Labor Agreements a central feature of government-funded construction projects, including their successful inclusion in economic development legislation passed this year. PLAs are widely considered to be a best practice for clean energy projects, while also meeting state and federal regulatory standards. We've also worked with local leaders from Boston to Peabody in recent years to adopt Responsible Contractor Ordinances for local construction projects. Such ordinances establish clear standards for firms bidding on publicly funded projects, including labor and environmental standards.

If Massachusetts is to reach its commitment to a zero-carbon clean-energy future, it will require continued investments in resilient infrastructure and strategic planning. As the leading union of skilled insulation experts, Local 6 will continue doing our part to ensure buildings across Massachusetts are safe, energy efficient, and to speed our transition to a clean-energy future. Insulators Local 6 are experts in mechanical insulation, firestopping, and hazardous waste remediation, with members throughout New England.

Jeffrey Saliba is the business manager/financial secretary at Heat and Frost Insulators Local 6 Boston. He also serves on the Massachusetts Apprenticeship Council.

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