



January 2021

# GULF SOUTH FOR GREEN NEW DEAL

## 2021 OVERVIEW & ACTION PLAN

*"The seas are rising...and so are we!"*

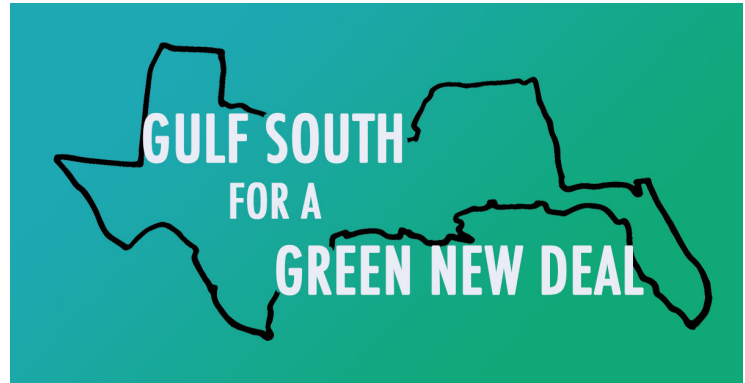


# Gulf South for a Green New Deal

*Anchored by Gulf Coast Center for Law & Policy*

## **Gulf South for a Green New Deal**

**(GS4GND)** is a frontline-led regional formation of more than 190 organizations advancing long-existing work in the region towards climate, racial, and economic justice. GS4GND focuses its work through three main avenues: strategic communications, policy development, and direct action. These three avenues of work integrate organizing in all of its components towards the creation of a Green New Deal that is inclusive of frontline communities in the Gulf South (TX, LA, MS, AL, FL). GS4GND is the first grassroots, regional-led movement for a Green New Deal in the US, and is inspiring change across the nation and world.



**Background.** Over the last 15 years, frontline communities across the five Gulf States have been building solutions to address disaster recovery and planning, while advancing policies to address the harms of the extractive economies that cause the climate crisis. The relationships that created the Gulf South for a Green New Deal were forged in collective work: resisting harm in the BP oil spill disaster; protecting and recognizing Indigenous lands that were lost to rising seas; and organizing around solutions such as state movement assemblies around energy democracy and the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. The GS4GND launched on a strong foundation of relationships, shared experiences, and strength on May 2019 at Mahalia Jackson Theater in New Orleans, LA with more than 800 attendees formally representing more than 30 tribal nations, neighborhood associations, faith groups, student groups, and community organizations.

Following the launch, the Gulf Coast Center for Law & Policy (GCCLP) facilitated a six-month, collective, bottom-up process with frontline communities across the Gulf South to develop a policy platform rooted in the values and priorities of the most impacted communities across 5 states. Starting with a critical analysis of US House Resolution 109 (AKA “The Green New Deal Resolution”), we concluded that even well-intentioned federal policy often excludes Southern perspectives, communities, and realities, thereby missing opportunities for systemic change in this nation’s most influential region.



This six-month collective conversation in 2019 yielded the Gulf South for a Green New Deal Policy Platform. This living document serves as a foundational starting point informing localized policy development, communications and actions. The GS4GND policy platform has been submitted to multiple U.S. congressional committees, including the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, House Committee on Natural Resources, Bernie Sanders Presidential Campaign and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights. Moreover, this document serves as the organizing tool for GS4GND and lays out the shared values that hold participants accountable and actualizes a shared vision on the unique requirements for a successful GND in the Gulf South.

**The Five Approaches and Seven Values of the Gulf South for a Green New Deal.** For GS4GND to thrive, we move our work across the region built on shared values and shared practice. These values and approaches shaped by the frontlines who created the policy priorities also anchor the accountability of the regional actors. While the policies or work might change each year, the values and approaches remain as our steadfast guides on this journey.

As communities living in and working on the frontlines of disaster and extractive industry practices, we know the promise of jobs and justice cannot be achieved without ensuring the following values are reflected at every stage in the design and implementation of Green New Deal policies.



## Five Approaches

- **Heal + Reconcile.** Honor, archive, and advance the inherent sovereign rights and traditional knowledge of Indigenous principles and methods of healing the human relationship to the land and to one another. Reconcile the relationships of communities traditionally pitted against one another.
- **Connect + Build.** Connect the dots between the climate crisis, coastal crisis, the toxic impact of the extractive and polluting industries, and the economic and political crisis in the Gulf South.
- **Shift + Re-Imagine.** Shift frontline relationships through information sharing, community participatory research, and collaborative analysis development toward an intersectional approach for shared liberation. Re-imagine a collective future for the Gulf South through equity and justice. Build a tailored strategy and communications campaign to shift the national narrative about the value, role, and leadership of the Gulf South region.
- **Democratize + Organize.** Democratize information and political processes toward structural shifts that dismantle systems of oppression. Organize aligned regional direct action, policy, and communication campaigns that advance the unique collective grassroots shift towards a just transition, moving away from extractive economies and toward a sustainable future.
- **Resource + Re-invest.** Resource and support the thought leadership and frontline work of Gulf South leaders through the development of progressive organizing, legal, and funding relationships and alternative forms of community controlled dollars in climate resilience and resistance of Southern frontlines.





### Seven Values of Gulf South for a Green New Deal

- **Advance Equity.** Consider and repair historical harm against those who have contributed the least to climate change and suffered the most. Advance solutions to the climate crisis that center those most impacted.
- **Follow the Frontlines.** The voices and needs of Indigenous and frontline communities must be prioritized in a Green New Deal. The sovereign rights and treaties of all tribal nations must be acknowledged and honored.
- **Build Community Wealth & Health.** For too long, workers in Gulf South communities have been forced into a false choice between a living wage and their health. Jobs associated with a Green New Deal must offer living wages, prioritize sustainable farming, transitioning to renewable energy, and investing in the next generation who will live on a further changing planet.
- **Invest in Visionary & Transformative Change.** Urgent transformative action capable of addressing the full scope and complexity of this moment is needed. Now is the time to invest in systems and institutions capable of bringing forth a more just, equitable, and sustainable world.
- **Advance Community & Local Control.** Power must be shifted away from large corporations and to local communities. We demand pathways towards affordable housing and sustainable homeownership, public control of natural resources, renewable energy sources and utility services.

- **Use an Intersectional Approach.** The challenges facing frontline communities are not rooted in a single issue but rather the consequence of intersecting breaks and injustices in our social fabric.
- **Value All Humans Equally.** Every human being has value and the inherent value of our humanity is not measured by our economic output. We must ensure the safety, dignity, and self-determination of all workers, and value non workers – children, students, unemployed people, elders, and people with disabilities – as worthy of support.



**The Gulf South for Green New Deal 2020.** In 2020, Gulf South for a Green New Deal built regional movement infrastructure through regional convergences, strategic convenings, and innovative spaces for collective healing and reconciliation. Although the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted plans for in-person gatherings and shifted all programming to virtual, GS4GND commemorated BP10 (the 10 year commemoration of the BP drilling disaster) in Mississippi, remembered 15 years since Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana, hosted the CCTX Tribunal on Human Rights to advance Indigenous land sovereignty in Texas, and connected the dots between housing and climate in Alabama.

Over a 7 month period, GS4GND also anchored the Sacred Waters Pilgrimage to advance healing & reconciliation as key first steps towards climate justice. This pilgrimage down the Mississippi River created space to heal relationships between Black and Native femmes and heal the human relationship with mother earth using Indigenous-inspired prayer and ceremony.



**The 2020 Gulf Gathering**, anchored by GS4GND partner organization Healthy Gulf, convened more than 120 Gulf South leaders representing organizations from all 5 Gulf South states over 4 days in order to cultivate the GS4GND 2021 Action Plan. During the 2020 Gulf Gathering, participants:

- created a shared understanding of our current Gulf South landscape;
- honored existing leadership in the region; and
- reviewed our shared work over the past year.

Participants then convened in breakout groups with other leaders from their state in order to cultivate state priorities around policy, action campaigns, and communications.

Finally GCCLP facilitated a modified People's Movement Assembly process through which participants from all 5 Gulf South states reviewed and affirmed the policy, action, and communication priorities for the Gulf South in 2021. This yielded the GS4GND 2021 Action Plan.

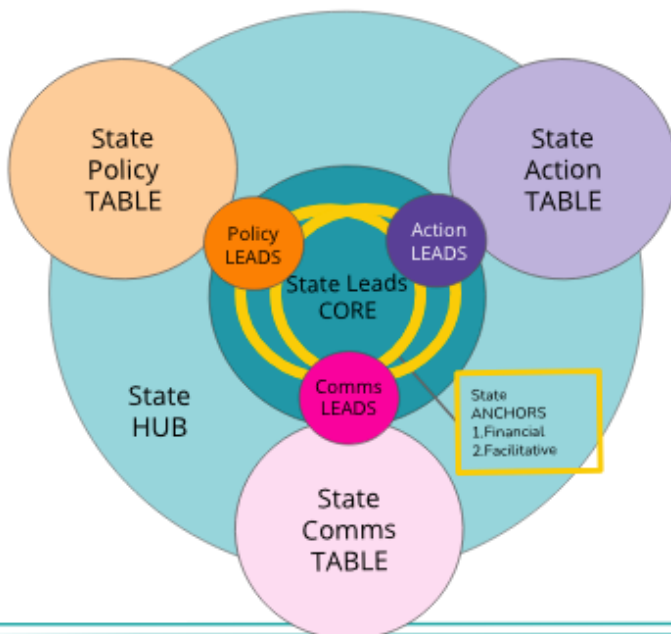


**GS4GND 2021 Action Plan and Governance.** In 2021, GS4GND's goals are to:

- Build out the GS4GND infrastructure to advance state goals
  - Communications networks and infrastructure
  - Financial network and infrastructure
- Cultivate Regional Leadership
  - Political Education and Training
  - Skills development
- Connect Gulf South for Green New Deal with national and regional networks
  - Southern Movement Assembly
  - Southeast Climate & Energy Network- Southern Communities for a Green New Deal
  - Movement for Black Lives – Red, Black & Green New Deal

**The 2021 GS4GND Action Plan** established 5 state-wide hubs (one per Gulf South state) consisting of two state anchors, at least one state policy lead for local policy and regulatory work, at least one communications lead to advance a regional communications strategy and at least one action campaign lead to advance regional actions in 2021. These hubs, led by anchors and leads, create a more than 20 person governance council for GS4GND representing frontline organizations across all 5 Gulf South states. See Graphic 1 below for a visual detail.

## State Governance Structure



**2 Anchors.** Financial Anchors manage receipt, distribution and tracking of financial support. Facilitative Anchors support the state hub cohesion.

**3 Table Leads.** Policy Table Leads advance policy priorities for the state. Communication Leads build out internal communication mechanisms and cultivate messaging and strategy to support regional actions. Action Leads coordinate with at least 1 other state to advance action opportunities.

**3 Tables.** Residents from each state may participate in state meetings. Table leads cast a wide net and orient participants to Values-based accountability system.



**Regional Action Priorities for GSGND 2021.** The five states coalesced around five critical and intersectional action areas: land, labor, energy, economy, and water. These five issues are not the only issues that the GS4GND states are currently moving, but they create opportunities for multiple interventions that can lead to structural change and regional transformation. For example, engaging in the sacredness of water will impact the health of the land or pushing for long-term sustainable and renewable energy systems creates new opportunities for jobs. GS4GND will align and connect work moving in at least 2 Gulf South states in order to build regional movement infrastructure and power.

All five Gulf South states identified land as an action campaign, making it the issue that brings the region together and provides a good opportunity for regional power building and collaboration. Action campaigns on land include protecting sacred sites by recognizing tribal sovereignty (TX), protecting or restoring public lands (LA), protecting wetlands and forests (MS), advancing housing justice and investment into affordable housing (AL), and food justice campaigns (FL). Additionally multiple states aligned around labor with job creation campaigns being discussed in most states along with energy campaigns against utility shut offs.

**Communications Priorities for GSGND 2021: We Have the Power to Change our Future.**

The communications priorities for 2021 focus on building out internal and external communications infrastructure. At the Gulf Gathering, the states established an internal communications infrastructure, which includes email listserv regionally and by state.

Meanwhile, region-wide external communications are under development pending capacity, including a new GS4GND website and social media presence.



Communications leads in each state will collectively develop a plan and budget for on the ground messaging campaigns that can include billboards, social media, talk radio, and mediums they know to be effective in their own communities. Gulf South Frontline messaging was developed at the 2020 Gulf Gathering and included messaging:

- We have the power to change our future.
- Defend our climate. Defend our culture.
- Defend our coast.TX: Go big on climate solutions.

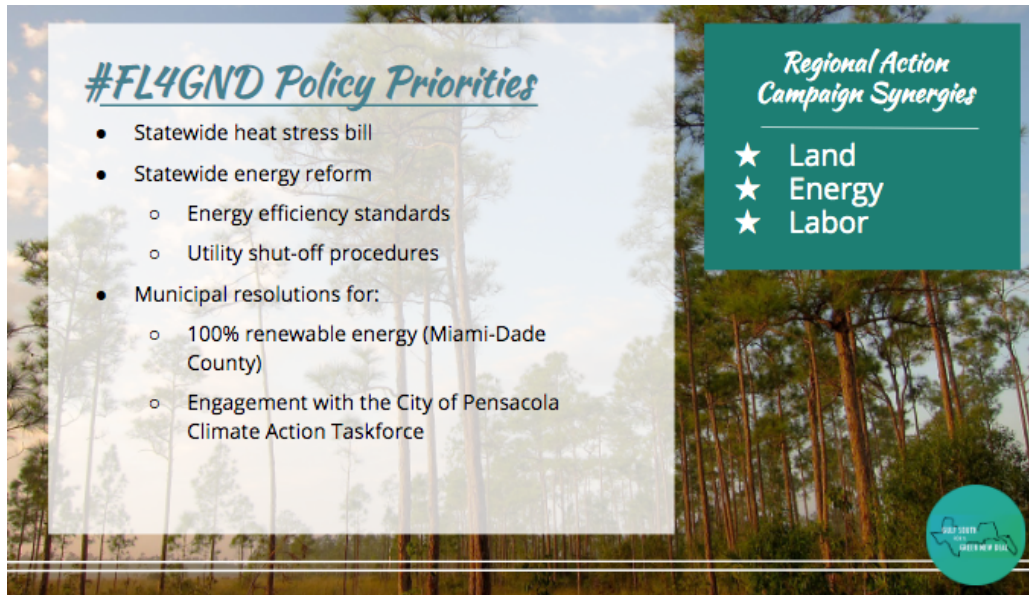
**Policy priorities for GS4GND 2021: Resisting Extraction, Building Justice.** The policy priorities align around resisting extractive economies, the dirty energy buildout, and tax exemptions for polluting industries that are assaulting the Gulf South while building green infrastructure and energy, local control, and good jobs.

**Alabama** policy priorities include launching Birmingham Green New Deal campaign, revoking permits for 3 proposed mega-prisons, stopping expansion of Alabama Power gas plant, advocating for statewide Water Plan and statewide Environmental Justice Plan, and city-level Affordable Housing plan in Mobile, candidate engagement ahead of 2022 elections, advancing renewable energy, and establishing an Environmental Justice Commission to the City of Birmingham.





**Florida** policy priorities include advocating for statewide heat stress bill, statewide energy reform, including energy efficiency standards and utility shut-off procedures, municipal resolutions for 100% renewable energy (Miami-Dade County), and engagement with the City of Pensacola Climate Action Taskforce.



**#FL4GND Policy Priorities**

- Statewide heat stress bill
- Statewide energy reform
  - Energy efficiency standards
  - Utility shut-off procedures
- Municipal resolutions for:
  - 100% renewable energy (Miami-Dade County)
  - Engagement with the City of Pensacola Climate Action Taskforce

**Regional Action Campaign Synergies**

- ★ Land
- ★ Energy
- ★ Labor

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**Louisiana** policy priorities include meaningful engagement with the Governor's statewide Climate Initiatives Task Force, an unprecedented opportunity to help plan the state's ambitious strategy to fully decarbonize by 2050, as well as advancing renewable energy and equitable and affordable housing.



**#LA4GND Policy Priorities**

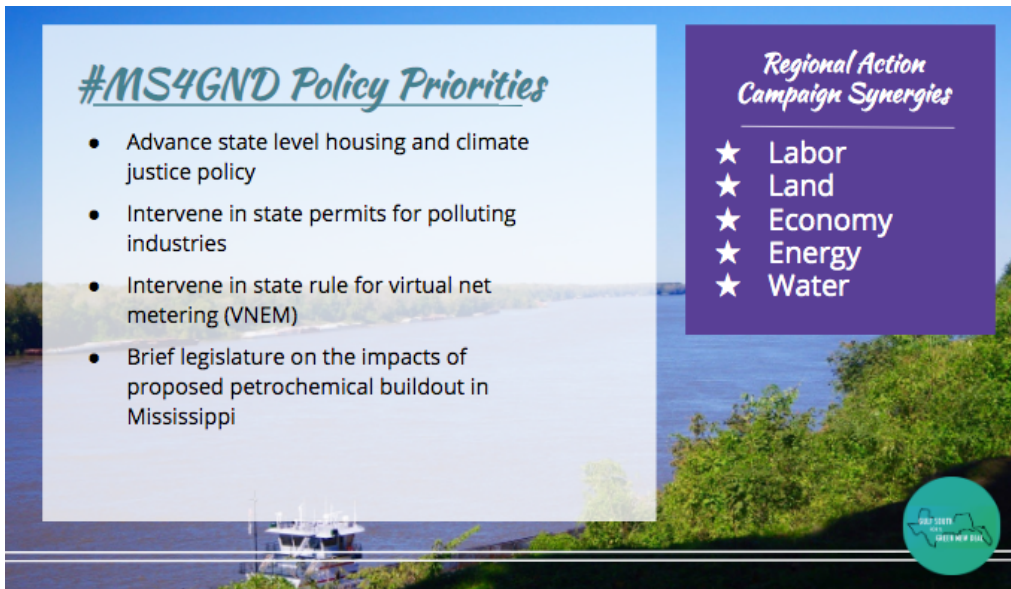
- Cultivate public engagement with the Governor's statewide Climate Initiatives Task Force: the state's ambitious strategy to fully decarbonize by 2050
- Advance renewable energy
- Advance affordable and equitable housing

**Regional Action Campaign Synergies**

- ★ Land
- ★ Energy
- ★ Water
- ★ Labor

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**Mississippi** policy priorities include intervening in state permits for polluting industries, advancing state level housing and climate justice policy, and advancing clean renewable energy policies, including intervening on state net metering policy, energy efficiency and community solar, and brief legislature on the impacts of proposed petrochemical buildout in Mississippi.



***#MS4GND Policy Priorities***

- Advance state level housing and climate justice policy
- Intervene in state permits for polluting industries
- Intervene in state rule for virtual net metering (VNEM)
- Brief legislature on the impacts of proposed petrochemical buildout in Mississippi

***Regional Action Campaign Synergies***

- ★ Labor
- ★ Land
- ★ Economy
- ★ Energy
- ★ Water

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**Texas** policy priorities include advancing Tribal Sovereignty, a state-wide fracking ban, and a language access initiative to ensure state-level democratic participation is accessible across lines of language and ability.



***#TX4GND Policy Priorities***

- Advance Tribal Sovereignty
- Statewide fracking ban
- Language access initiative to ensure state-level democratic participation is accessible across lines of language and ability

***Regional Action Campaign Synergies***

- ★ Land
- ★ Labor
- ★ Water

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**GS4GND Hub Leadership 2021.** Each of the state hubs include anchors and leaders responsible for state and regional coordination and engagement with the broader formation, consisting of over 200 organizations located in the five Gulf states.



**Regional Anchor:** Gulf Coast Center for Law & Policy

### *#AL4GND Anchors & Leads*



**State Anchor(s):** GASP

**Policy Lead(s):** Alabama Rivers Alliance, Hometown Action, Alabama Interfaith Power & Light

**Action Campaign Leads(s):** Hometown Action, GASP

**Strategic Communication Lead(s):** SCEN, Alabama Rivers Alliance, Alabama Interfaith Power & Light

### *#FL4GND Anchors & Leads*



**State Anchor(s):** Miami Climate Alliance

**Policy Lead(s):** Catalyst Miami, Central Florida Climate Alliance, Healthy Gulf

**Action Campaign Lead(s):** Catalyst Miami, Central Florida Climate Alliance, The Smile Trust Inc.

**Strategic Communication Lead(s):** QLatinx, SCEN

### *#LA4GND Anchors & Leads*



**State Anchor(s):** Alliance for Affordable Energy

**Policy Lead(s):** No Waste Louisiana, Alliance for Affordable Energy, Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance

**Action Campaign Lead(s):** Healthy Gulf, New Orleans for Lincoln Beach

**Strategic Communication Lead(s):** Healthy Gulf, Sierra Club, The Wind & the Warrior

## #MS4GND Anchors & Leads



**State Anchor(s):** Steps Coalition

**Policy Lead(s):** EEECHO, Healthy Gulf

**Action Campaign Lead(s):** Steps Coalition, Cooperation Jackson

**Strategic Communication Lead(s):** Healthy Gulf, People's Advocacy Institute

## #TX4GND Anchors & Leads



**State Anchor(s):** T.E.J.A.S

**Policy Lead(s):** Sierra Club Lone Star Chapter; San Antonio DSA; Fenceline Watch

**Action Campaign Lead(s):** Carrizo Comecrudo Tribe of Texas; Sunrise Austin

**Strategic Communication Lead(s):** Texas Campaign for the Environment

**GS4GND Fundraising Goals 2021-2025.** GS4GD state anchors will receive money directly to be allocated as is collectively decided by the hub to advance the GS4GND Vision. State hubs are in the process of collectively developing line item budgets. Funding the frontlines is an exercise in trusting and supporting self-determination. The regional request is \$15 million for 3 years.

- Texas: \$1 million
- Louisiana: \$1 million
- Mississippi: \$1 million
- Alabama: \$1 million
- Florida: \$1 million

**Donation Methods.** Direct contributions to the five state financial anchors and/or contribute to the Community-Controlled Fund governed by the five state financial anchors and GCCLP



# CONTACT

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