RESOLUTION ON A HIGH-ROAD VISION FOR THE DEPLOYMENT OF AI TECHNOLOGY
RESOLUTION #2024.35

WHEREAS, technology companies headquartered in Washington State are on the forefront of developing artificial intelligence (AI) which will create both benefits and risks to workers. Washington State's elected officials should take this opportunity to demonstrate a living "high-road" vision for how this technology can be deployed in ways that are consistent with the values of our State which include workers rights, social equity, and environmental sustainability. The benefits of the AI revolution should be broadly shared by everyday people and the harms should be intentionally avoided and mitigated; and

WHEREAS, history has shown that the free market alone will not deliver these outcomes and government intervention is necessary; and

WHEREAS, successful regulation of AI will require a mix of targeted protections for specific groups of vulnerable workers, new broad-based benefits that can be enjoyed by all workers, equitable taxation, and a high-road build-out of physical AI infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, if done right, the highly-profitable but inherently-unequal high tech sector can be an economic engine that provides long term, sustainable prosperity to everyday working people. If we get it wrong, it is easy to imagine a range of dystopian outcomes ranging from populist backlashes, to environmental ruin, to trillionaires with flying cars and ordinary workers being locked out of opulent private compounds guarded by higher and higher walls; and

WHEREAS, transportation workers are one group of workers who are vulnerable to job losses due to autonomous vehicle technology, increased surveillance, oppressive micromanagement, and other harms due to AI. They must be protected in several specific ways; and

WHEREAS, workers who create intellectual property are another group of workers who face a high risk of harm by AI through the uncompensated and unauthorized taking of their works and then having AI gain the capacity to take their jobs. They must be protected in several specific ways; and

WHEREAS, workers in creative fields are another group of workers who face risks from AI through the uncompensated and unauthorized taking of their voice, name, image, and likeness, and then having AI gain the capacity to take their jobs. These workers must retain their rights to consent and compensation and be protected in the following specific ways; and

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WHEREAS, workers who do administrative, data management, bookkeeping, coding, paralegal, accounting and secretarial labor in every industry are especially threatened by the wholesale automation of their jobs as a result of generative AI. Much of this work is performed by women, and is the entry to career pathways for women to promote and earn higher wages. These workers must be protected and supported; and

WHEREAS, it is impossible to foresee all of the ways that AI technology will harm workers by eliminating jobs, reducing bargaining power, and by worsening working conditions; and

WHEREAS, there should be broad-based benefits provided to the masses of workers such as a four-day workweek, expansion of subsidized higher education, and improvements to unemployment insurance benefits; and

WHEREAS, taxing the wealth generated by the AI revolution to fund public services and pay for harm mitigation is another way to promote a just transition; and

WHEREAS, the AI revolution will ultimately consume electricity and fresh water that is on the scale of multiple cities. With careful planning, these changes could be a major lever to build out non-carbon emitting energy. Without sufficient regulation, they could cause environmental devastation; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Washington State Labor Council will lobby legislation in Olympia for broad benefits for all workers so that the prosperity generated by the efficiency advancements of AI are shared with workers, like the four day work week with no loss in pay; and be it further

RESOLVED, the Washington State Labor Council will oppose legislation that aims to allow fully autonomous vehicles on our roads and lobby for human safety operators to be required; and be it further

RESOLVED, the Washington State Labor Council will continue to convene affiliates to learn about the threats and opportunities created by AI, and lobby in Olympia for legislation to mitigate the harms to specific industries hardest hit; and be it finally

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RESOLVED, the Washington State Labor Council will use its position on the State AI Taskforce to:

(a) Recommend protections for specific categories of workers most likely to be impacted by AI. These include transportation workers, creators of intellectual property, workers in creative fields, administrative workers and public employees.

(b) Recommend broad benefits for all workers to mitigate against less easy to predict harms from AI.

(c) Make recommendations about how to fairly tax the wealth generated by the AI revolution to support public services.

(d) Develop and adopt an equity and anti-racism framework to ensure the advancement of this technology does not disproportionately impact BIPOC workers and communities negatively.

(e) Add a subgroup to the Taskforce that is specifically focused on physical infrastructure and the climate and environmental justice impacts of AI. The Washington State Labor Council will advocate for the accountable development of AI data centers with the following attributes:

(f) Because they are such heavy users of electricity– expected to account for 7.5% of all US electricity consumption by 2030, AI data centers should be built out concurrently with co-located new non-carbon emitting energy generation, rather than merely displacing existing customers from existing power grids.

(g) AI data centers should be contributing to the cost of new grid transmission, distribution, and resilience capacities rather than passing along costs to other existing customers. This can be accomplished with the use of Corporate Power Purchase Agreements for clean energy, and through a thorough process for Integrated Resource Planning at the utility level.

(h) AI data centers and their accompanying non-carbon emitting energy generation and grid modernization infrastructure projects should be done in ways, when appropriate, under a collective bargaining agreement, and in ways that ensure the creation of good jobs including prevailing wages, apprenticeship utilization standards, targeted local hire provisions. These projects should be built with community benefits agreements to ensure broad benefits and harm mitigation for local communities.

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(i) Non-carbon emitting energy projects that provide electricity to AI data centers should be built in the USA. Big tech companies should never be able to claim that they are offsetting their carbon pollution in America through the funding of non-carbon emitting energy projects in low-wage countries with poor labor and human rights records.

(j) AI data centers should only be built in areas with adequate water resources.

(k) AI data centers should ensure that the incredible heat that they generate is directed to beneficial uses such as waste heat recovery systems, rather than contributing to hotter local temperatures.

(l) AI data centers must take climate resilience into account. We must never face a situation where everyday people lose their life-saving air conditioning during a heat dome while non-essential AI data center operations are allowed to continue.