

Green Job Forecast for the Growing Green Economy

WASHINGTON, DC, June 4, 2008 (ENS) - Millions of U.S. workers already have the skills and experience to fill the jobs needed to fight climate change and build a green economy in the United States, finds a report issued today that was commissioned by the nonprofit Natural Resources Defense Council, NRDC.

As its standard, the report focuses on six key strategies for tackling global warming - building retrofitting, mass transit, energy-efficient automobiles, wind power, solar power, and cellulosic biomass fuels.

The majority of jobs associated with these strategies are in areas of employment that people already work in today, in every region and state of the country, according to the report, which was authored by Robert Pollin and Jeanette Wicks-Lim of the Department of Economics and Political Economy Research Institute of the University of Massachusetts-Amherst.

It is being released in cooperation with the Green Jobs for America Campaign, a partnership of the Sierra Club, Blue Green Alliance, United Steelworkers, NRDC and with the Center for American Progress and Green for All.

Today's unemployment rate stands at five percent, and job losses totaled 240,000 in the first three months of the year, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor said May 2. Employment continued to decline in construction, manufacturing, and retail trade, while jobs were added in health care and in professional and technical services.

The green jobs report indicates that many unemployed people will be able to find work that utilizes their skills in the upcoming green economy.

"The commitment to a clean energy economy will not only lead to quality jobs in manufacturing unions and the building trades," says Leo Gerard, international president of the United Steelworkers. "It will help stop good-paying jobs from continuing to be exported."

For instance, constructing wind farms creates jobs for sheet metal workers, machinists and truck drivers, among others. Increasing the energy efficiency of buildings through retrofitting relies on roofers, insulators and electricians.

The report presents data on employment in Florida, Indiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, and Wisconsin, including the number of people employed in the occupations affected by the six green strategies, and what the average wages are for each of these jobs.

"Achieving a clean energy economy through green industries like wind and solar are just part of the story. This report is also about job security," said Dan Lashof, director of the Natural Resources Defense Council's Climate Center.

"We're talking about jobs at every skill level from construction to research, already available here at home."



Employee Garth Johnson works in the hub of a new wind turbine rotor at the National Wind Technology Center. (Photo by Lee Fingerish courtesy [National Renewable Energy Lab](#))

What makes these familiar occupations “green jobs” is that the people working in them are contributing their labors toward building a green economy, the report states.

"Making homes and offices more energy efficient not only saves money and energy, but also represents growth opportunities for workers who build our communities and keep them running," Lashof said.

This report provides information on what kinds of jobs are needed to fight global warming and build a green economy in the United States based on the efficient use of energy, reducing polluting emissions, and the use of renewable sources of power.

"The term 'green jobs' has spread rapidly over the past year," write Pollin and Wicks-Lim in their report. "We seek to make the term concrete by highlighting many - but by no means all - of the occupations that will play a central role in building the green economy."

For instance, the authors report that there are about 168,000 sheet metal workers now employed throughout the country. Roughly 10,000 are in Florida, 5,000 in Ohio, 1,000 in Nebraska, and 3,000 in Oregon. Depending on where they work, they are now earning, on average, between about \$15.50 (Tennessee) and \$27.00 (New York) per hour.

"A push to dramatically increase the country's supply of wind energy will mean increased demand for these workers. Rising demand could also lead to rising average wages," the report states.

"Everyone is talking about how the transition to a clean energy future will create millions of new green-collar jobs," said Carl Pope, executive director of the Sierra Club. "This report shows that millions of Americans are already working in exactly the kinds of jobs we'll need to build that clean energy future. Those millions and millions more - from steelworkers to software engineers - stand to benefit from implementing the clean energy solutions we need to fight global warming."

The authors do not attempt to estimate how much growth there is likely to be in any area of green investments or green jobs in the United States but to provide what they call a "snapshot" of some of the key industries and occupations that will experience increasing growth through green investments.

In work with the Center for American Progress that is will be published later this summer they intend to provide a detailed study on what employment growth could be in the United States under various green economy scenarios.

"This report shows that solving global warming means new investments in jobs and infrastructure, and the reconstruction of our economy," said Bracken Hendricks, senior fellow at the Center for American Progress.

"As Congress debates climate legislation it should keep in mind that investing in energy efficiency and alternative energy means more opportunity for today's job market including welders and machinists, carpenters, insulators and electrical engineers," Hendricks said.

"In a very real sense, green jobs are America's jobs," he said. "We can strengthen career ladders and restore America's middle class by rebuilding our economy to solve global warming."

"This report demonstrates that given the right strategies, green jobs can be the engine that allows us to build an inclusive green economy strong enough to lift a lot of people out of poverty" said Van Jones, founder and president of Green For All.

He said, "With good policies and strong investments that prepare people who most need work for the work that most needs to be done, green jobs can fight poverty and global warming pollution at the same time."