

Rebuild the American Dream by Creating 21st Century Energy Jobs

2. Create 21st Century Energy Jobs. We should invest in American businesses that can power our country with innovative technologies like wind turbines, solar panels, geothermal systems, hybrid and electric cars, and next-generation batteries. And we should put Americans to work making our homes and buildings energy efficient. We can create good, green jobs in America, address the climate crisis, and build the clean energy economy.

“Green jobs are the sweet spot in an otherwise bitter economy.” – *Forbes*, June 8, 2011

Our environmental crisis cannot wait.

- Climate change caused by the uncontrolled dumping of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere [threatens](#) regions around the world over the near term – and could disrupt American society in unpredictable ways. [NASA]
- At the same time, other pollutants in our air and water are making us sick. Smog pollution, mercury emissions and tiny particles from cars and fossil fuel-burning power plants [put Americans at risk](#) for heart attacks, asthma and lung disease. Every 30 minutes, an American dies prematurely from power plant pollution. And our aging water infrastructure continues to put our freshwater systems at risk. 20 million Americans [get sick every year](#) from drinking contaminated water due to untreated waste. [EPA, *New York Times*]
- Low-income communities and communities of color [bear the brunt](#) of this pollution. For example, one-in-six African-American children have [asthma](#), compared to one-in-ten overall. [Earthjustice, American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology]
- Our dependence on energy sources from unstable foreign countries puts our [national security](#) at risk. [*Scientific American*]

The green economy is big, diverse - and growing.

- The green economy isn't just solar panels and wind turbines. It's not even new batteries and electric cars. It's mass transit, recycled products, organic food systems. It's a [huge economy](#), employing 2.7 million people. [Brookings]
- Clean energy systems are the fastest growing sectors of the American economy. The [solar industry](#) grew 67% in 2010, and now employs nearly 100,000 people. The [wind power](#) industry grew by 15% in 2010, and provides 26% of all new electric generating capacity in the nation. [Solar Energy Industries Association, Business Wire]
- There is a role for government to play in the green economy. Smart investment and regulation to reduce pollution can put many more people to work. Every \$1 million invested in clean energy [creates](#) 16.7 jobs, compared to just 5.3 jobs in fossil fuels. [Stimulus dollars](#) steered into green investments created or saved 1 million jobs through 2010. [Political Economy Research Institute]
- The United States is competing in a global clean energy market – but [falling behind](#). [Pew]

Green jobs are good jobs that open doors at all levels.

- Green jobs are often in manufacturing and other traditionally blue-collar employment.
- Compared to the fossil fuel industry, [green jobs](#) create 3.6 times more jobs requiring a high school degree or less. [Green for All]
- Median wages in the green economy are 13 percent higher than median U.S. wages.
- A disproportionate percentage of jobs in the clean economy are staffed by workers with relatively little formal [education](#) in moderately well-paying green collar occupations. [Brookings]