



ACORE
AMERICAN COUNCIL ON
RENEWABLE ENERGY



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CONTACT: Michael Timberlake — (202) 289-2407, mtimberlake@e2.org; Alex Frank — (703) 276-3264, afrank@hastingsgroup.com; Carina Daniels — (510) 847-1617, carina@storyandreach.com; Alex Hobson — (202) 594-0706, hobson@acore.org

106,000 Jobs in Clean Energy Lost in March Due to COVID-19 Economic Crisis

- *More than a year's worth of job gains erased in a few weeks*
- *Analysis forecasts industry could lose more than 500K jobs in months ahead*
- *CA, NC, PA, MA, MI, NY, OH, TX, WA, IL among hardest hit states*

WASHINGTON, DC (April 15, 2020) – More than 106,000 clean energy workers lost their jobs in the month of March, and hundreds of thousands more clean energy job losses are projected in the coming months. That's according to [a new analysis of](#) unemployment data released today by E2 (Environmental Entrepreneurs), the American Council on Renewable Energy (ACORE), E4TheFuture and BW Research Partnership.

The analysis of Department of Labor data found that 106,472 workers in clean energy occupations filed for unemployment benefits last month, wiping out all 2019 clean energy job gains across renewable energy, energy efficiency, clean vehicles, energy storage and clean fuels. These include electricians, HVAC and mechanical trades technicians and construction workers who work in energy efficiency; solar installers; wind industry engineers and technicians; and manufacturing workers employed by electric and other clean- vehicle manufacturing companies and suppliers.

Clean energy has been one of the U.S. economy's biggest and fastest-growing employment sectors over the past decade, growing 10.4 percent since 2015. According to [a separate report released today](#) by E2, U.S. clean energy jobs increased to nearly 3.4 million at the end of 2019. [Clean Jobs America 2020](#) found the industry accounted for more than half of the entire energy sector's job growth in 2019, adding more than 70,000 jobs for a 2.2 percent growth rate – a faster pace than the U.S. workforce as a whole. At the start of 2020, America's clean energy workforce accounted for more than one out of every 50 U.S. workers. That made clean energy by far the biggest employer of workers in energy occupations, employing nearly three times more workers than the fossil fuel industry.

But all that growth came to a screeching halt in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic fallout. The March layoffs are just the first indication of how badly the clean energy industry will be hit by the crisis, [with the analysis projecting](#) that more than 500,000 clean energy workers – 15 percent of the entire clean energy workforce – will lose their jobs in the months ahead, unless Congress and the Trump administration take quick and substantive action.

A loss of that magnitude would erase the clean energy industry's total job growth over the last five years.

Bob Keefe, executive director of the national, nonpartisan business group E2 said:

"What these numbers tell us is that clean energy workers are a huge and important part of America's workforce – and they are hurting badly. Lawmakers simply cannot ignore the millions of electricians, technicians and factory workers who work in clean energy as they consider ongoing economic recovery efforts – especially since we know from our country's last economic meltdown that clean energy can lead the way to recovery."

Gregory Wetstone, President and CEO of the American Council on Renewable Energy (ACORE), said:

"This analysis quantifies in stark terms the damage COVID-19 is already doing to the renewable energy workforce, and the devastating trajectory we're facing absent help from Congress. The renewable sector is being hit hard by supply chain disruptions, shelter-in-place orders and other significant pandemic-related delays. To stem job losses, we ask Congress to extend the time-sensitive deadlines faced by renewable projects seeking to qualify for critical tax incentives, and to provide temporary refundability for renewable tax credits that are increasingly difficult to monetize. In the end, we're all in this together, and the renewable energy industry wants to be a key economic driver to help the nation through this downturn, as well as an effective climate solution over the long haul."

Phil Jordan, Vice President and Principal at BW Research Partnership said:

"The economic fallout from COVID-19 is historic in both size and speed. Activities across the entire range of clean energy activities, from manufacturing electric vehicles to installing solar panels, are being impacted. And the data pretty clearly indicate that this is just the beginning."

Steve Nadel, Executive Director, American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE)

"Each year our ally E4TheFuture co-publishes a report detailing the growth of energy efficiency jobs – but that trend is threatened right now. March unemployment claims, and projections of worse to come, are alarming. From contractors who can't go into homes to weatherize them to employees in shut-down electric car factories, energy efficiency workers have lost their jobs – and that costs all of us. Consumers lose out on utility bill savings, and the country curtails a critical tool for slashing greenhouse gas emissions. We need to support this workforce during the crisis and quickly get them back on the job when the health threat subsides."

For quotes from more than a dozen clean energy business owners and professionals who work or do business across America, [click here](#).

Industries Hit Hardest

According to the [unemployment data analysis](#), energy efficiency lost more jobs than any other sector of the clean energy industry in March, with nearly 70,000 people losing their jobs. The losses in the energy efficiency sector accounted for about two-thirds of all clean energy unemployment filings – as electricians, plumbers, construction workers, energy auditors and others were unable to enter homes, offices and other buildings because of coronavirus quarantines.

Renewable energy lost more than 16,000 jobs, and filings are expected to increase substantially in the coming weeks as solar and wind energy companies struggle with sudden and massive financing issues that are resulting in canceled and delayed projects.

The clean vehicle sector was also severely impacted, losing 12,000 jobs in factories that manufacture electric and hybrid vehicles and the parts that go in them. This represents the largest percentage job loss —4.5 percent — of any clean energy sector. This does not include the 20,000 workers that Tesla Inc. furloughed, or other losses posted after this March data was collected.

States Hit Across Country

California, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Massachusetts were among the states that saw the most unemployment filings in clean energy last month, while 26 states saw job losses rise above 1,000, according to the analysis.

For a full breakdown of clean energy jobs losses in each state, [see the full analysis here](#).

State	Unemployment Claims	Percent Decline
US TOTAL	106,472	3.10%
California	19,949	3.60%
North Carolina	6,800	5.90%
Pennsylvania	6,068	6.20%
Massachusetts	5,611	4.40%
Michigan	5,446	4.10%
New York	4,789	2.90%
Ohio	4,719	4.10%
Texas	4,246	1.70%
Washington	3,940	4.40%
Illinois	3,326	2.60%

Growth Trend Upended

The widespread layoffs in clean energy risk derailing an industry that was leading the country in job creation. At the start of 2020, clean energy employment increased for the fifth straight year, growing to nearly 3.4 million workers nationwide. Renewable energy led the way, increasing 3.2 percent to about 523,000 jobs.

Energy efficiency continues to be the single largest section of the clean energy economy, employing 2.4 million Americans at the end of 2019, up 2.3 percent from 2018 despite federal rollbacks and delays of energy efficiency standards.

The clean vehicle sector was the only clean energy sector that saw job declines in 2019, dropping 2.3 percent to more than 266,000 jobs, in part because of industry uncertainty about rollbacks of federal vehicle emissions and mileage standards, which were recently finalized. The sector’s job losses come after a record-setting year in 2018 that saw the clean vehicle industry grow 17 percent and add more than 40,000 jobs.

For more information or for interview requests, please contact Michael Timberlake (202-289-2407; mtimberlake@e2.org) or Alex Frank (703-276-3264; afrank@hastingsgroup.com).

Background:

[The Clean Jobs America 2020 report](#) is E2’s fifth iteration of the annual employment analysis. The report expands on data from the [2020 U.S. Energy and Employment Report \(USEER\)](#) produced by the Energy Futures Initiative (EFI) in partnership with the National Association of State Energy Officials

(NASEO), using data collected and analyzed by the BW Research Partnership. The report was released in March 2020 and is available at www.usenergyjobs.org. E2 is a partner on the USEER, the fifth installment of the energy survey first released by the Department of Energy in 2016 and subsequently abandoned under the Trump administration.

Previous E2 Clean Jobs America Reports:

- [Clean Jobs America 2019](#)
- [Clean Jobs America 2018](#)
- [Clean Jobs America 2017](#)
- [Clean Jobs America 2016](#)

Previous E2 and E4TheFuture Jobs Reports:

- [Energy Efficiency Jobs in America 2019](#)
- [Energy Efficiency Jobs In America 2018](#)
- [Energy Efficiency Jobs in America 2017](#)

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[Environmental Entrepreneurs \(E2\)](#) is a national, nonpartisan group of business leaders, investors, and professionals from every sector of the economy who advocate for smart policies that are good for the economy and good for the environment. Our members have founded or funded more than 2,500 companies, created more than 600,000 jobs, and manage more than \$100 billion in venture and private equity capital. For more information, see www.e2.org or follow us on Twitter at [@e2org](#).

[E4TheFuture](#) works for clean, efficient and safe energy solutions. A nonprofit organization, we promote energy efficiency, renewables, demand management, energy storage and electric vehicles to advance climate protection and economic fairness. We work to achieve an energy economy that is sustainable, lower cost, and resilient. Our “Faces of EE” initiative shines a light on energy efficiency professionals nationwide. Visit www.E4TheFuture.org or follow us on Twitter at [@E4TheFuture](#) and [@FacesofEE](#).

Founded in 2001, the [American Council on Renewable Energy \(ACORE\)](#) is the nation’s premier pan-renewable organization uniting finance, policy and technology to accelerate the transition to a renewable energy economy. For more information, please visit www.acore.org.