



ACORE
AMERICAN COUNCIL ON
RENEWABLE ENERGY



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27,000+ More Clean Energy Jobs Lost in May

- *620,500 clean energy workers jobless since COVID-19 hit*
- *CA, FL, GA, TX, WA, MI among hardest-hit states*
- *Report comes as Congress debates economic stimulus; runs contrary to findings of flawed Bureau of Labor Statistics report*

WASHINGTON, DC (June 15, 2020) – As Congress this week begins debating economic stimulus support for the energy industry, a [new analysis](#) of unemployment data shows the biggest part of America’s energy economy – clean energy – lost another 27,000 jobs in May, bringing the total number of clean energy workers who have lost their jobs in the past three months to more than 620,500.

While May saw an improvement in new unemployment claims over March and April, the findings represent the sector’s third straight month of significant job losses across solar, wind, energy efficiency, clean vehicles and other industries. With coronavirus cases once again rising in many states and companies beginning to run out of the Payroll Protection Program (PPP) funding that has helped small businesses keep workers employed, the report increases concerns the sector will be unable to resume its economy-leading jobs growth in the short- or long-term without a significant policy response.

Given the size and scope of the clean energy industry, such a sustained loss would cast a pall on the nation’s overall economic recovery, [according to the analysis of the Department of Labor’s May unemployment data](#) from E2 (Environmental Entrepreneurs), E4TheFuture and the American Council on Renewable Energy (ACORE).

Prior to COVID-19, clean energy – including energy efficiency, solar and wind generation, clean vehicles and related sectors – was among the U.S. economy’s biggest and fastest-growing employment sectors, growing 10.4% since 2015 to [nearly 3.4 million jobs at the end of 2019](#). That made clean energy by far the biggest employer of workers in all energy occupations, employing nearly three times as many people as the fossil fuel industry. For comparison, [coal mining employs about 47,000 workers](#).

The latest monthly analysis for the groups by BW Research Partnership runs contrary to recent Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports, which indicated that a more robust economic rebound was underway while also [acknowledging misclassifications and serious reporting difficulties](#) in its own data.

Bob Keefe, Executive Director at E2, said:

“May’s almost 30,000 clean energy jobs loss is sadly an improvement in the rate of jobs shed but make no mistake: There remains huge uncertainty and volatility ahead. It will be very tough for clean energy to make up these continuing job losses without support from Congress. Lawmakers must act now. If they do, we can get hundreds of thousands of these workers back on the job today and build a better, cleaner, more equitable economy for tomorrow. And who doesn’t want that?”

Pat Stanton, Policy Director at E4TheFuture, said:

“Most of the time, energy efficiency workers need to go inside homes, businesses and other buildings to get the job done. Since they couldn’t do that during COVID lockdowns, they couldn’t work. Now states are opening up. But utilities, contractors and building owners need to protect employees and occupants from possible exposure to the virus and need more clarity about potential liabilities.”

Gregory Wetstone, President and CEO of ACORE, said:

“In May, we saw thousands of additional renewable energy workers join the ranks of the unemployed, further underscoring the damage COVID-19 is inflicting on our workforce. Since the pandemic began, nearly 100,000 renewable energy workers have lost their jobs. We need help from Congress to get American clean energy workers back to work. With commonsense measures like temporary refundability and a delay in the phasedown of renewable energy tax credits, Congress can help restore these good-paying jobs so the renewable sector can continue to provide the affordable, pollution-free power American consumers and businesses want and deserve.”

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

“We understand the challenges and limitations of data collection for BLS in the middle of a global pandemic. But any suggestion that a strong employment rebound is underway in the United States simply is not reflected in the clean energy sector right now. And with PPP expiring, that only increases uncertainty in the months ahead.”

The report comes as both the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the House Energy and Commerce Committee are considering clean energy stimulus to restart the U.S. economy, and as lawmakers in both the House and Senate are increasing calls for supporting clean energy workers and businesses, including [this bicameral letter](#) signed by 57 members of Congress and [another signed today by 180 House members](#).

Industries Hit Hardest

According to the analysis, energy efficiency lost more jobs than any other clean energy sector for the third consecutive month in May, shedding about 18,900 jobs. These workers include electricians, HVAC technicians who work with high-efficiency systems, and manufacturing employees who make Energy Star appliances, LED lighting systems and efficient building materials.

Renewable energy, including solar and wind, lost nearly 4,300 jobs in May.

Clean grid and storage and clean vehicles manufacturing — including grid modernization, energy storage, car charging and electric and plug-in hybrid vehicle manufacturing — lost a combined 3,200 jobs in May.

The clean fuels sector lost more than 650 jobs in May.

Sector	March Claims (adj)	April Claims (adj)	May Claims	Total
Energy Efficiency	103,298	309,584	18,880	431,762
Renewables	23,739	71,705	4,272	99,717
Clean Vehicles	11,399	35,070	2,059	48,528
Grid & Storage	6,517	19,666	1,166	27,349
Clean Fuels	2,186	10,390	657	13,233
INDUSTRY TOTAL	147,139	446,416	27,035	620,590

States and Localities Hit Across Country

California continues to be the hardest hit state in terms of total job losses, losing 4,313 jobs in May and more than 109,700 since the COVID-19 crisis began. Florida was the second hardest hit state in May, losing an additional 2,563 clean energy jobs, while Georgia, Texas, Washington, and Michigan all suffered more than 1,000 job losses across the sector. An additional 12 states saw at least 500 clean energy unemployment filings, according to the latest analysis.

For a full breakdown of clean energy job losses in each state, along with a list of the hardest hit counties and metro areas, see the full analysis [here](#).

State	March Claims (adj)	April Claims (adj)	May Claims	Total Claims
US TOTAL	147,139	446,416	27,035	620,590
California	27,583	77,815	4,313	109,712
Texas	5,965	25,170	1,709	32,844
Florida	3,963	25,949	2,563	32,475
Michigan	7,867	22,245	1,012	31,124
Georgia	1,909	25,282	1,741	28,932
North Carolina	9,124	17,138	955	27,217
Pennsylvania	8,283	12,780	571	21,634
Washington	5,646	14,433	1,163	21,242
New York	6,006	13,868	848	20,722
Ohio	6,929	12,879	612	20,420

For more information or for interview requests, please contact Michael Timberlake (913-645-9103; mtimberlake@e2.org) or Alex Frank (703-276-3264; afrank@hastingsgroup.com).

Background

The analysis 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 and E4TheFuture are partners on the annual 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, E4TheFuture, ACORE Clean Energy Unemployment Reports

- [Clean Energy & COVID-19 Economic Crisis | April 2020 Impact Analysis](#)
- [Clean Energy & COVID-19 Economic Crisis | March 2020 Impact Analysis](#)

For policy recommendations from E2 on building America's economy back better and faster through clean energy visit E2's [Build Back Better](#) homepage.

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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.