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Projected to Add 175,000 Jobs Before COVID-19 Pandemic, Clean Energy Sector Enters Final Months of 2020 Down 478,000 Jobs

- *40+ states continue to suffer double-digit unemployment in clean energy*
- *14% of sector's workforce still jobless as industry nears slow season*

WASHINGTON (October 8, 2020) – The clean energy industry expected to add over 175,000 jobs this year, but enters the final months of 2020 down 477,862 jobs as a stalled recovery plagues the sector. Clean energy saw 12,500 jobs added in September, leaving almost 14% of its pre-COVID-19 workforce unemployed, according to [the latest analysis of federal unemployment filings](#) prepared for E2 (Environmental Entrepreneurs), E4TheFuture and the American Council on Renewable Energy (ACORE) by BW Research Partnership.

Despite growing two times faster than the overall economy since 2017, the clean energy sector has been particularly slow to rebound compared to the nation's overall jobs recovery. Jobs in clean energy grew by less than half a percent for the third time in four months and just one out of every five clean energy jobs lost between March and May has come back, [according to the monthly report](#). The slow growth is consistent nationwide; no state saw more than a 0.7% increase in employment in September, with 23 states and the District of Columbia adding fewer than 100 jobs each.

In 2018 and 2019, clean energy [created about 190,000 new jobs nationwide](#). Before the coronavirus pandemic, employers projected that more than 175,000 jobs would be added in 2020, according to the [2020 U.S. Energy & Employment Report \(USEER\) employer survey](#).

While September showed some signs of national economic growth, alarming trends continued. Weekly unemployment claims remain at historic highs, and long-term and permanent unemployment rates have sharply risen since March. With federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) funds all but exhausted, and negotiations for an additional round of more targeted stimulus relief in question, more layoffs could be imminent.

Before COVID-19, nearly 3.4 million Americans across all 50 states and the District of Columbia worked in clean energy occupations, including renewable energy, energy efficiency, grid modernization, clean vehicles and fuels. That's more people than work in real estate, banking or agriculture in the U.S., and

three times the number of Americans that worked in fossil fuels, [according to E2’s Clean Jobs America report](#).

Sandra Purohit, Advocacy Director at E2, said:

“Continued paltry job growth and uncertainty headed into the slow winter hiring months confirms the need for federal clean energy stimulus. This won’t turn around by itself. Congress and the White House can’t keep pretending that it will.”

Pat Stanton, Policy Director for E4TheFuture, said:

“It’s a painful reality that energy efficiency jobs are still down by 336,700 compared with January 2020 numbers. If this had been a normal year, the efficiency sector would have added about 30,000 jobs during this timeframe.”

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

“The hard-hitting impacts of COVID-19 continue to roil the renewable energy workforce. This report shows more than 75,000 renewable workers in America remain out of a job because of the pandemic. To keep that unemployment number from rising further, our ask to Congress is simple and urgent: We need temporary refundability for renewable tax credits so that projects can continue to be built in spite of a COVID-constrained tax equity market, and a delay in the scheduled phasedown of existing credits in recognition of the adverse nationwide impact the pandemic has had on the renewable sector this year.”

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

“The data show another month of anemic growth in the clean energy sector. Job growth will need to accelerate much more rapidly to get to ‘rebound’ territory.”

Monthly Clean Energy Job Losses by Sector:

Sector	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	Total
Energy Efficiency	-103,298	-309,584	-18,880	+71,786	+6,836	+8,116	+8,354	-336,670
Renewables	-23,739	-71,705	-4,272	+17,287	+1,918	+2,571	+2,273	-75,669
Clean Vehicles	-11,399	-35,070	-2,059	+10,335	+896	+2,182	+965	-34,151
Grid & Storage	-6,517	-19,666	-1,166	+4,561	+428	+482	+510	-21,368
Clean Fuels	-2,186	-10,390	-657	+2,351	+296	+205	+378	-10,004
INDUSTRY TOTAL	-147,139	-446,416	-27,035	+106,320	+10,373	+13,556	+12,479	-477,862

State Clean Energy Unemployment by Total Losses:

State	Total Losses	Percent of Clean Energy Workforce
California	81,826	14.9%
Georgia	26,899	31.2%
Florida	25,166	15.0%
Michigan	23,341	17.6%
Texas	22,669	9.2%

North Carolina	19,533	17.0%
Pennsylvania	17,883	18.4%
Washington	17,693	19.9%
Ohio	15,519	13.4%
New York	14,865	9.1%

For expanded state and county findings, download the full report [here](#).

State and Sector Impacts

Energy efficiency continued to lead clean energy job growth in September, adding over 8,000 jobs. It was followed by renewable energy (2,273) and clean vehicles (965). No sector grew by more than 0.4%.

More than 40 states still suffer double-digit unemployment in clean energy, with six states seeing unemployment of 20% or more. Georgia continues to have the highest rate, with over 31% of its clean energy workforce still unemployed, followed by Kentucky at 28%. North Carolina led all states with the highest percentage of workforce growth at 0.7% while California again saw the largest total increase in jobs with 2,600 positions added (0.6%). No other state added over 1,000 clean energy jobs; only New York, Texas, and Illinois added more than 600. Ten states added fewer than 50 jobs each.

The data analyzed for this report did not include workers who had their work hours slashed and are now significantly underemployed.

For more information, including breakdowns by state, county and metro area, [click here](#). For interview requests, please contact Michael Timberlake (913-645-9103; mtimberlake@e2.org); Alex Frank (703-276-3264; afrank@hastingsgroup.com); or Alex Hobson (202-594-0706; hobson@acore.org)

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 | August 2020 Impact Analysis](#)
- [Clean Energy & COVID-19 Economic Crisis | July 2020 Impact Analysis](#)
- [Clean Energy & COVID-19 Economic Crisis | June 2020 Impact Analysis](#)
- [Clean Energy & COVID-19 Economic Crisis | May 2020 Impact Analysis](#)
- [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.