



ACORE
AMERICAN COUNCIL ON
RENEWABLE ENERGY



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Slow Job Growth in November Leaves 446,000 Clean Energy Workers Unemployed as COVID Cases, Shutdowns Surge

- *Clean energy businesses face weakening federal incentives unless Congress acts before holidays*
- *At rate since June, sector would need 36 months to reach pre-COVID employment*
- *Job growth slowest since unemployment peaked in May*

WASHINGTON (December 9, 2020) – Clean energy companies added the fewest number of jobs in November since unemployment peaked in May, as COVID-19 cases and shutdowns surge to their highest levels since the pandemic first hit and triggered America’s historic unemployment crisis. Fewer than 8,000 jobs were added by U.S. clean energy businesses in November, leaving more than 446,000 (13% of the sector’s workforce) unemployed heading into the holidays, 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.

[According to the monthly report](#), seven out of 10 clean energy workers who lost their jobs since the beginning of the crisis remain out of work. With November’s meager job growth, employment in clean energy — once the nation’s fastest-growing job sector — has grown by less than half a percent four of the last five months.

At the rate of recovery seen since June, it would take about three years for the clean energy sector to reach pre-COVID employment levels. It would take an additional 14 months to reach the levels of clean energy employment [projected for 2020 before the pandemic struck](#).

The dismal jobs outlook comes just as the Investment Tax Credit (ITC) is scheduled to decline to 22%, and the Production Tax Credit (PTC) is scheduled to phase out completely at the end of the year. Without congressional action on these key tax policies in the next three weeks, clean energy businesses will face declining federal support on top of rising COVID cases and closures.

Sandra Purohit, E2 Federal Advocacy Director said:

“If Congress fails to include targeted clean energy stimulus before the end of the year, the sector will face a terrible trifecta: rising COVID closures, declining job growth, compounded by the

automatic weakening of federal support. Now is the time to bolster the job-creating power of clean energy, not undercut it.”

Pat Stanton, Policy Director for E4TheFuture, said:

“It is alarming that the already anemic recovery for clean energy workers has worsened now, with an even smaller rate of job growth in November. The situation for energy efficiency professionals is particularly worrisome, as this group continues to bear the most job losses. Efficiency jobs are down by more than 314,000 compared with January 2020 numbers. If this had been a normal year, the efficiency sector would have added more than 39,000 jobs since March.”

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

“More than 70,000 renewable energy workers in America remain out of a job because of the COVID-19 pandemic. If policymakers are serious about getting Americans back to work in high-quality, good-paying jobs, they should enact commonsense emergency relief measures for the clean energy sector in must-pass legislation this year. Delaying the scheduled phasedown of renewable credits and making them temporarily refundable would enable renewable developers to immediately resume their hiring and help power our nation’s economic recovery.”

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

"Clean energy firms remain unwilling to take on the risk of rehiring given the uncertainty of the virus and the economy. New policy interventions are needed to provide stability and get workers back on the job."

Monthly Clean Energy Job Losses by Sector:

Sector	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Total
Energy Efficiency	-103,298	-309,584	-18,880	+71,786	+6,836	+8,116	+8,354	+16,806	<u>+5,400</u>	-314,464
Renewables	-23,739	-71,705	-4,272	+17,287	+1,918	+2,571	+2,273	+3,965	<u>+1,348</u>	-70,356
Clean Vehicles	-11,399	-35,070	-2,059	+10,335	+896	+2,182	+965	+1,615	<u>+646</u>	-31,889
Grid & Storage	-6,517	-19,666	-1,166	+4,561	+428	+482	+510	+1,042	<u>+336</u>	-19,990
Clean Fuels	-2,186	-10,390	-657	+2,351	+296	+205	+378	+409	<u>+150</u>	-9,445
INDUSTRY TOTAL	-147,139	-446,416	-27,035	+106,320	+10,373	+13,556	+12,479	+23,838	<u>+7,880</u>	-446,144

State Clean Energy Unemployment by Total Losses:

State	Total Losses	Percent of Clean Energy Workforce
California	74,929	13.6%
Georgia	26,440	30.6%
Florida	23,636	14.1%
Michigan	22,456	16.9%
Texas	20,160	8.2%
North Carolina	17,898	15.6%
Pennsylvania	17,133	17.6%
Washington	16,963	19.0%
Ohio	14,565	12.1%
New York	12,846	7.8%

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

State and Sector Impacts

No clean energy sector grew by more than 0.3% in November. Energy efficiency had the highest total job growth, adding 5,400 jobs. It was followed by renewable energy (1,348) and clean vehicles (646).

Forty states and the District of Columbia still suffer double-digit unemployment in clean energy, with five states experiencing unemployment of 20% or more. Georgia continues to have the highest rate, with over 30% of its clean energy workforce still unemployed, followed by Kentucky at 28%. In November, North Carolina had the sector's highest growth rate — a mere half a percent — while California again saw the largest total increase in jobs with 1,700 positions added (0.4%). Florida, Illinois, New York, North Carolina, and Texas all added more than 300 jobs, while 30 states and the District of Columbia added fewer than 100 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

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](#).

[This unemployment 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. It included surveys of thousands of employers and projected more than 175,000 clean energy jobs would be added by the end of 2020.

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. The two organizations also published [Energy Efficiency Jobs in America](#) on November 18, 2020 with a comprehensive set of state-level data.

Previous E2, E4TheFuture, ACORE Clean Energy Unemployment Reports

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

To understand the quality of employment opportunities within the clean energy sector, including a detailed analysis of wages and benefits, download the *Clean Jobs, Better Jobs* report [here](#).

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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.