

Green Jobs are Growing Georgia's Economy

Despite the economic recession of the late 2000s — which confronted Americans with unemployment, stagnant wages, and rising fuel costs — there was one sector that outshone the rest: the clean economy. And with Georgia's unemployment rate hovering around 10 percent for over two years,¹ Georgia is poised to gain from investing in green.

The clean economy is growing and outpaced the rest of the economy during the recession.

The clean economy grew faster than the rest of the economy during the height of the recession, “expanding at a rate of 8.3 percent.” Additionally, the clean economy added “more than half a million jobs between 2003 and 2010.”²

Georgia's clean economy is the ninth largest in the country.

Jobs in the clean economy represent just over two percent of Georgia's total workforce at 83,000 jobs.

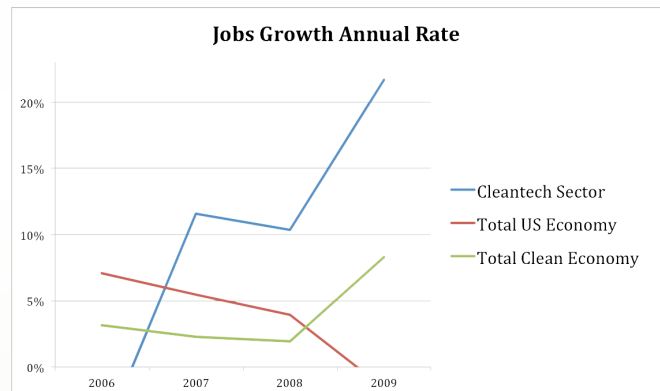
Jobs in the clean economy are good and accessible to Georgia's workers.

Nearly half of Georgia's clean jobs are held by workers with a high school diploma or less, with an average annual wage of over \$36,000.³ That is greater than the average annual wage for all other jobs in Georgia.⁴ In the Atlanta region, the average annual wage for clean jobs is over \$40,000.

Growing the Green Economy

Georgia currently lacks key policies that will support continued growth of its clean economy.

Of four critical policies identified by The Pew Charitable Trusts that support a state's clean economy, Georgia only offers financial incentives. Other policies that encourage clean economic development include renewable portfolio standards, energy efficiency resource standards, and regional cap-and-trade programs.⁵



A Georgia Renewable Portfolio Standard would create and support thousands of good, green jobs.

The state of Georgia stands to gain an estimated 16,648 new clean jobs if a 25 percent by 2025 renewable electricity standard is adopted. That would amount to 8,044 new jobs in the wind energy sector, 6,285 in the solar energy sector, 1,016 in the geothermal energy sector, and 1,303 in the biomass sector.⁶

The recycling industry in Georgia is creating thousands of good, green jobs.

“In Georgia, recycling industries add over 3 billion dollars in value to the materials that they process, employing over 23,000 Georgians.”⁷ Nationally, achieving a recycling rate of 75 percent would create and sustain nearly 1.5 million by 2030.⁸

Investments in public transportation, including intercity high-speed rail, will create over 18,000 green jobs in Georgia over the next six years.

These jobs would be created as part of a \$40 billion national investment that would support middle class jobs, “with wages mainly in the middle of the wage distribution.”⁹

Spotlight: Greening Atlanta

The Atlanta region was nationally selected for green jobs development:

Workforce Development. In July 2011, Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed and EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson held a press conference to highlight the impact that more than \$6.2 million in national environmental workforce development and job training would have on “five targeted low-income Atlanta neighborhoods.”¹⁰

Energy Efficiency Upgrades. In June 2011, the Obama administration selected Atlanta as a pilot city for its Better Buildings Challenge initiative to use private sector investment in energy upgrades to create good, green jobs. “Since the launch of the challenge, Atlanta has received commitments from 20 property owners representing more than 16 million square feet of building space... surpassing its local participation goal for the first phase of the challenge.”¹¹

1 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

2 “Sizing the Clean Economy,” The Brookings Institution, 2011.

3 “Sizing the Clean Economy.”

4 “Sizing the Clean Economy: The Clean Economy in the State of Georgia,” The Brookings Institution, 2011.

5 “The Clean Energy Economy: Georgia Fact Sheet,” The Pew Charitable Trusts, June 2009.

6 Renewable Energy Policy Project estimates from “Building the Clean Energy Assembly Line,” BlueGreen Alliance, 2009.

7 “Catch the Cycle: A Guide to Recycling in Georgia Schools,” Georgia Department of Community Affairs, <http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/www/documents/go-green/guide-to-recycling-in-georgia-schools.pdf> (accessed February 13, 2012).

Georgia’s clean economy in numbers:

Clean jobs (2003): 64,709
Clean jobs (2010): 83,707
Annual Change (03-10): 3.7%
Exports per jobs (2009): \$20,216
Average annual wage (2009): \$36,764

Fast growing clean industries in Georgia:

- Efficient Lighting
- Conservation
- Green Architecture
- Green Construction
- Efficient Appliances

Source: “Sizing the Clean Energy Economy”

8 “More Jobs, Less Pollution: Growing the Recycling Economy in the U.S.,” Tellus Institute, 2011, <http://www.bluegreenalliance.org/admin/publications/files/MoreJobsLessPollutionFinal-1.pdf> (accessed February 13, 2012).

9 “Impact of Alternate Public Transit and Rail Investment Scenarios on the Labor Market,” October 15, 2010, <http://www.epi.org/page/-/pdf/ib285.pdf> (accessed February 13, 2012).

10 “EPA Administrator Announces National Grants to Train Jobseekers in Green Jobs and Clean Up of Contaminated Sites,” EPA Press Release, July 12, 2011.

11 “Atlanta celebrated for early progress in energy initiative as President Obama announces more than \$4 billion of investments in program,” Southeast Green, <http://www.southeastgreen.com/index.php/metro-atl-news/5173-mayor-kasim-reed-joins-president-barack-obama-former-president-bill-clinton-for-better-buildings-challenge> (accessed February 13, 2012).



The BlueGreen Alliance is a national, strategic partnership between labor unions and environmental organizations dedicated to expanding the number and quality of jobs in the green economy.

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