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CONTACT: Alex Frank — (703) 276-3264, afrank@hastingsgroup.com; Micaela Preskill — (312) 995-5908, mpreskill@e2.org; Michael Timberlake — (913) 645-9103, mtimberlake@e2.org

Report: More Than 28,900 Iowans Work in Clean Energy; Jobs Located in Every County

Proposed federal policies could create thousands more jobs

DES MOINES, IA – (August 11, 2021) – More than 28,900 Iowans worked in clean energy and clean vehicles at the end of 2020, making the sector a major – and promising – part of the state’s economy, according to a comprehensive [analysis of employment data](#) released today by the national, nonpartisan business group E2 (Environmental Entrepreneurs) and Clean Energy Trust.

Like most of the economy, clean energy was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic and economic downturn in 2020. According to this year’s [Clean Jobs Midwest](#), 2020 was the first year-to-year decline since E2 and Clean Energy Trust began tracking Iowa clean energy jobs. At one point, more than 5,000 Iowa clean energy workers had filed for unemployment, but the sector surged back 8.2 percent in the second half of the year to recover more than half of the jobs initially lost. The final 2020 job numbers represent a 9.7 percent drop in Iowa’s clean energy workforce from 2019, or 3,100 jobs. Last year’s job losses were a dramatic change of pace for the industry. Last year’s job losses were a dramatic change of pace for the industry. In the 3 years leading up to 2020, for example, clean energy jobs grew 7 times as fast as overall statewide employment.

Despite the setbacks, clean energy jobs rebounded quicker than the overall Iowa workforce, according to the analysis. Iowa can take advantage of the sector’s high job growth potential by enacting policies that support renewable energy, energy efficiency and electric vehicles that would help create tens of thousands of new jobs for decades as Iowa moves beyond the immediate recovery.

[According to the analysis](#), energy efficiency jobs saw the biggest drop, declining about 13.8 percent over the year as both the pandemic and state policies that cut Iowa’s energy efficiency programs both took a toll on the industry. Other clean energy sectors also saw significant declines in 2020, including renewable energy [2.4 percent], grid and storage [7.5 percent], and clean fuels [3.1 percent].

Several clean energy sectors did see job gains in 2020, including Electric Vehicles (EVs) and Hybrid Electric Vehicles, which combined now employs about 2,881 workers as an increasing number of automakers announced shifts to producing 100 percent zero-emission vehicles.

Nationwide clean energy employment finished 2020 down about 307,000 jobs from 2019’s high of nearly 3.4 million, recovering about 300,000 jobs nationally from June to December – a rate faster than nationwide employment growth during that period.

Micaela Preskill, Midwest Advocate of the national, nonpartisan business group E2 said:

"2020's unprecedented crisis showed why Iowa needs a strong clean energy economy more than ever before. Despite the decline, the data shows clean energy is rebounding back in every state and every county in the Midwest. Our state and federal lawmakers should take note: if you want these good paying jobs in your backyard, you need to support the policies on the table that are primed to turbocharge clean energy and keep it growing."

Ian Adams, Managing Director at Clean Energy Trust said:

"Now in its sixth year, the Clean Jobs Midwest report offers a snapshot of the Midwest's clean energy industry. These jobs prove to be resilient, rebounding faster than the overall Midwest workforce. We see the clean energy industry as ripe with opportunity for innovation and growth - and look forward to supporting the impressive climate entrepreneurs in this space."

Andrew Fisher, Solar and Electric Vehicle Consultant for 1 Source Solar of Ankeny, Iowa said:

"If the sun is shining, solar energy is working and that's why Iowa is 16th in solar technical potential in the country. Not to mention, solar makes financial sense, and so it's a no-brainer. As the cost of solar continues to decline, installing more clean energy means lower bills for everyone and more jobs for Iowans."

Other Findings:

- Energy efficiency, Iowa's largest clean energy employer, now employs 18,240. The sector was hardest hit in 2020 – losing 2,925 jobs or 13.8 percent of its total workforce.
- Renewable energy now employs 5,655 Iowans, including 3,953 in wind and 896 in solar.
- Clean vehicles employ 2,881 Iowans.
- Grid and storage employ 1,326 Iowans.
- Clean fuels employ 852 Iowans.
- Small businesses drive Iowa's clean energy sector – in 2020, 77.1 percent of Iowa's clean energy businesses employed fewer than 20 people.
- Clean energy employed workers in all 99 counties in Iowa.
- Clean energy employed workers in all 4 congressional districts in Iowa.
- 10.4 percent of Iowans employed in clean energy are veterans.

For a full breakdown of clean energy jobs in each sector and for every state in the Midwest, see the detailed breakdowns available at www.cleanjobsmidwest.com – including job totals for every county, congressional district, and state legislative district.

Methodology:

The analysis is based on preliminary employment data collected and analyzed by BW Research Partnership for the 2021 U.S. Energy and Employment Report (USEER, forthcoming). The USEER analyzes data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) to track employment across many energy production, transmission, and distribution subsectors. In addition, the 2021 USEER relies on a unique supplemental survey of 35,000 business representatives across the United States.

Previous E2 and Clean Energy Trust Jobs Reports:

- [Clean Jobs Midwest 2020](#)

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

Additional Information:

- Report: [Clean Jobs America 2021 \(April 2020\)](#)
- Report: [Clean Jobs, Better Jobs: An examination of clean energy job wages \(October 2020\)](#)
- Report: [Build Back Better, Faster: How a federal stimulus focusing on clean energy can create millions of jobs and restart America's economy \(July 2020\)](#)
- Report: [Clean Energy & COVID-19 Economic Crisis, May Impact Analysis \(June 2020\)](#)

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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](#).

Clean Energy Trust provides catalytic capital and support to early-stage startups in the Greater Midwest working on solutions for clean energy, decarbonization, and environmental sustainability. Based in Chicago, Clean Energy Trust invests in and provides hands-on support to help entrepreneurs scale and succeed. To date, Clean Energy Trust has helped its 36 portfolio companies raise \$34 for every \$1 Clean Energy Trust has invested. Learn more at www.CleanEnergyTrust.org.