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Report: More Than 11,400 South Dakotans Work in Clean Energy; Jobs Located in Every County

Proposed federal policies could create thousands more jobs

PIERRE, SD – (August 11, 2021) – More than 11,400 South Dakotans 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. The report comes as Congress and the Biden administration are considering legislation to boost federal investments in clean energy and clean vehicles.

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 South Dakota clean energy jobs. At one point, more than 1,000 South Dakota clean energy workers had filed for unemployment, but the sector surged back 9.2 percent in the second half of the year to recover nearly all the jobs initially lost. The final 2020 job numbers represent a 0.4 percent drop in South Dakota clean energy workforce from 2019, or about 50 jobs. 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 almost 3 times as fast as overall statewide employment.

Despite the setbacks, clean energy jobs rebounded quicker than overall South Dakotan workforce, according to the analysis. South Dakota 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 South Dakota moves beyond the immediate recovery.

[According to the analysis](#), energy efficiency jobs saw the biggest drop, declining about 6.9 percent over the year as workers were prevented from entering homes and offices because of the pandemic lockdowns. Other clean energy sectors also saw significant declines in 2020, including grid and storage [2.3 percent] and clean fuels [0.9 percent].

Several clean energy sectors did see job gains in 2020, including Electric Vehicles (EVs) and Hybrid Electric Vehicles, which combined now employs about 264 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 this region needs a strong clean energy economy more than ever before. Despite the decline, what the data shows is that 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."

Other Findings:

- Energy efficiency, South Dakota's largest clean energy employer, now employs 7,104. The sector was hardest hit in 2020 – losing 524 jobs or 6.9 percent of its total workforce.
- Renewable energy now employs 2,747 South Dakotans, including 1,879 in wind and 605 in solar.
- Clean vehicles employ 927 South Dakotans.
- Grid and storage employ 435 South Dakotans.
- Clean fuels employ 192 South Dakotans .
- Small businesses drive South Dakota's clean energy sector – in 2020, 57.6 percent of South Dakota's clean energy businesses employed fewer than 20 people.
- Clean energy employed workers in all 66 counties in South Dakota.
- 11.8 percent of South Dakotans 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](https://twitter.com/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.