



North Carolina Sustainable Energy Association

Education - Public Policy - Economic Development

www.energync.org

P.O. Box 6465
Raleigh, NC 27628
Main: 919.832.7601

417 N. Boylan Avenue
Raleigh, NC 27603
Fax: 919.832.6967

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Contact: Julie Robinson
(919) 832-7601, ext. 108
(919) 271-3490, cell
julie@energync.org

NORTH CAROLINA CAN BE A NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEADER IN THE NEW ENERGY ECONOMY

*Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency Industry = 6,470+ Jobs in NC;
Significant Growth Expected*

(RALEIGH, NC) – The North Carolina Sustainable Energy Association (NCSEA), a non-profit working to ensure a sustainable future by promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency through education, public policy and economic development, has released two new reports, which detail the economic impact of the new energy economy in North Carolina.

The findings are published in the "North Carolina Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Industry Census 2008" and "Economic Analysis of the North Carolina Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard," which can be found on NCSEA's website at www.energync.org and at the end of this release.

As part of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Industry Census, NCSEA identified and surveyed 486 firms focusing on renewable energy and energy efficiency in North Carolina. A total of 166 firms responded to the survey's 24 questions. The survey found that the responding firms currently provide 2,144 full-time jobs and this young, robust and growing renewable energy and energy efficiency industry has a significant potential for job creation in the coming years.

These firms reported significant employment growth over the last 12 months and project a 24% growth over the next year. Accounting for all identified renewable energy and energy efficiency firms, the industry could consist of over 6,470 jobs today. This figure suggests a significant – and yet overlooked – renewable energy and energy efficiency industry already exists in the State, which will continue to expand in the coming years.

“North Carolina’s renewable energy and energy efficiency industry is very much in its infancy, but the job creation potential is enormous,” said Paul Quinlan, NCSEA’s Market Research & Development Director. **“With over 6,400 jobs in the industry and significant growth projected, North Carolina is poised to become a national and regional leader in the new energy economy. However, the state must take the right steps in next two years in order to capitalize on this opportunity.”**

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Employment in the renewable energy and energy efficiency industry includes a diverse range of positions related to research and development; manufacturing; distribution and sales; installation of renewable energy technologies; implementation of energy efficiency measures; operation and maintenance; and government and support services.

Stimulated by global demand for sustainable energy products, NCSEA found that over 70% of reported jobs are associated with firms involved in manufacturing. Numerous firms in North Carolina manufacture critical components – rather than finished products – for the industry.

Meanwhile, the enactment of state policies, such as the NC Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard (REPS), has increased local demand and spurred growth among firms providing installation services. The REPS requires public utilities to generate at least 12.5% of their electricity from renewable energy sources and energy efficiency measures by 2021.

The size of the industry has grown modestly since the 1970s, with an explosion of new firms entering the industry in the last few years. In fact, more than half of the responding firms began working in the renewable energy and energy efficiency industry since 2000. Among these younger firms, roughly two-thirds of the organizations began operations as renewable and/or energy efficiency firms while one-third of the firms transitioned or diversified into the industry from other activities or markets.

The survey also found these firms maintain a presence in 64 of North Carolina's 100 counties with headquarters predominantly clustered in the west and Research Triangle regions.

“Many of our current manufacturers can transition into the renewable energy and energy efficiency industry and our community colleges and universities can train and retrain our employees,” said Quinlan. “North Carolina’s new energy economy can revive our ailing manufacturing sector and create a broader service industry of technicians, contractors, builders and installers who can’t be outsourced to Mexico or China.”

A portion of the economic potential can also be seen in a technical report released by NCSEA entitled “Economic Analysis of the North Carolina Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard.” This report finds that meeting the REPS mandate will require the support of over 4,000 direct, indirect, and induced jobs by the year 2021, with most jobs occurring in the biomass industry. Accounting for job losses due to changes in conventional industries and rate impacts, the analysis finds the mandate will produce of a net gain of 2,050 jobs in North Carolina. The report’s narrow scope does not capture jobs unrelated to REPS implementation.

A much broader assessment of ‘green jobs’ by the Center for American Progress recently projected 62,000 new green jobs in North Carolina over the next decade tied to government policies to promote a low-carbon economy. This is not unreasonable, given the potential market spillover effects of the REPS law and the current rate of industry growth in North Carolina and worldwide.

However, a major challenge facing this emerging industry will be access to a skilled workforce. According to the industry census, most firms are finding skilled workers, but smaller firms — who project the greatest growth in employment — have the most difficulty finding employees with the required skills.

Furthermore, the required skills for most employees in the renewable energy and energy efficiency industry are likely to significantly change in the next two to five years. These findings suggest workforce development will be an important issue for the growth and success of the industry. Nevertheless, a concerted effort to overcome this, and several other regulatory barriers, would position North Carolina as a national and regional leader in the new energy economy.

NCSEA plans to conduct the "North Carolina Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Industry Census" annually in order to track the expansion of this fast growing industry.

[Click here](#) to view the complete North Carolina Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Industry Census 2008.

[Click here](#) to view the complete Economic Analysis of the North Carolina Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard.

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ABOUT NCSEA

Founded in 1978, the NC Sustainable Energy Association is a 501(c)3 non-profit membership organization of individuals and businesses working to ensure a sustainable future by promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency in North Carolina through education, public policy and economic development. Learn more at

www.energync.org.