

California adding green jobs, leading nation in energy efficiency

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California added green jobs in recent years at a much more rapid pace than non-green jobs, a new report released today says.

From 2005 to 2007, the number of green jobs grew 10 percent, to about 105,000 in California, according to the 2009 California Green Innovation Index. During the same period, state-wide job growth was about 1 percent.

A surprising number of the green jobs — 20 percent — were manufacturing jobs, the report notes, with the growth spread fairly evenly across diverse segments of clean-technology, including advanced materials, transportation, air and environment, and green building.

From 1995 to 2007, the number of green jobs in California grew 15 percent and the number of green businesses increased 28 percent. Green jobs are defined as ones that provide products and services leveraging renewable energy resources, reducing pollution, conserving energy and natural resources, and repurposing waste.

The data snapshot, however, ends in early 2007, which means that the turbulent economy that became the recession of 2008 and continues into 2009 isn't reflected in these numbers.

The report was issued by Next 10, a Palo Alto non-profit that focuses on the intersection of the economy and the environment. It was founded and funded by F. Noel Perry, a former venture capitalist. The research was conducted by Collaborative Economics of Mountain View.

Some other highlights of the report:

- Energy productivity, which researchers define as total gross domestic product produced per unit of energy, is 68 percent higher in California than in the rest of the United States. In 2006, California created \$2.17 of GDP for every 10,000 BTU of energy consumed, compared to \$1.29 of GDP for every 10,000 BTU of energy consumed in the rest of the nation.
- That's important, said Perry, because it shows that energy-efficiency doesn't have to inhibit economic growth.

- From 2002 to 2007, California was the leader in patent registrations for green technologies, especially in the fields of solar energy, fuel cells and batteries.
- A Field Survey commissioned as part of the research shows that a vast majority of Californians believe that global warming is a serious threat to the state's economy (69 percent) and its quality of life (73 percent).
- The \$3.3 billion in venture investments in California clean-tech companies in 2008 represented 57 percent of the total U.S. investment in the segment. Of that, \$1.8 billion went to Silicon Valley companies. Most of the money (69 percent) went to energy-generation projects; 8 percent went to transportation.
- Registrations of alternative-fuel vehicles, including hybrids as well as those running on electricity or natural gas, topped 100,000 in California for the first time in 2007. That represented more than 2 percent of California's car registrations.

As the Obama administration moves to use energy-efficiency and renewable energy as a source of job growth, California could be an exporter of its expertise to other states, Perry said.

"Imagine where the country could be if it were as efficient as California," Perry said.

Tracey Grose, a Collaborative Economics vice president, noted that many calculations of the number of green jobs rely on modeling or existing job categories, and neither results in an accurate accounting. Her firm relied on a broad spectrum of sources, including a sophisticated Internet search for data, to reach its data.