

The economic, environmental and human impacts of our dependence on foreign oil, combined with a worsening economy in severe recession have built the public and political will to develop the U.S. green economy. CAUSE and the Economic Development Collaborative-Ventura County (EDC-VC) recognize that from this crisis involving energy, the environment and increasing unemployment comes the opportunity to invest in a sustainable economic recovery. The green economy and the jobs that come with it represent an extraordinary opportunity to accelerate our recovery in the short term while assuring long-term prosperity through business growth and new pathways to quality jobs for worker advancement.

The emerging green economy increases business and job opportunities in four main areas:

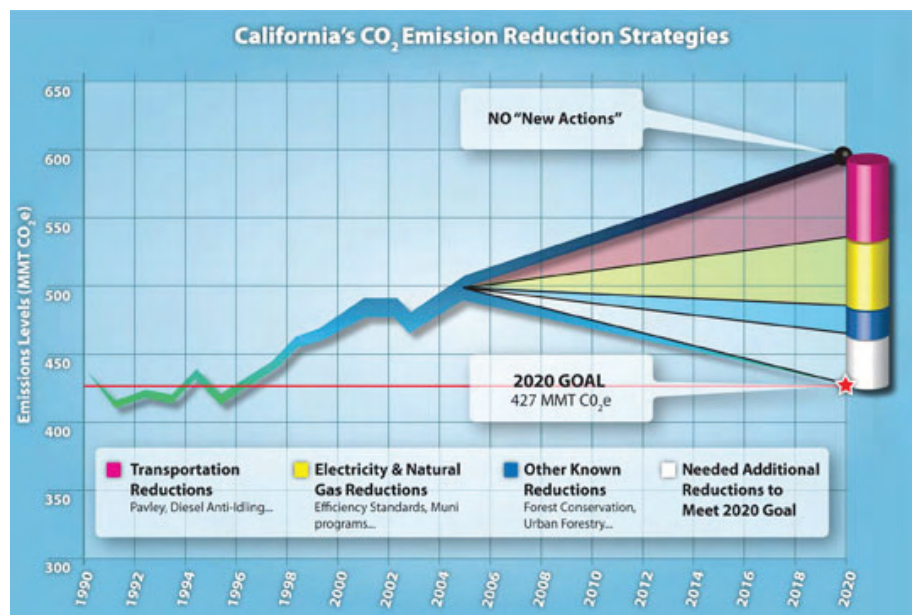
- Improving the energy efficiency of our infrastructure
- Developing renewable energy sources
- Responding to the increasing consumer demand for eco-friendly products and services
- Recycling waste materials

Jobs in these areas are called green collar or green jobs because they not only help preserve or enhance the environment but also provide career tracks that increase workers' skills and wage levels through their participation in emerging business opportunities.

In this policy brief we seek to identify in the green economy a foundation for a shared and sustainable agenda for business and worker prosperity. We outline some common goals and principles, and close with a summary of some actions available to us now to reach our goal of improving worker and business prosperity throughout the region.

The Foundation: The growth of the green economy counters negative economic trends such as the 24% decline in high and middle-income manufacturing jobs from 1990 to 2006. Over 41% of current green jobs are in manufacturing. What makes the scale of the green economy so large is that we are not taking stock of a single new industry, rather, as summarized in a recent report by the California Economic Strategy Panel, we are witnessing "a transformation of the entire economy" (Clean Technology and the Green Economy: Growing Products, Services, Businesses and Jobs in California's Value Network, page 5, March 2008, www.labor.ca.gov/panel/). Though concentrated in manufacturing and construction, green products and services cross numerous industry sectors and occupations.

The Impact of Climate Change Policy on Greenhouse Gas Emissions



Source: California Air Resources Board web site



The Green Economy is already here! Are we ready for it?

California already has over a million existing green jobs and we could add thousands more. A study for the United States Conference of Mayors projected that in the next 30 years Santa Barbara County could add over 5,000 jobs and Ventura County over 17,000 jobs, and that's assuming almost no change in public policy.

Moving on the public policy front, the Obama Administration is proposing a 10-year, \$150 billion investment plan to create five million green jobs. California has enacted legislation requiring that we reduce greenhouse gases back to 1990 levels and the Governor has signed a pact with seven other states and four Canadian provinces in the Western Climate Initiative to further cut back on air pollution. Driven in part by these actions—and despite the budget crisis—California continues to lead the nation in creating jobs in energy efficiency.

The question now is whether California will have the workforce talent to keep pace with the growing and changing demands of business and industry growth.



What's at stake?

Growth in the job sectors of renewable energy, energy efficiency and transportation infrastructure and maintenance will play an integral role in jump-starting our local economy. We must be prepared not only to attract these sectors and to identify infrastructure priorities, but we must also provide education and training to prepare the workforce to meet the new and evolving demand for skills.

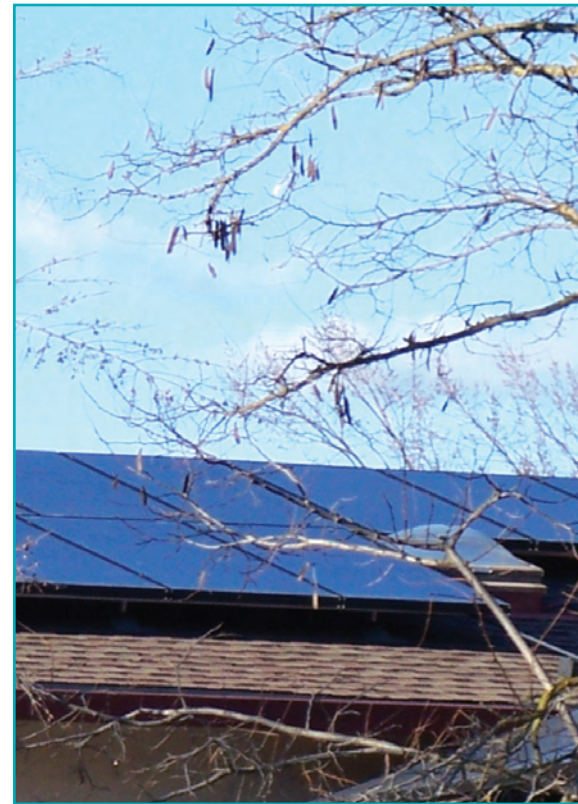
The development of the green economy must benefit the whole spectrum of the Ventura County workforce, particularly our region's low income workers and communities who are suffering the greatest while the economy sheds jobs and slides deeper into recession. We know, for example, that because of growing energy demands, certain communities face disproportionate environmental burdens. However, we are optimistic that these communities will be part of converting to a green or renewable economy that will decrease pollution. We all as a region will benefit from the transition to a green economy by putting people to work in good jobs, promoting healthier communities, and preserving natural resources. Developing green collar jobs in our region can help put a stop to the citing of polluting sources in our neighborhoods.

The Pink in Green

Without a focused effort, the green economy and green jobs will unintentionally exclude women. According to the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), 70% of green businesses are in three job sectors including professional, scientific and technical services, construction and manufacturing. As of 2007, only 9.4% of construction jobs were held by women and only 30% of manufacturing jobs, predominantly textiles, apparel, and leather nondurable goods. In addition, as of 2006, although 30% of privately-held firms nationwide were women led, only 3.4% of government contracts were with women led firms. The green economy is an important opportunity to meet the ideal goal of including women as equal partners in the new economy.

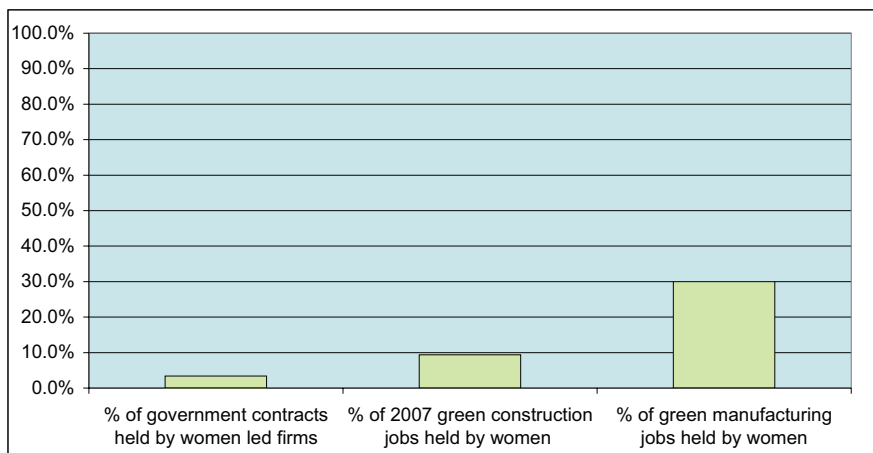
There are three main ways to prevent the unintended consequence of excluding women from the growing green-collar workforce. The first is the traditional route of facilitating women's participation in male-dominated industries, such as labor union efforts to recruit, train and retain women or the Small Business Association program for Small, Minority and Women Owned Businesses. A second strategy is to invest in innovative models such as the Oakland based Women's Action to Gain Economic Security (WAGES). WAGES creates and supports women-owned business cooperatives that provide ecologically friendly home cleaning services and create living wage jobs with health care benefits (wagescooperatives.org).

The third strategy enhances the green economy but requires a paradigm shift. The paradigm shift involves addressing the link between the physical or technological infrastructure jobs related directly to alternative energy and environmental protection with the social infrastructure jobs of child and elder care, education, and health care needed to support the green collar workforce. A combination of traditional, innovative and enhancing strategies is needed so that both women and men benefit from the green economy.



Some Principles to Guide Us in the Green Economy

- The future of energy production is in developing and converting to renewable energy sources produced in the U.S, and this must be a top priority.
- Equally important for delivering the benefits of the emerging green economy to our region are supporting entrepreneurship for its development of new solutions, helping existing businesses transition to new markets and new consumer demand, and training workers to fill the jobs created by new business opportunities.
- We all have the right to live, work and play in a healthy environment. Current reliance on non-renewable energy compromises this right and has created environmental injustices in low income communities and communities of color.
- In the interim period when reducing our reliance on non-renewable energy, we need to focus on getting more efficient instead of building more non-renewable sources that we are trying to get away from using.
- Green jobs represent community value, in that they represent opportunity for widespread worker access to the wealth of the new economy and pay wages that support family self-sufficiency.



Putting the Pieces Together of the Green Jobs Puzzle

The CAUSE:

Provide Green Career Paths

Our region must immediately organize new business and education partnerships to expand the education, training and apprenticeship programs that will prepare workers for green economy jobs.

Growing Green Business

Our region must improve capital access for green economy businesses and target business support services to small and start-up businesses whose growth will benefit from new green product and service development and by identifying and accessing green economy markets for their products or services.

Complete the Green Life Cycle

Currently green products such as solar panels are made with toxic materials and have a 25 year life cycle. We must ensure toxics harmful to our environment do not end up in landfills by recycling green products to complete the green life cycle.

We can do green energy retrofits now

For local homes and businesses there is the knowledge and the infrastructure to weatherize homes and maximize the efficiency of our neighborhoods. Currently energy retrofit programs like the low-income home energy assistance provider (LIHEAP) program are up and running and can be used to reduce the energy use in residential areas. A regional program can be set up that gives loans to those who are energy retrofitting their homes or businesses with the knowledge that the energy savings will be used to pay back the loan within a given time period. Public agencies and government can take the lead by investing in energy retrofits of their buildings recognizing that by investing now they will realize savings in the future.

A Green Regional Collaborative Effort and Voice

There is a need to build a broad based collaborative of labor, business, community groups, academics, and public agencies in the Central Coast. An assessment of what areas of the green economy matches best with our unique attributes as a coastal region with a strong agricultural base given our current land use patterns is needed.

Green Transportation

With new national investments in infrastructure we have a great opportunity to improve how our regional transportation networks support workers, business opportunity, and overall community access. The local consideration of a transportation tax measure is an opportunity to renew the public/private dialogue and planning for how transportation investments can support alternatives to driving, including public transit, and improve our economy over the long-term.

The Green Triple Bottom Line

The green economy gives us the opportunity to obtain the triple bottom line of social, environmental and economic gains by

- Providing good paying jobs with local hire requirements and labor standards, especially targeting poorer communities with high unemployment rates
- Reducing demand for energy and thus reducing air pollution and the need for new non-renewable energy generating facilities
- Increase the number of our region's businesses successfully participating in the green economy, creating new wealth and new jobs across multiple industries



Take Action



The EDC-VC's mission is to maintain a healthy Ventura County economy through collaboration, education and training as a means to create and sustain quality jobs and improve wealth, thus enhancing the standard of living and quality of life throughout Ventura County.

Funded by contributions from the county, its cities, the Workforce Investment Board and top-level private sector executives, EDC-VC programs serve to strengthen the communities where we live, work and raise our families.

For more information call 805-384-1800 or visit www.edc-vc.com.

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CAUSE's Mission is to build grassroots power to realize social, economic and environmental justice for the people of the Ventura and Santa Barbara counties region through policy research, leadership development, organizing, and advocacy.

CAUSE's Vision is that together we can create a global community where we all contribute to, and benefit from, a sustainable economy that is just, prosperous and environmentally healthy.

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