

The Green Collar Jobs Council's Position on the Green Economy and Green Collar Jobs

A Foundation for Deliberation and Investment

The Green Collar Jobs Act, signed into law by Governor Schwarzenegger in 2008, established the Green Collar Jobs Council (GCJC) under the purview of the California Workforce Investment Board (CWIB).

The Green Collar Jobs Council is tasked with understanding the current and future workforce needs of the Green/Clean economy, developing a comprehensive strategy to prepare California's workforce to meet the needs of businesses supporting the Green/Clean economy and ensuring that efforts aimed at improving worker's skills are coordinated and effective. Additionally, the Green Collar Jobs Act requires that the CWIB utilize a sector strategy approach in addressing California's workforce needs and align its approach with the Economic Strategy Panel's work on regional economies and industry clusters.

Regarding the GCJC, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has said... *"As we continue to navigate California's economic recovery, we want to make sure our businesses and residents are ready to compete for new markets and changing jobs. The Green Collar Jobs Council will work with leaders in education, workforce development and business throughout the state to ensure California is on the leading edge of the new green economy—and able to meet the job demands it brings."*

In order to effectively meet its charge, the GCJC needs to understand the Green/Clean Economy, how the GCJC's decisions may influence the Green/Clean Economy, and how this economy may potentially impact the State's residents and environment. This position paper will serve as a guide to the GCJC as it deliberates strategies and policies to prepare the Green workforce, and makes recommendations on the use of resources to meet the demands of the emerging Green/Clean economy.

Background

California has a long-standing history of leading implementation of environmental policy. Most recently, the enactment of the California Global Warming Solutions Act (AB 32) and the Alternative and Renewable Fuel and Vehicle Technology Program (AB 118) have demonstrated that California is becoming a national and global leader in combining advances in public policy and private sector innovation to enhance both environmental quality and economic growth. With the venture capital community heavily investing in a range of clean technologies, state leaders know that policy decisions along with new investments signal transformation for the entire California economy. Current challenges now exist around understanding what makes up the green economy, what existing jobs are being transformed, what new jobs are being created, and what implications these events have on education, economic, and workforce development policy issues.

Research

In March of 2008, California's Economic Strategy Panel (Panel) published a monograph entitled "Clean Technology and the Green Economy: Growing Products, Services, Businesses and Jobs in California's Value Network". The monograph's primary objective was to help define California's green economy and provide state policy leaders with answers to the questions above. In this publication, the Panel asserts that new discoveries and demand for green technologies are fueling the expansion of business activities across the entire economy. This assertion is critical to how green occupations are understood and defined.

The Panel discusses the greening of California's economy not as the development of new and unfamiliar industries, but rather the transformation of familiar industries within the existing economy as they begin to "make more efficient and sustainable use of our limited natural resources".

This noteworthy observation by the Panel is important as the Green Collar Jobs Council considers how to frame the workforce development strategies in support of this economic opportunity. While there is potential for completely new skill sets to be required by segments of the green economy, the majority of the jobs that will be associated with it are familiar and may spring from industries which have historically suffered from declining job numbers. Remarkably, two industries often cited for job losses statewide are poised for potential growth as the Green Economy takes shape, namely, construction and manufacturing.

Any attempt to define "green jobs" in a state with an economic base as diverse and extensive as California's would be flawed unless it assumed the potential for job growth from an economic value network and product value chain perspective. To be successful in its charge the GCJC (and the Panel) will continually engage the range of leaders contributing to this economic transformation and consider policy implications to facilitate growth and competitiveness of the emerging green economy. The monograph will be one of the foundation documents that the GCJC shall consider in its deliberations on policy and investment in Green Workforce Initiatives. The GCJC will also look to the emerging field of research and practice on sector strategies and industry clusters as it seeks to develop a robust and sustainable approach to the development of the workforce needed to support Green enterprise. [Draft Green Economy Monograph](#)

In addition to the Monograph, the Panel and the Employment Development Department's Labor Market Information Division (LMID) have developed a working definition of the Green Economy and the jobs associated with it. LMID's definition is the result of reviewing nearly 100 documents published on the Green economy. This body of work encompasses findings from a wide variety of organizations from throughout the United States and is garnering national attention. Below is the abbreviated working definition as represented by the acronym "GREEN":

Green or clean is any activity or service that performs at least one of the following:

- **G**enerating and storing renewable energy ;
- **R**ecycling existing materials ;
- **E**nergy efficient product manufacturing, distribution, construction, installation, and maintenance;
- **E**ducation, compliance and awareness ;
- **N**atural and sustainable product manufacturing.

The full definition is broad, fairly comprehensive, and connects job titles to the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS). It will be modified as needed following analysis of the LMID's green survey responses during the summer of 2009. It provides a broad foundation upon which the GCJC can build strategies. This document will be considered as another key piece of information for the GCJC as it deliberates the workforce needs of California's Green economy.

[LMID Green Definition](#)

Promise

The Green Economy holds an additional value proposition in the business and employment benefits it may produce for Californians. Through discussion and input from a variety of stakeholders including GCJC members, State agencies, various philanthropic organizations, community based

organizations, and others, it is believed that the GCJC's decisions and recommendations will benefit from establishing guiding principles that reflect the values associated with the Green Economy. These values are also found in much of the literature available on the Green Economy and Green jobs.

From a business perspective, this economic opportunity holds promise for:

- A business environment which provides greater opportunity for business start-up, expansion, retention and growth, including improved opportunity for minority and women-owned enterprise;
- Recognition of the critical role played by entrepreneurs in this emerging economy, and reward for innovation;
- Spreading economic benefit to all groups while creating new public/private partnerships never thought probable before;
- Investing in the growth and support of a sustainable economy through the effective leveraging of fiscal and other resources;
- Strong collaboration between business leaders, and stakeholders in education, economic and workforce development, as well as community based and philanthropic organizations, ensuring business needs are supported by a skilled and talented workforce.

From an employment perspective the Green Economy holds the promise of jobs that:

- Provide incomes which allow individuals and families to achieve a higher quality of life, recognizing that family-sustaining wages may differ regionally;
- Provide career pathways which are connected to a full complement of educational opportunities (including apprenticeship and certification programs) which lead low-income and unemployed individuals out of poverty, and provide incumbent workers advancement opportunities;
- Impact the environment in a positive way by providing products and services which promote renewable energy, reduce pollution, conserve energy and natural resources and restore or enhance the environment while spreading environmental, economic and wellness benefits to all individuals;
- Provide employment stability and are sustainable.

Considerations for a Workforce Development Strategy

The GCJC's Short Term strategy will:

- Focus on workforce development solutions for industries which support the green initiatives identified in ARRA including Smart Grid Transmission, Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency, Weatherization, and others as identified;
- Structure grant opportunities to support preparation of unemployed, underemployed, low-income and displaced workers for employment in careers in the green economy to include assessment, training, internships, On-the-Job Training, connection to state approved apprenticeship programs and job placement;
- Influence education to prepare young people for the work of tomorrow—emphasizing the critical need for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics and encouraging educational models that connect the rigor of classroom instruction with the relevance of real world of work application, soft skills training—including people skills, problem-solving and critical thinking, workplace readiness skills, enthusiasm, creativity;

- Align with education and awareness initiatives focusing on changing public behavior related to reducing individual and collective impact on the environment—this can be an industry/occupational focus as well as marketing;
- Seek additional funding opportunities, applying for any federal, state, or other funding under the auspices of the California Workforce Investment Board.

The GCJC's Long Term strategy will:

- Identify industries for focus beyond ARRA
- Continue to support expansion of *innovation and development* in renewable energy
- Focus on California's comparative green advantage, designing projects that support what can be produced in California, used in California and exported from California;
- Structure grant opportunities to support preparation of unemployed, underemployed, low-income and displaced workers for employment in careers in the green economy to include assessment, training, internships, On-the-Job Training, connection to state approved apprenticeship programs and job placement;
- Influence education to prepare young people for the work of tomorrow, emphasizing the critical need for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics and encouraging educational models that connect the rigor of classroom instruction with the relevance of real world of work application, soft skills training—including people skills, problem-solving and critical thinking, workplace readiness skills, enthusiasm, creativity;
- Continue to support energy efficiency and weatherization, and work to connect these career pathways to the jobs that will emerge as building retrofit efforts get underway;

The GCJC will provide:

- Broad state level direction (may be influenced by California Working GREEN definition discussed above) on investment in green workforce strategies; and
- Support for regional action derived through economic trend analysis, workforce needs analysis, sector strategy development and sustainable planning practices based on broad participation in the planning process from local business, workforce development, economic development, local elected officials, education, labor—the brain trust that collaborates to plan for the best future for all in their region.

Summary:

Over the next 18 to 24 months, the GCJC will identify and facilitate the development of the framework, funding, strategies, programs, policies, partnerships, and opportunities necessary to address the need for a highly skilled and well trained workforce in support of California's green businesses and economy. Through its work, the Council will serve as a catalyst for the creation of sustainable sector strategies that will be managed through regional partnerships.

To inform this work the GCJC will use the two foundation documents including the Monograph, and California's Working Definition of the Green Economy. Additionally the GCJC will use the values and aspirations cited above to ensure that the promises of the Green economy are shared by all Californians, and that California's environment is protected for current and future generations. None of the foundation documents, premises or framework statements will take necessary precedence over another, and be considered individually. Rather, they will be taken as a whole to fully inform and support the work of the GCJC.