

Green jobs will fire up state's ailing economy

by *Billy Parish* - May. 2, 2009 12:00 AM
My Turn

In the past year, the number of unemployed men and women in Arizona has nearly doubled to more than 240,000. Most of those job losses have been in construction, as the housing industry has been particularly hard hit.

Our best bet to stem the loss of jobs and reinvigorate the state economy is through the creation of green jobs in housing, transportation and clean-energy development.

Arizona, in particular, stands to benefit from the development of a clean-energy economy. With more than 300 days of sunshine every year and more solar-energy potential than any other state, Arizona is well-positioned to capitalize on the new energy-technology revolution. Investing in clean energy creates four times as many jobs as investing the same amount of money in oil. Those jobs can be here in Arizona.

But there's a major obstacle: the lack of federal legislation. Fortunately, there seems to be progress toward a consensus that will address [climate change](#) and jump-start the transition to a clean-energy economy.

Last week, the Union of Concerned Scientists released "Climate 2030 Blueprint," a study showing how the United States can dramatically cut its global-warming emissions and reduce consumer and business energy bills through a cap on dirty emissions and increased energy-efficiency measures.

It is the same approach in the climate legislation under discussion in Congress: the Waxman-Markey bill.

Moving away from the dirty fuels of the past would force polluters to pay for the transition to renewable energy, a smart grid, and better [public transportation](#) that would create jobs and put people back to work.

In addition, both the UCS report and Waxman-Markey measure propose incentives for [energy efficiency](#) and renewables that would provide long-term savings to U.S. businesses and consumers. By 2030, the average U.S. household would save \$900 on its annual energy bill because of the lower cost of fuel, electricity and home heating. Combining the reduced energy costs and revenue from a "cap-and-trade" system to limit greenhouse gases, the savings to businesses and consumers would total \$465 billion in 2030.

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for energy efficiency with jobs that can't be shipped overseas. Until the late 1990s, the United States dominated the global solar-energy market. Now, Japan, China and Germany are the leaders, and the United States has fallen to a distant fourth in solar-panel production.

Let's start building things in Arizona again, beginning with wind turbines, solar panels and energy-efficient products that say, "Made in America."

Investment in clean energy and energy-efficiency products will not only create jobs here at home but will provide long-term savings to Arizona's residents. If the recommendations of the UCS Blueprint are implemented in Waxman-Markey, Arizona stands to create tens of thousands of jobs. That's good for now and good for the future.

Billy Parish of Flagstaff is founder of the Energy Action Coalition, a national student clean-energy coalition.

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The advertisement features a large, stylized text layout for Mother's Day bouquets. On the left and right sides, there are images of colorful rose bouquets. The text is centered and uses various font sizes and weights to emphasize the offer. The ProFlowers logo and ordering information are positioned on the right side of the ad.

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