Clean-Energy Investments Create Jobs in Montana

By Robert Pollin, James Heintz, and Heidi Garrett-Peltier

Investments in a clean-energy economy will generate major employment benefits for Montana and the rest of the U.S. economy. Our research finds that Montana could see a net increase of about $460 million in investment revenue and 6,000 jobs based on its share of a total of $150 billion in clean-energy investments annually across the country. This is even after assuming a reduction in fossil fuel spending equivalent to the increase in clean-energy investments.

Adding 6,000 jobs to the Montana labor market in 2008 would have brought the state’s unemployment rate down to 3.2 percent from its actual 2008 level of 4.5 percent.

Clean energy creates jobs across the economy

Clean-energy investments create 16.7 jobs for every $1 million in spending. Spending on fossil fuels, by contrast, generates 5.3 jobs per $1 million in spending.

Most of the jobs created through clean-energy investments will be in the same areas that people work in today. Constructing wind farms creates jobs for sheet metal workers, machinists, and truck drivers. Increasing buildings’ energy efficiency through retrofitting requires roofers, insulators, and building inspectors. Expanding mass transit systems employs civil engineers, electricians, and dispatchers.

Relative to spending on fossil fuels, clean-energy investments create 2.6 times more jobs for people with college degrees or above, 3 times more jobs for people with some college, and 3.6 times more jobs for people with high school degrees or less.
Legislation encourages private investment

Robert Pollin is professor of economics and co-director of the Political Economy Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. James Heintz is associate research professor and associate director for PERI. Holly Cramm-Peddie is a PERI research fellow.

The overall clean-energy investment program will provide a major boost to the construction, manufacturing, and phosphate power sectors. Important new investments will also be devoted to developing renewable energy systems. Important new investments will also be devoted to developing renewable energy systems for building sectors, public transportation, and smart grid electrical transmission. The largest share of clean-energy investments will go toward energy efficiency, including investment promotes efficiency and renewable energy.

For private businesses, most important, a clean-energy investment program of measures that would substantially strengthen these clean-energy investment incentives. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act encourages private business. The largest share of clean-energy investments would come from certain rules.


Policies such as the ACESA will have significant economic benefits in addition to their environmental contributions. Most important, a clean-energy investment program of measures that would substantially strengthen these clean-energy investment incentives.

Most of the $150 billion per year in new clean energy investments would come from private businesses. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act encourages private business.

Robert Pollin is professor of economics and co-director of the Political Economy Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. James Heintz is associate research professor and associate director for PERI. Holly Cramm-Peddie is a PERI research fellow.

The overall clean-energy investment program will provide a major boost to the construction, manufacturing, and phosphate power sectors. Important new investments will also be devoted to developing renewable energy systems. Important new investments will also be devoted to developing renewable energy systems for building sectors, public transportation, and smart grid electrical transmission. The largest share of clean-energy investments will go toward energy efficiency, including investment promotes efficiency and renewable energy.

For private businesses, most important, a clean-energy investment program of measures that would substantially strengthen these clean-energy investment incentives. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act encourages private business. The largest share of clean-energy investments would come from certain rules.