

RENEW Wisconsin: Commends budget proposal to invest in Wisconsin's clean energy workforce

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Madison, WI – On Sunday, February 14, 2021, Governor Evers [announced](#) that his 2021-23 budget will include more than \$29 million for workforce development initiatives, including \$1 million in the Fast Forward program specifically to train workers in green jobs. RENEW Wisconsin strongly supports this proposal to help alleviate the shortage of trained workers in our rapidly growing clean energy industry.

[Clean Jobs Midwest](#) estimates that at the end of 2019 there were 76,600 clean energy jobs in Wisconsin, which is more than the combined workforce of real estate agents and brokers, computer programmers, web developers, and waiters and waitresses. Sixty-nine percent of Wisconsin's clean energy workforce are employed by businesses with fewer than 20 employees, with more than 19,500 workers based in rural areas.

The need for renewable energy workers is expected to continue growing at a rapid pace. According to the [US Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), solar and wind technicians are projected to be two of the fastest growing occupations in the country over the next 10 years. In the last 10 years the price of solar has dropped 88% and wind energy has dropped by 69%, which according to the financial firm [Lazard](#), even without subsidies, makes it less expensive than coal generated electricity, and on par with natural gas. The prices for wind and solar energy are expected to continue declining and their financial advantage will continue to increase, benefiting all of the electric ratepayers in Wisconsin and further increasing demand for skilled renewable energy

workers.

Alliant Energy, based in Madison, WI, has committed to build more than 1,000 megawatts (MW) of utility scale solar energy by 2024. This commitment will create 1,600 construction jobs, annually generate \$4 million in payments to local governments, and pay approximately \$5 million in land rental income, primarily to farmers, every year for 30 years. This investment will also save Alliant ratepayers over [\\$2 billion in long-term costs](#).

“The construction of clean energy projects not only creates thousands of good paying jobs, but it keeps billions of our energy dollars right here in Wisconsin.” said Heather Allen, Executive Director of RENEW Wisconsin. “Without our own trained workforce, many of these clean energy projects may not get built or will be built by out-of-state companies and crews. We can’t afford to let that happen.”

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RENEW Wisconsin is a nonprofit organization that promotes renewable energy in Wisconsin. We work on policies and programs that expand solar power, wind power, biogas, local hydropower, geothermal energy, and electric vehicles. Since 1991 we have been a champion for clean energy solutions in the Badger State.