

Gov. Evers: Highlights initiatives to build a clean energy workforce, infrastructure, and economy

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers this week will travel across the state highlighting clean energy workforce, infrastructure, and economy initiatives in his 2023-25 biennial budget to invest in building a statewide clean energy economy, including expanding access and use of electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure and promoting the conservation, clean energy, energy efficiency, and environmental job sectors.

“Wisconsiners shouldn’t have to choose between mitigating climate change and protecting our environment and good-paying jobs and economic development—we must do both,” said Gov. Evers. “Building a clean energy economy here in Wisconsin is a top priority and a major focus of our budget. From investing in clean energy and clean job promotion, like bolstering our forestry industry and building out our state’s electric vehicle charging infrastructure, to supporting innovative programs that were introduced in our Clean Energy Plan that reduce reliance on out-of-state energy sources and lower energy bills for working families, our budget works to ensure that we can meet our clean energy and workforce needs both today and in the future.”

Since Day One, Gov. Evers has been a leader in combatting the climate crisis and is committed to building a clean energy economy in Wisconsin. From joining the [U.S. Climate Alliance](#), a bipartisan coalition of governors committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions consistent with the goals of the Paris Agreement, to creating the [Governor’s Task Force on Climate Change](#) to releasing the state’s first-ever [Clean Energy Plan](#), Wisconsin continues to advance towards a clean energy economy under Gov. Evers’ leadership. The governor’s 2023-25 biennial budget proposal builds on this work and includes several provisions recommended

by the state's [Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy](#) and the Clean Energy Plan. Implementing the state's Clean Energy Plan is expected to lower energy bills for families, reduce reliance on out-of-state energy sources, invest in job and apprenticeship training, and create more than 40,000 jobs by 2030. In addition, this plan also supports the governor's ambitious commitment to making Wisconsin's electricity production 100 percent carbon-free by 2050.

Gov. Evers' 2023-25 budget proposal includes many key investments in building a clean energy economy, promoting clean energy production and energy efficiency, and supporting and creating jobs in the clean energy sector. The governor's budget invests in building the state's clean energy workforce, increases funding for the state's Focus on Energy program, and supports small businesses in the clean energy sector and local communities in resiliency planning efforts.

In addition, the governor is proposing key initiatives to build out the state's electric vehicle charging station network to accelerate the deployment and adoption of electric vehicles in Wisconsin, lowering emissions and improving air quality for all Wisconsinites.

More information regarding the governor's proposals to protect and conserve Wisconsin's natural resources and promote a clean energy economy and workforce is available below.

Bolstering the Clean Energy Economy

- Establish the existing Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy in statute within the Department of Administration (DOA), which will continue to promote the development and use of clean and renewable energy across the state, advance innovative sustainability solutions that improve the state's economy and environment, diversify the resources used to meet the state's energy needs, and generate family-supporting jobs by promoting the expansion of Wisconsin's clean energy economy;
- Establish a Clean Energy Small Business Incubator within DOA, which will provide business development, mentorship, and expertise to Wisconsin small businesses operating in the clean energy sector;
- Provide \$5 million over the biennium to support a one-time pilot clean energy small business start-up grant program;
- Create a renewable and clean energy research grant with \$4 million to be administered by the Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy within DOA;

- Provide \$145,000 and one project position at the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to assist with reviewing and permitting solar energy projects;
- Include utility-owned battery storage facilities in the calculation of shared revenue utility aid payments to counties and municipalities to encourage the construction of facilities necessary for renewable energy storage and incentivize local governments to host this form of utility property in their communities;
- Provide \$10 million for a clean energy job training and reemployment program;
- Provide \$2 million under the Wisconsin Fast Forward framework for training in green jobs, including conservation and environmental career pathways; and
- Provide \$2 million to create the Southeast Wisconsin Green Jobs Corps to encourage young adults facing barriers to employment to enter energy efficiency, conservation, and environmental sector jobs.

Building Wisconsin's EV Infrastructure

- Establish a program to utilize federal funding to further build out Wisconsin's electric vehicle charging infrastructure. This action, along with other key provisions recommended by Gov. Evers, will enable the state to use \$34.5 million of federal funding, along with potential state funds, to allow greater use of electric vehicles throughout the state;
- Provide \$412,200 and two positions to provide consumer protection oversight of EV charging stations;
- Modify current law to explicitly exempt from the definition of a public utility a nonutility that supplies electricity through an EV charging station and charges by duration or the kilowatt-hour; and
- Include utility-owned EV charging infrastructure in the calculation of shared revenue utility aid payments to counties and municipalities to promote the use of renewable energy and reward local governments that host these facilities in a manner similar to other utility property.

Investing in Energy Efficiency

- Double the required utility contribution for the Focus on Energy program from 1.2 percent to 2.4 percent of annual operating revenues, which would generate an additional \$100 million in annual funding for the program;
- Modify the types of eligible projects under the Focus on Energy program to include projects that deploy electric technologies to meet energy needs currently served by other fuel sources;

- Authorize regulated utilities to offer inclusive on-bill financing to residential and commercial customers for energy efficiency improvements, allowing customers to pay for energy efficiency improvements incrementally over time and making such improvements more accessible; and
- Provide \$250,000 and one full-time position to establish a stretch energy code working group to develop a stretch energy code for Wisconsin. A stretch energy code permits local governments to voluntarily enact regulations that improve energy efficiency relative to the base energy code.

Promoting Jobs in Forestry

- Provide \$775,000 for the development of a forestry industry strategic plan and roadmap;
- Provide an additional \$500,000 over the biennium for both the Wisconsin Institute for Sustainable Technology (WIST) at the University of Wisconsin (UW)-Stevens Point and the Advanced Manufacturing, Engineering Technology, and Apprenticeship (AMETA) Center at Mid-State Technical College (MSTC) to further support their critical work in building out Wisconsin's forestry and paper industry workforce. This investment ensures ongoing support to these programs and builds upon Gov. Evers' previous investment of \$4 million each to WIST and AMETA to support their work to ensure the long-term viability of the state's paper and forest products industry; and
- Provide \$195,000 and one full-time position at the DNR to hire a forestry-focused outreach officer to work with groups underserved by traditional forestry and environmental higher education programs.

An online version of this release is available [here](#).