



FACT SHEET

Regional Energy, National Solutions

Two clear paths lie ahead for America's energy future. The first—embraced by the American Petroleum Institute and its supporters in Washington and across the country—sees America as nothing more than a source of fossil fuels, regardless of regional diversity, availability of natural resources, or environmental impact. This “drill, baby, drill” path looks like a quick fix, but, as with all such schemes, it's really just a mirage.

We offer an alternative: a longer but more realistic path that diversifies our energy resources and strengthens the economy through proactive solutions that move us toward sustainable energy independence, the jobs of the future, and recognition of the urgent need to combat climate change.

Unlike the fossil fuel industry's vision, America's clean energy economy is working right now to create jobs, spur economic growth, and reduce our carbon emissions and fossil fuel dependence across the country. The U.S. military gets this: Realizing the critical need to enhance our energy security, the Department of Defense has become a major proponent of clean energy solutions. The world's leading private investors, too, agree that long-term climate change and clean energy policy is a tremendous economic opportunity.

This report doesn't deny the current role of fossil fuels in today's energy economy. But America is more than just a giant coal mine or oil field. In fact, every region has its own intrinsic resources and can contribute in its own way toward the overall movement away from a carbon-only energy future. This report focuses on non-fossil-fuel-driven economic development strategies in six major regions of the country. Though the clean economy in each state and region is multifaceted, we've highlighted specific projects that are currently in operation or possess proven and achievable potential to create significant jobs and spur smart industrial development. By capitalizing on the country's incredible size and resource diversity—shown in the unique strengths of each region—our vision is uniquely American.

Atlantic Coast: Offshore wind

The Atlantic Coast's vast natural resources, pre-existing infrastructure, and status as one of the nation's largest energy load centers make the area prime territory for offshore wind energy development. The densely populated region has some of the highest electricity prices in the nation and currently depends heavily on a high-carbon volatile supply of imported fossil fuels. Developing an offshore wind industry in the region enjoys broad public support and carries the potential for reaping the huge economic rewards that come from establishing a hub for an entire regional—or even national—industry.

- Offshore wind is the only utility-scale energy resource abundant enough to contribute substantially to the sustained, long-term energy demands of the Atlantic Coast region. The Department of Energy rates the region's coastal wind resources higher than any land-based wind resources in the nation.
- Developing just 54 gigawatts of offshore wind in Atlantic waters would generate \$200 billion in economic activity and create 43,000 permanent, well-paid technical jobs, in addition to displacing the annual output of 52 coal-fired power plants.

Gulf Coast: Coastal restoration

America's Gulf Coast is a region long dominated by the oil industry, but the inherent riskiness of fossil fuel extraction points to the importance of diversifying the region's economic base. In order to remain economically vibrant and resilient to extreme weather events and to the long-term effects of decades of oil and gas and other industrial development, the coastline, estuaries, and wetlands that define the Gulf Coast must be repaired and restored. Doing so is vital to the health and safety of the region and provides a tremendous economic opportunity in emerging coastal- and marine-restoration-related industries for the hard-hit region.

- The rapid loss of wetlands along the Gulf Coast puts the region at greater risk of the devastating effects of climate change: storm surges, sea level rise, and flooding. It also threatens existing industries—such as fisheries, tourism, and recreation—that represent billions of dollars in economic activity and thousands of jobs.
- Studies find that each \$1 million invested in ecosystem restoration can create as many as 36 jobs in design, construction, and operations—more than equivalent investments in traditional infrastructure projects. Much more than the oil and gas sector, the restoration sector includes jobs across a huge range of occupations and skill levels. Restoration is helping firms working in design, services, and construction related to offshore drilling to develop new lines of business to put their skills into repairing critical ecosystems.

Southeast: Energy efficiency and smart grid

The Southeast, a region historically dependent on fossil fuels, has become a leader in the emerging field of smart-grid technology—which is at the center of the impending wholesale modernization of our electric infrastructure. An enhanced commitment to regional smart-grid innovation, manufacturing, and deployment, coupled with a robust plan to address the region's traditional energy efficiency shortfall, point to an economic and environmental boon.

- The Southeast boasts more firms across the high-tech smart-grid value chain than any other region. Continuing to lead this transition offers the opportunity to create jobs across a range of skill-levels and fields; to diversify existing companies and to build new ones; to improve quality of life by connecting home, utility, renewable, and vehicle technology; and to reap the environmental and cost-saving benefits of using our resources more efficiently.
- At the same time, addressing the region's serious shortfall in implementing conventional energy efficiency policies provides a tremendous and complementary economic and environmental opportunity. A study by Georgia Tech and Duke University showed the potential to cut energy use across the region by 16 percent in 2030. This would result in annual consumer savings of \$71 billion and lead to the creation of 520,000 jobs by 2030.

Midwest: Advanced vehicles

The auto industry revival that is taking place in the Midwest is proof that states and the nation prosper when we make energy choices that take the American people, our economy, and our outdoor heritage forward together. Having recovered from near bankruptcy less than three years ago, the auto industry is now profitable, sales are rebounding, and fuel-economy projections have exceeded expectations.

- Retooling the auto industry to build the next generation of vehicles has proved to be one of the most effective elements of a national recovery, adding more than 230,000 direct jobs in manufacturing and auto sales since the low point of the recession in mid-2009. That adds up to 14 percent growth, far outpacing the economy as a whole.
- The region is experiencing significant success in innovation, as smart standards, manufacturing investment, and advanced research and development move forward together. Automakers and automaking states are leaders in clean energy patents; foreign and domestic automakers are bringing additional advanced vehicle manufacturing to the United States, including to build here for export; and companies are hiring hundreds of new engineers.

- In addition to revitalizing American manufacturing, the deep oil savings from vehicles being built now under strong new fuel-economy standards will mean net savings to consumers of more than \$54 billion a year in 2030 and will add 570,000 jobs to the economy.

Mountain West: Wind and solar development and distribution

The Mountain West is experiencing firsthand the economic and environmental benefits of transitioning to low-carbon energy sources. Continuing this shift will be critical—the West is already experiencing serious damage from climate change and would face an even grimmer future if the nation turns its back on clean renewable energy in favor of a continued reliance on dirty fuels.

- The West boasts nearly unlimited renewable energy resources—particularly wind, solar, and geothermal—that promise a brighter economic future than is possible with fossil fuels. The National Renewable Energy Laboratory identified 11,788 megawatts of nonhydro renewable energy projects either under construction or in advanced development in the region. Using the Electric Power Research Institute’s estimates of jobs per megawatt, these projects represent 71,872 jobs.
- Unrestrained fossil fuel development poses a grave threat to recreation, natural resources, and habitat throughout the region—all significant economic drivers. A study by Headwaters Economics found that from 1970 to 2010, nonmetropolitan counties in the West that had more than 30 percent protected federal lands increased jobs by 345 percent. Nonmetropolitan counties with no protected federal lands saw just 83 percent growth.

Pacific Coast: Solar power innovation and installation

The Pacific Coast and the adjoining western states are referred to as the “sun belt” for a reason. Capitalizing on that abundant solar resource is paying huge dividends for the region—providing jobs, spurring new industries, and spawning new innovative technologies. Abundant resources and aggressive renewable energy standards, including incentives for both utility-scale and small-scale rooftop solar, position the region to build on its current status as a national leader in solar energy installation and generation.

- The National Renewable Energy Laboratory recently identified a region comprising southeastern California, southern Nevada, and southwestern Nevada as having the strongest solar energy potential in the United States.

- The solar industry in California has experienced significant growth over the past 15 years. Since 1995 the number of solar businesses grew by 171 percent, and total employment jumped by 166 percent. As a point of comparison, the total number of California businesses has grown by 70 percent, and employment has increased by 12 percent.
- The National Renewable Energy Laboratory estimates that California has the technical capacity to generate more than 4,200 gigawatts of solar energy. That is more than 10 times the amount of energy produced by the entire stock of U.S. coal-burning plants—without the carbon emissions and other pollutants.

“One size fits all” has never applied to America, and the nation’s energy policy is no exception. Our vision relies on American resources and innovation to build strong, healthy, resilient communities and economies, weaving together a national energy fabric that is much stronger than one comprising drilling alone.