

PACING JOB GROWTH FOR NC, WITH OPPORTUNITY FOR MORE

Clean jobs in North Carolina grew by over 4 percent in 2021, more than double the growth rate of the state's total workforce for the year. That growth also demonstrates the clean energy economy's strong recovery from the COVID-19 economic downturn and sets North Carolina up for even more clean energy job opportunities in the years to come—especially with the right policies in place.

KEY FINDINGS

57.9%

Black and African-Americans are under-represented by nearly 60% in North Carolina's clean energy economy. Black workers occupy more than 21% of all jobs in the state, but less than 9% of clean energy jobs²

TOP 10

North Carolina was home to 3.2% of the nation's total clean energy jobs, 9th in the nation

67%

More than two-thirds of the 27,217 clean energy jobs lost in North Carolina during the COVID-19 economic downturn had been regained by the end of 2021³

78%

Small businesses (<20 employees) accounted for almost 4 out of every 5 clean energy jobs in North Carolina, ranking 2nd among all 50 states

#1

North Carolina ranked 1st among all 50 states in rural clean energy jobs, with 25,563 clean energy jobs in rural areas⁴

Fig. 1 // CLEAN ENERGY EMPLOYMENT by year 2017–2021

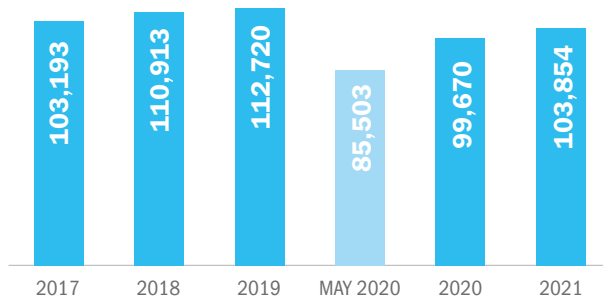


Fig. 2 // CLEAN ENERGY EMPLOYMENT by value chain 2021

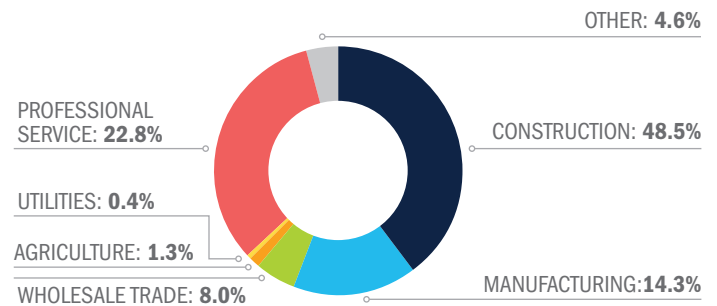


Fig. 3 // CLEAN ENERGY EMPLOYMENT by share of total county employment 2020⁵

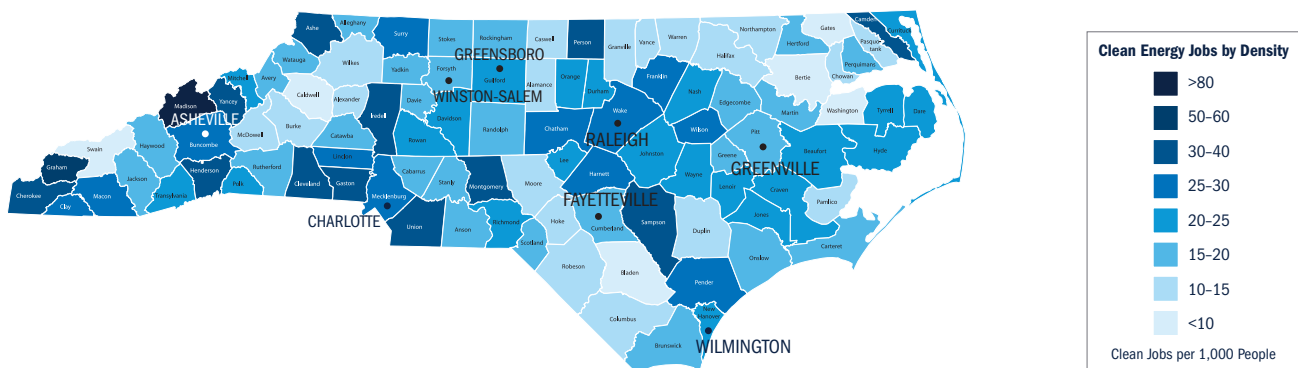
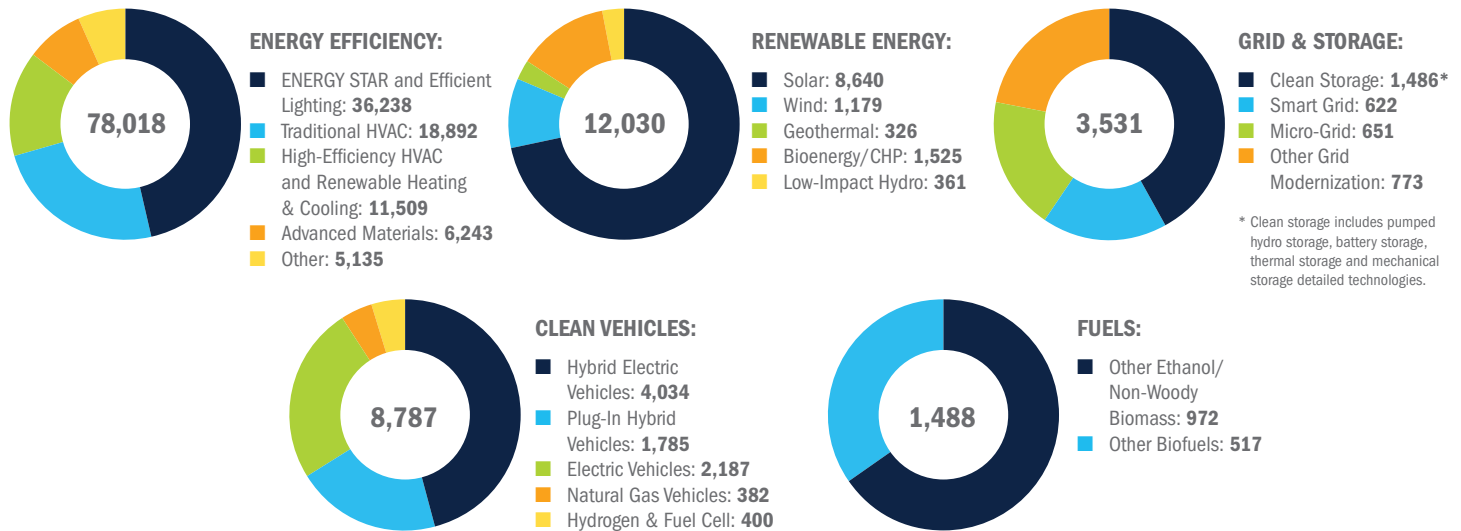


Fig. 4 // CLEAN ENERGY EMPLOYMENT by subsector 2021



POLICIES MATTER

North Carolina has long been a regional leader in clean energy jobs. That distinction is due in large part to its early adoption of smart clean energy policies like the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard, which passed the North Carolina General Assembly with bipartisan support back in 2007.

But as other states in the Southeast and throughout the country continue to pass policies that will drive growth in their clean energy economies, North Carolina must build on past successes to maintain its leadership status. The bipartisan passage of the Energy Solutions Act (HB 951) in 2021 was a huge step in the right direction, kicking off much-needed utility reform and establishing ambitious carbon pollution reduction targets for the power sector—70 percent by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050.

Now, North Carolina's policymakers need to implement HB 951 as intended and pass additional policies that send a clear, long-term signal that the state is committed to a clean energy future. In turn, that will empower clean energy companies in North Carolina to continue to invest and grow jobs in the state.

Thankfully, North Carolina's policymakers have multiple opportunities before them to do just that, including:

// POWER SECTOR: Adoption of an ambitious and cost-effective Carbon Plan by the North Carolina Utilities Commission, which has the potential to set North Carolina on the path to achieve the HB 951 carbon pollution reduction targets without new natural gas infrastructure and while substantially expanding renewable energy generation, storage solutions, and energy efficiency in the state. Additionally, joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative would help ensure North Carolina follows the most cost-effective path to reduce power plant emissions, all while generating proceeds that can be invested in overburdened communities to reduce environmental injustice. North Carolina should pursue additional clean energy programs targeted towards residential and commercial customers alike, including community solar and other clean energy procurement programs.

// TRANSPORTATION SECTOR: Adoption of regulations like Advanced Clean Cars and Advanced Clean Trucks to increase the supply of light-, medium-, and heavy-duty zero-emission vehicles in North Carolina and supercharge the state's clean vehicles sector.

// BUILDINGS SECTOR: Passage of a policy to establish a Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) financing program in North Carolina, which would enable private financing for energy efficiency and clean energy upgrades to buildings via property tax assessments. Additionally, by establishing a state government buildings energy efficiency standard (previously HB245), taxpayers could see significant operational savings across state-owned buildings.

// LEVERAGING FEDERAL ACTION: By harnessing federal funding made available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act, North Carolina can invest in the infrastructure needed to drive greater deployment of electric vehicles, renewable energy projects, and other clean energy solutions, with an emphasis on investments in disadvantaged communities.

1 Unless otherwise stated, all data is from the 2022 U.S. Energy and Employment Report (USEER), June 2022, Department of Energy (DOE). All employment findings in USEER is based on survey and data analysis collected from Q4 2021. See Pages 201-206 for methodology questions.

2 Bureau of Labor Statistics. Percent of each state's labor force that is African American, 2020 annual averages. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2021/four-states-and-dc-had-labor-force-that-was-more-than-30-percent-african-american-in-2020.htm>

3 BW Research, E2, American Council on Renewable Energy, E4TheFuture. Clean Energy Unemployment Claims in COVID-19 Aftermath, May 2020. <https://e2.org/reports/clean-jobs-covid-economic-crisis-may-2020>

4 E2. Clean Jobs America 2021. <https://e2.org/reports/clean-jobs-america-2021>

5 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Fourth Quarter 2021. Available at https://data.bls.gov/cew/apps/data_views/data_views.htm#tab=Tables.



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E2 is a national, nonpartisan group of business leaders, investors and others who advocate for smart policies that are good for the environment and good for the economy.



NC SUSTAINABLE
ENERGY ASSOCIATION

About NCSEA

The North Carolina Sustainable Energy Association (NCSEA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit advocacy organization driving policy and market development to create clean energy jobs, economic opportunities, and affordable energy.