

Clean Energy and Conservation the Silver Bullet the American Economy Needs

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One day the history books could say that the Obama Administration's stimulus package of 2009 saved the nation from deep and irreparable financial collapse. But one thing we know right now is that the historic \$90 billion investment in clean energy was a significant policy decision for unleashing critical market forces and helping ignite a nascent clean energy economy—a decision that continues to pay clear dividends.

Clean energy technology was identified by the [Center for American Progress \(CAP\)](#) as "one of the fastest-growing sectors of the global economy...projected to grow to \$2.3 trillion by 2020." For example, it is estimated that [827,000 clean energy jobs](#) will have been saved or created nationwide by the fourth quarter of 2012 through the progressive provisions of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Bracken Hendricks, author and senior fellow at CAP, called the green stimulus dollars the "the [most important energy bill in American history](#) ." And if we want to spur more new jobs that cannot be outsourced, we need even more innovative policy decisions that spur better clean energy market choices.

That is why clean energy and a more intelligent and resilient infrastructure to deliver that energy are also key components of CAP's [three step approach](#) to further boost job creation: 1) Invest in national infrastructure through existing channels and the creation of an investment bank; 2) Stabilize the housing market through restructuring loans and automatic foreclosure mediation; and 3) Promote residential and commercial energy efficient retrofits.

Today, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that [unemployment](#) in the United States has remained unchanged at 9.1%, and that no new jobs have been added to the U.S. economy. Retrofitting our buildings may be the most obvious step forward when buildings consume 70% of all electricity and contribute to 40% of our national greenhouse gas emissions. [McKinsey & Co](#) showed that we could create nearly a million jobs by working to bring building energy retrofits to scale. With [25% unemployment in the construction sector](#), energy efficiency retrofits make our investment dollars go further by creating jobs, saving homeowners and building occupiers utility expenses and reducing our nation's impact on the environment—called a triple win by some lawmakers.

In a few days the President will address the nation on the current state of unemployment and the economy. We anticipate and hope that his speech will include provisions for ramping up investments in clean energy and conservation. The clean energy economy could be the silver bullet needed to ensure America's sustainable future—not exclusively in the environmental sense, but as a self-perpetuating and long-term economic solution.

Greenbuild Green Jobs Summit: The U.S. Green Building Council, in partnership with the Center for American Progress, the BlueGreen Alliance and the BlueGreen Alliance Canada, will host the Green Jobs Summit at Greenbuild 2011 to further explore the role of green jobs in the economy as well as their deployment. The Summit will feature notable experts and sector leaders including eco-entrepreneur Majora Carter and Dan Esty, Commissioner of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection for the State of Connecticut.

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