

Moving the Green Jobs Movement Forward

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Green For All

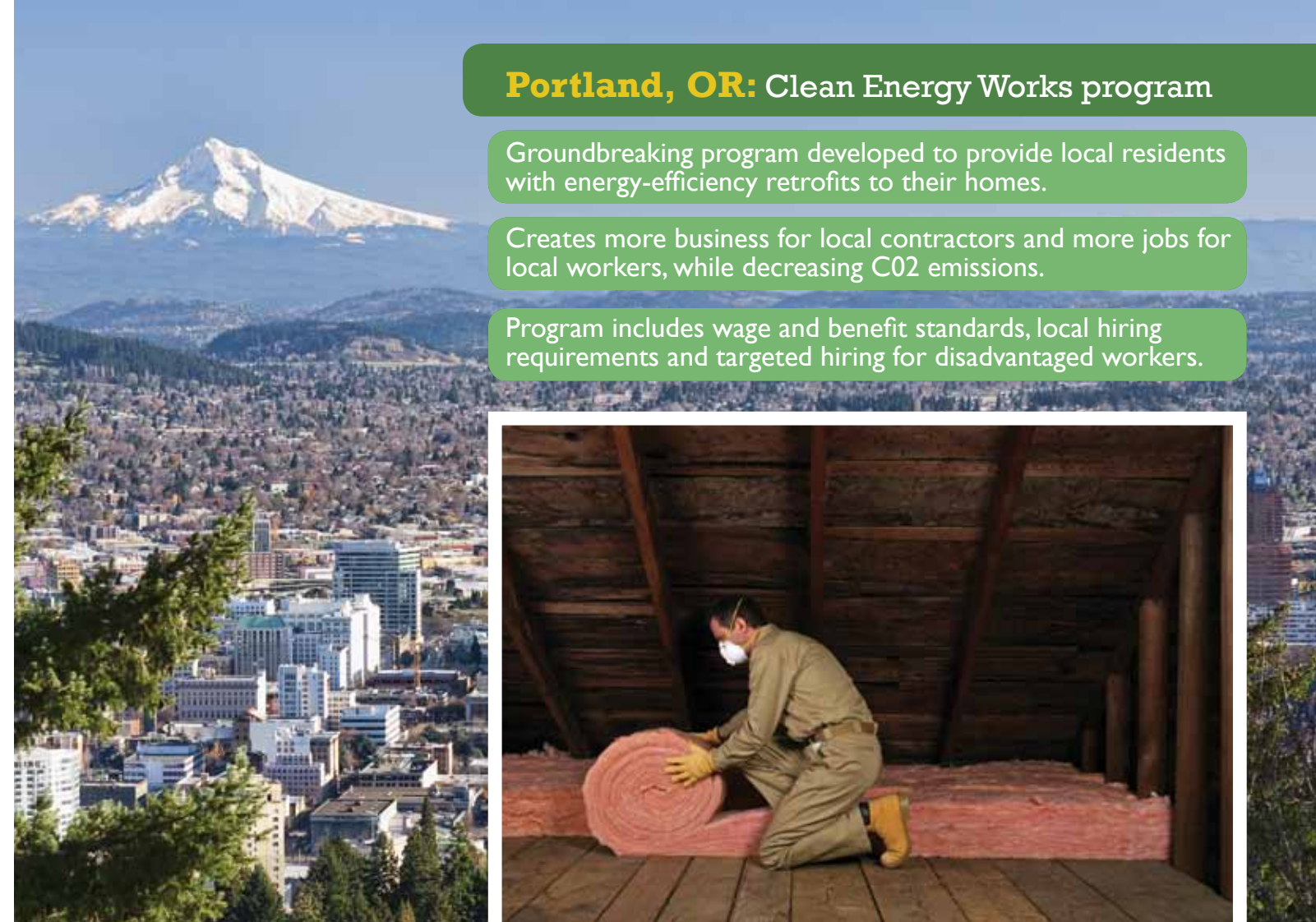
When it comes to building a thriving economy that creates millions of American jobs and is rooted in environmental stewardship—it's time to stop tinkering. The need for success is greater than ever. Bold action is required. We need to rebuild the pillars of our economy so that it can provide every American with the chance to enjoy a happy and prosperous life. And we can and must do it in a way that heals the planet instead of hurting it. Over the long run, that's the only solution.

With this chance for a renewed economy also comes a chance for a renewed American Dream, a renewed commitment to the loftiest ideals of our country—that everyone deserves a chance to succeed. By creating new waves of investment, new jobs and new sources of wealth, a green economy also creates an opportunity to lift up our most vulnerable communities—those that have too often been locked out, left behind or forgotten.

Signs of Progress: Portland Leads the Way

We are already making progress toward this goal.

Take Portland, Oregon. It has developed a groundbreaking program to provide local residents with energy-efficiency retrofits to their homes. *The Clean Energy Works Portland* program is driving an increase in the demand for these home improvements, which is in turn creating



Portland, OR: Clean Energy Works program

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more business for local contractors and more jobs for local workers, all the while decreasing CO2 emissions. Using federal money to build a revolving loan fund, these improvements pay for themselves over time with money saved on energy bills.

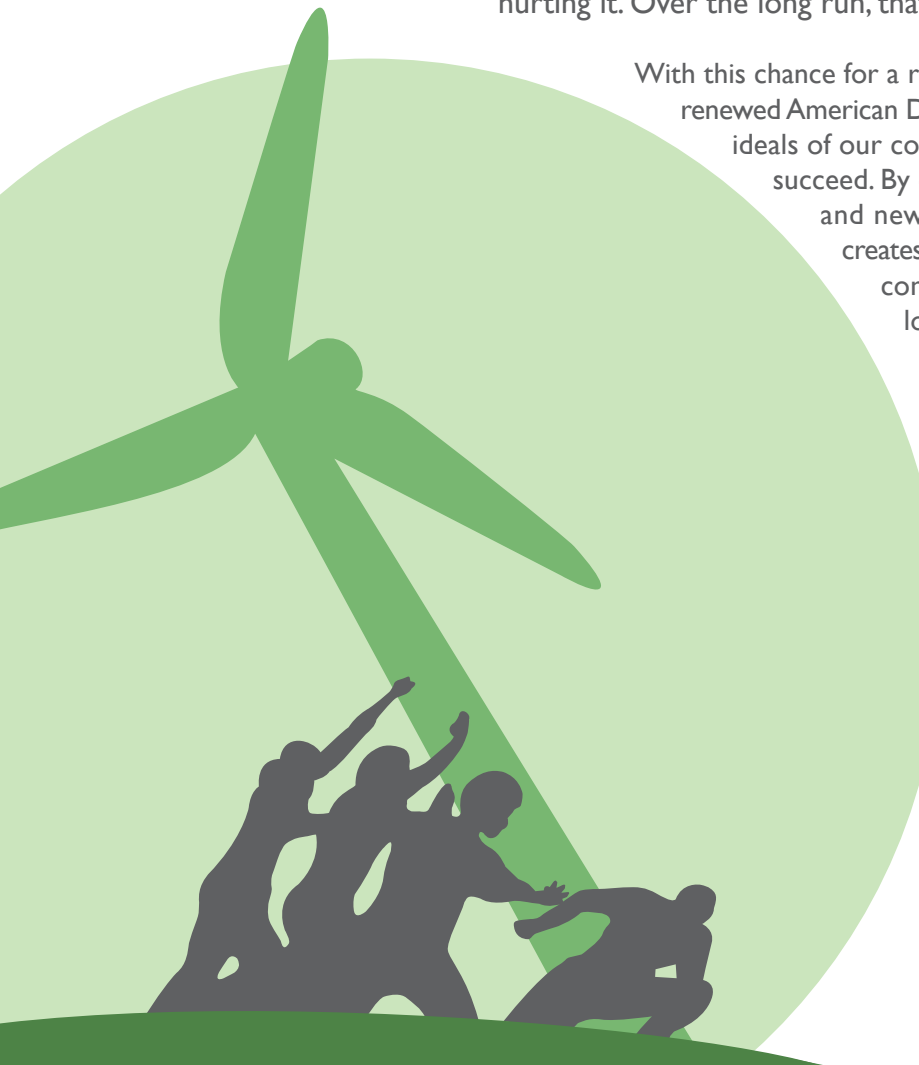
More than just a retrofit program, Clean Energy Works includes wage and benefits standards, local hiring requirements, targeted hiring for disadvantaged workers (and contractors) and a screening process for contractors to ensure a solid track record. The goal is not just to put people to work today—but also to put them into careers that can support families. Green jobs need to be sustainable to the planet—and to workers.

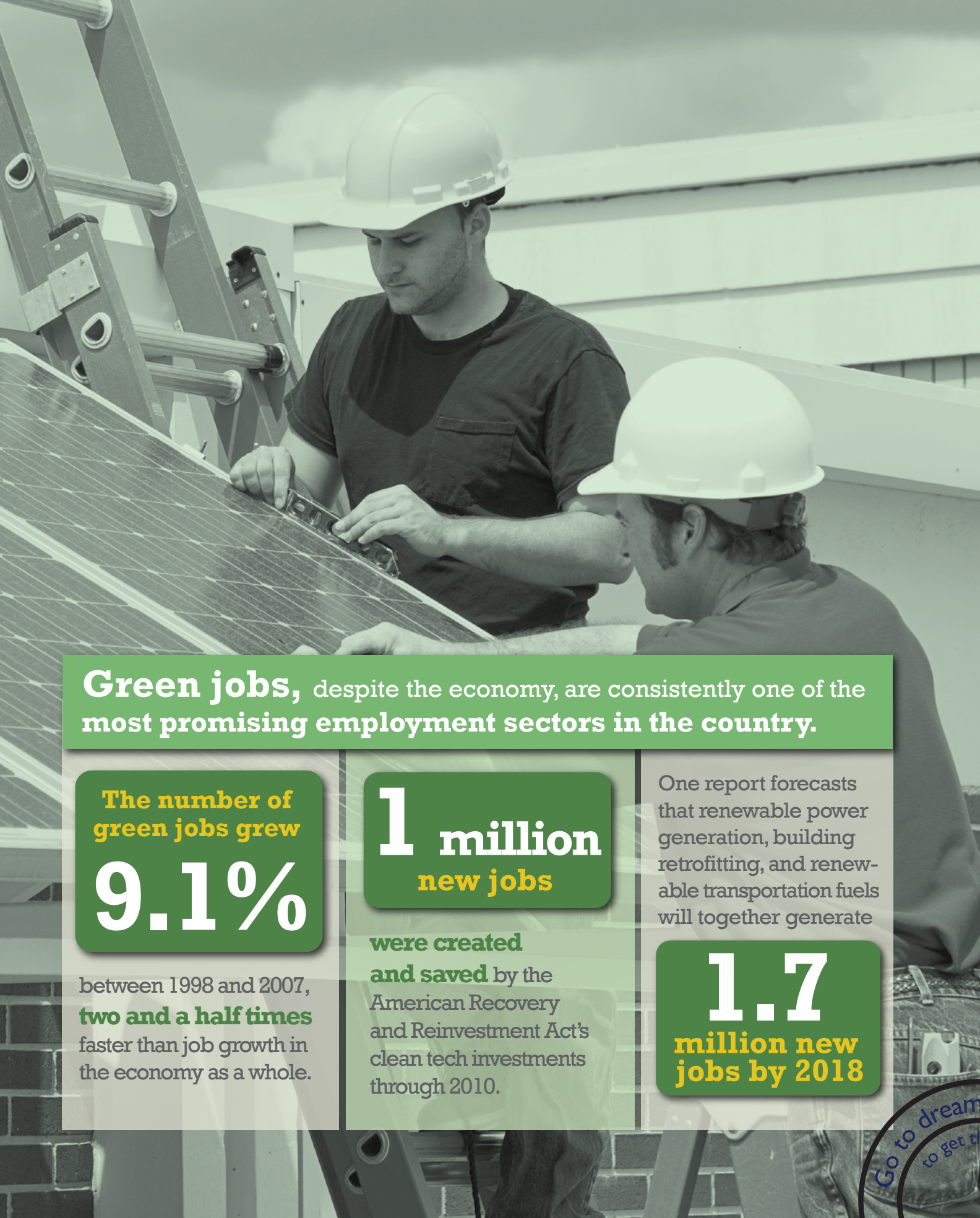
The success of this program is serving as a model for different communities across the US, including an expanded initiative in Seattle. It's also the model for a key component in Sacramento's Greenwise Initiative, an

effort to transform the region into the nation's next green hub. Riding the wave of innovation that already puts Sacramento on the map as one of the top green cities in the US, the Greenwise Initiative calls for retrofitting 200,000 existing homes—or 25 percent of the region's housing stock—and 60 million square feet of school facilities over the next ten years, while ensuring quality jobs are provided for communities in need.¹

Zooming Out: The National Picture

Green jobs, despite the economy, are consistently one of the most promising employment sectors in the country. The number of green jobs grew 9.1 percent between 1998 and 2007, two and half times faster than job growth in the economy as a whole.² One million green jobs were created and saved by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act's clean tech investments through 2010.³ A US Conference of Mayors report





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Large-scale investments in green technologies coupled with policy supports are critical for turning this vision into a reality. The Apollo Alliance proposes an investment of \$50 billion per year over ten years to create 5 million jobs in industries such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, transit and transportation, and research development and deployment of clean energy technologies.⁵ The Center for American Progress and the Political Economy Research Institute call for spending \$100 billion over two years to create 2 million jobs in building retrofitting, expansion of the transit and freight rail grids, construction of a smart electrical grid, wind and solar power.⁶

Investments in clean energy technologies are driving innovation and job creation all over the country. Since 2003, Pennsylvania has invested more than \$1 billion in renewable energy projects. As a result of investments and policies, there are now thousands of companies in the green energy industry with more than 350,000 employees. Projects range from a 3.2-megawatt wind project and energy-efficient lighting systems to an

11,000 solar panel installation. Pennsylvania has been recognized as one of the fastest-growing states for wind energy and is expected to be among the top five for solar energy by the end of 2011.⁷

The creation of green jobs was also a key component to former Mayor Richard Daley's plan to transform Chicago into the greenest city in America. A City program, Greencorps Chicago, provides paid nine-month training programs in landscaping, weatherization, environmental remediation, electronics recycling and household hazardous materials processing to individuals with strong barriers to employment and people leaving the prison system. The program is estimated to add 5,000 to 10,000 jobs annually. Additionally, the city has leveraged its purchasing power to attract businesses, ultimately spurring green job creation. When the City committed to purchase solar panels, it attracted two solar power manufacturers to locate their operations in Chicago.⁸

What the Future Can Look Like

Our success is now transforming the Green Jobs Movement into a movement that looks to green the entire economy, regardless of the industry. Key to doing so is cleaning up not only the way we generate electricity, but

Two Greencorps Chicago crew members work in a community garden.



also the way we fuel our vehicles, manufacture goods and grow our food. The industries and processes involved in those tasks are all still maturing, but promising.

No matter how energy-efficient we make our buildings, we still must generate the electricity we use more cleanly. Renewable energy is beginning to grow but comes nowhere close to providing all of our electricity. As it expands to meet that goal, it will generate jobs and wealth as much as it does power. What's more, this expansion will fuel a similar expansion in America's long-struggling manufacturing sector.

We cannot overestimate the importance of a thriving manufacturing sector to revitalize our economy and ensure it is an inclusive one. An economy that churns out service sector jobs does not create enough demand to reignite our economic engine. Our success requires rebuilding the middle class and replacing low-wage service sector jobs with high-wage manufacturing jobs—typically good high-paying jobs that provide workers health benefits and a living wage. Historically the vehicle into the middle class for a large percentage of workers without a college degree, manufacturing jobs pay 21 percent more in wages and benefits than the entire economy average.⁹

Renewable energy technologies can be an important driver of these types of jobs. Luckily, manufacturers of renewable energy technologies already have operations across the US and are creating jobs. Vestas, a world leader in wind energy, is investing about \$600 million at three Colorado locations that together are expected to employ more than 2,000 workers. Solar-World recently opened a \$440 million, 480,000-square-foot plant in Hillsboro, Oregon. The plant, said to be the largest solar cell producer in North America, is projected to have a payroll of 1,000 within three years. A wind turbine blade producer has become the largest private employer in Grand Forks, North Dakota, where more than 900 people are employed. The company hopes to create a workforce of comparable size at its operation in Little Rock, Arkansas.¹⁰

Once this power is cleanly generated, we will need to efficiently deliver it to American buildings. This requires a new, modernized "smart grid." Building this grid will generate a significant number of jobs in every state in the country.

Dirty electricity is certainly not our only significant source of pollution. Vehicles burning petrol-based fuels are massive emitters of the greenhouse gases that cause

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climate change. The transportation sector currently accounts for 28 percent of greenhouse gas emissions in the US, of which 64 percent are linked to personal vehicle use. Changing this reality will spark a number of American industries. Manufacturing highly efficient automobiles can revive our struggling automotive industry. In fact, the Cash for Clunkers program in 2009, which "provided consumers who traded in their old, gas-guzzling vehicles with vouchers worth up to \$4,500 to pay for new, more fuel efficient cars and trucks [...] created or saved over 60,000 American jobs and boosted economic growth by up to \$6.8 billion."¹¹ The need for advanced high-storage batteries will also spur an increase in American manufacturing. Producing clean-burning advanced biofuels will replace dying fossil fuel industries.

Cleaning up our transportation also means expanding shared transportation, specifically public transport and rail. About 50 percent of all Americans do not have access to public transportation.¹² Investing in our nation's transportation infrastructure to expand our shared transportation network will not only decrease CO2 emissions and help our environment but will also put millions of Americans back to work in good high-paying construction, manufacturing and operations jobs. The existing public transit bus, rail vehicle and clean truck supply chains currently support approximately 40,000 US manufacturing jobs. Large-scale investments in the next federal transportation reauthorization legislation could increase these numbers substantially. The Apollo Alliance's proposal to increase federal investments in transit and intercity rail to \$40 billion annually could

double transit ridership and support 300,000 manufacturing jobs and 3.7 million jobs total.¹³ Whether manufacturing clean and efficient buses, building new railway lines or designing and producing the trains of tomorrow, this will also create job, business and investment opportunities.

All told, green sectors remain a vast untapped source for creating American jobs and wealth.

A Dream for a Nation

When I heard the title of this book, I smiled to myself. The first thing that Green For All did as a new organization was organize the first national environmental conference led by low-income people and people of color. We held it on the 40th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination, in Dr. King's honor. And we called it The Dream Reborn.

How fitting, then, to write an essay now about the dream of a green high-road economy for America. As our country's leaders—whether presidents, preachers or prisoners—have from the very beginning, we are building new American Dreams for the times we live in, for the new world of the 21st century. We are everyday people with an everyday dream: a safe, healthy, prosperous place for ourselves and our families.

I know I'm excited about working today to build that tomorrow. I hope you are too.

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Phaedra Ellis-Lamkins is the chief executive officer of Green For All (www.greenforall.org). Under her leadership, Green For All has become one of the country's leading advocates for a clean-energy economy, and one of its most important voices on the intersection of economics and environment. Ellis-Lamkins has led Green For All to several groundbreaking policy victories at the federal, state and local levels, and has helped states like Washington and New Mexico pioneer state-level green jobs and energy-efficiency programs. Green For All is redefining the face of environmentalism through partnerships with popular artists to reach new audiences with a message about the benefits and opportunities of going green.

