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Report: Colorado's clean energy policies need a refresh

With other states strengthening policies, Colorado – long a national clean energy leader – risks losing economic ground; big opportunities in renewables, efficiency, electric vehicles

DENVER (October 14, 2016) – Colorado's booming clean energy economy is in danger of sputtering if lawmakers do not act quickly to update state policies, according to a new report unveiled today by the national nonpartisan business group Environmental Entrepreneurs (E2).

The analysis – “Colorado's Clean Energy Future” – is available [here](#) and at www.e2.org. It was previewed Thursday evening at an [event](#) at the Alliance Center in downtown Denver featuring business and civic leaders from across Colorado.

The report says changing market dynamics like the rapidly falling cost of clean, renewable energy technologies like wind and solar are making some crucial Colorado energy policies obsolete.

“Colorado is a national leader in clean energy, but that leadership is at stake,” said Susan Nedell of Louisville, Colo., who's E2's Rocky Mountains Advocate. **“If we want to remain competitive, we can't be complacent. We have to harness national clean energy market trends for the benefit of Colorado's economy.”**

According to the report, Colorado's wind and solar industries supported as many as 12,000 workers in 2015, and the costs of renewable energy development have dropped to an all-time low. A big part of the clean energy success story in Colorado has been its Renewable Portfolio Standard, or RPS, which requires investor-owned utilities to source 30 percent of their electricity from renewables. With that standard set to expire in 2020, strengthening and extending Colorado's RPS should be a legislative priority – one that can grow Colorado's economy, attract investment, and stimulate in-state innovation, the report notes. If the standard isn't extended, the industry could falter.

The report also identifies gaps in the state's energy efficiency policies. It recommends lawmakers boost energy-savings goals for all utilities to 2 percent annually, and extend those goals beyond 2020. The report notes that switching to LED streetlights is a fast, low-cost route for towns and cities to save taxpayer money by cutting municipality electricity usage by as much as 60 percent.

Expanding electric vehicle (EV) adoption and infrastructure can also grow Colorado's economy. The report calls on utilities to incentivize EV ownership by installing more EV infrastructure and encouraging car charging during hours of low energy demand. And to help cities like Denver meet federal ozone standards, Colorado should consider adopting the Zero Emission Vehicles standard, which would require automakers to ensure that a minimum percentage of vehicles sold in the state are electric or hybrids.

"Renewables, energy efficiency and electric vehicles are all part of the solution to climate change," said RJ Mastic, CEO of Ecosystems Group Inc., a Denver-based energy efficiency company that has worked on projects along the Front Range and across eight states. **"But at the same time, these technologies can grow Colorado's economy and create good jobs. For our state to remain economically competitive far into the future, we need more wind and solar projects, a renewed emphasis on energy efficiency, and an expansion of clean transportation infrastructure."**

The report features a profile of Ecosystems Group Inc. Other Colorado businesses profiled are: National Car Charging, which has installed EV charging products in Aurora, Boulder, Colorado State, and elsewhere, and iUNIT Technologies LLC, which employed 100 people during construction of an energy-efficient multifamily residential housing development in Denver's Lower Highland neighborhood.

Previous Colorado-focused reports published by E2 and cited in "[Colorado's Clean Energy Future](#)" include "[Winds of Change](#)," a deep dive into Colorado's wind industry, and "[Plugged into Efficiency](#)," which examines the economic benefits of scaling up energy efficiency statewide.

E2 also previously released this [video](#) illustrating how energy efficiency and solar presents business opportunities across Colorado. Earlier this year, E2 released "[Clean Jobs America](#)," a report that tallied 2.5 million clean energy jobs coast to coast. That report was based on U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data and was developed and released in conjunction with a major U.S. Department of Energy study on all energy jobs in America.

To interview Nedell or Colorado business leaders in your area who support strengthening state and federal clean energy policies, please reach out to the media contacts listed at the top of the release.

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[Environmental Entrepreneurs \(E2\)](#) is a national, nonpartisan group of business leaders, investors, and professionals from every sector of the economy who advocate for smart policies that are good for the economy and good for the environment. Our members have founded or funded more than 2,500 companies, created more than 600,000 jobs, and manage more than \$100 billion in venture and private equity capital. For more information, see www.e2.org or follow us on Twitter at [@e2org](#).