

The Potential for Green Jobs

Rapid Response recently issued a series of InfoAlerts outlining the magnitude of the current jobs crisis. With over 11 million jobs needed to get back to pre-recession levels, we need to look at all options to both secure our current jobs and create new, family and community-supportive jobs. One option to move us in this direction is through “green jobs.” If done right, Steelworker members stand to benefit if our country makes the commitment to supporting and creating these jobs.

What is a Green Job?

A green job can be thought of as a blue collar job done for a green purpose. Consider this: If you’ve ever driven past a wind turbine, you’re looking at over 8,000 parts. Someone had to manufacture or mine every one of them, as well as assemble and maintain them.

The typical wind turbine, like those made by Steelworkers in Pennsylvania, includes:

- 250 tons of steel,
- Three tons of copper for the generator and power cables,
- 250 yards of concrete for anchoring,
- Titanium components for the rotator hubs,
- Gears and gear boxes,
- Bearings, and many more components.

Steelworkers make or mine all of these components, which makes the jobs we have part of the emerging clean energy economy.

But, it’s not just wind turbines. Steelworkers make glass for solar panels and energy-efficient light bulbs, we process the natural gas powering some city buses, we make goods with recycled paper content, we produce biofuels, we make activated carbon to filter our drinking water and remove harmful pollution from industrial processes, we make “greener” alternatives to typical products such as energy-efficient air conditioners made without ozone-depleting refrigerant.

When the manufacturing, mining and other work for the emerging clean energy economy is done domestically, and our industries are given the support they need to become more efficient, we secure our jobs. We also strengthen the tax base, ensuring funding for the public sector jobs that build strong communities.

Watch for more information on green jobs, as well as an action on the issue, coming soon.

