

MEMORANDUM

TO: House Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure
FROM: The Vermont Department of Labor
DATE: February 25, 2025
SUBJECT: H.125, *An act relating to reporting on the energy transition*; Clean Energy Economy Workforce

Thank you for inviting the Vermont Department of Labor (“the Department”) to provide preliminary feedback on **H. 125**, *an act relating to reporting on the energy transition*, specifically regarding your request for information about the workforce supporting our renewable energy transition and weatherization efforts. Regarding the underlying bill, the Department will contribute to recommendations that the Agency of Natural Resources and the Public Service Department will present to the Committee.

To provide the Committee data on Vermont’s “clean energy economy,” we would need a list of which specific industries and occupations fall within the Committee’s definition of the clean energy economy; the term is not currently or consistently defined at the State or Federal level when discussing labor force data. Once we have direction, we can access the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) codes to identify relevant data for Vermont. The Committee should also be mindful that for successful clean energy adoption, we need additional workers involved in front-end activities that allow for clean energy technology to be utilized; for example, electricians, who may not normally be included in a clean energy economy workforce profile. Vermont’s current unemployment rate is 2.4%, and everyone is acutely aware that we need more workers in all sectors of our economy.

The Department’s Economic & Labor Market Information (E&LMI) Division produces and explains key economic data, including current employment statistics, occupational safety and health statistics, industry/occupational employment and wage statistics, and industry/occupational projections. Data on Vermont’s clean energy workforce can be pulled from these sources. Other state agencies would be the best resource for the most detailed business-specific information in the clean energy economy, as tracking businesses falls outside E&LMI’s jurisdiction.

The Department can provide aggregate information on the number of jobs in a particular industry or occupation in Vermont that may be involved in the clean energy economy or fossil fuel distribution, such as solar installation, weatherization, construction laborers, extraction workers, heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers, gas plant operators, and many more. An example of the kind of data that is readily available is listed below:



Industry¹ <i>(seasonally adjusted)</i>	Number of Jobs in VT <i>(December 2024)</i>
Mining, Logging, and Construction	16,600
Manufacturing	27,700
Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	7,300
Professional and Business Services	34,100

Occupations	Number of Jobs in VT <i>(2022)</i>
Solar Photovoltaic Installers ²	188
Electricians (all) ³	1,362
Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters ⁴	978
Insulation Workers, Floor, Ceiling, and Wall* ⁵	147
Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers ⁶	1,532

* Federal code most closely related to weatherization technicians

Summary of Department Clean Energy Workforce Support Activities

Partnerships: The Department also has connections with the following non-state entities working in the clean energy workforce development/clean energy/resiliency/etc. sphere. These providers are focused on weatherization training, heat pump installation, engaging youth and building awareness, career development, HVAC training programs, pre-apprenticeships, Registered Apprenticeships, and more.

- Efficiency Vermont
- ReSource
- Vermont Adult Learning
- Vermont Works for Women
- Weatherization Program, DCF OEO
- State Energy Office, Public Service Department
- Agency of Transportation
- Vermont Energy Education Program
- Advance Vermont

¹ Vermont Department of Labor, *Current Employment Statistics*, ECONOMIC & LABOR MARKET INFORMATION (Feb. 24, 2025, 11:41 AM), <https://www.vtlmi.info/ces.cfm>.

² Vermont Department of Labor, *Solar Photovoltaic Installers*, ECONOMIC & LABOR MARKET INFORMATION (Feb. 24, 2025, 11:47 AM), <https://www.vtlmi.info/oic3.cfm?occcode=47-2231.00>.

³ Vermont Department of Labor, *Electricians*, ECONOMIC & LABOR MARKET INFORMATION (Feb. 24, 2025, 11:41 AM), <https://www.vtlmi.info/oic3.cfm?occcode=47-2111.00>.

⁴ Vermont Department of Labor, *Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters*, ECONOMIC & LABOR MARKET INFORMATION (Feb. 24, 2025, 11:49 AM), <https://www.vtlmi.info/oic3.cfm?occcode=47-2152.00>.

⁵ Vermont Department of Labor, *Insulation Workers, Floor, Ceiling, and Wall*, ECONOMIC & LABOR MARKET INFORMATION (Feb. 24, 2025, 11:50 AM), <https://www.vtlmi.info/oic3.cfm?occcode=47-2131.00>.

⁶ Vermont Department of Labor, *Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers*, ECONOMIC & LABOR MARKET INFORMATION (Feb. 24, 2025, 11:33 AM), <https://www.vtlmi.info/oic3.cfm?occcode=49-9021.00>.



The Department provides technical assistance on workforce program development and funding for formula or competitive grants distributed by the Workforce Development Division. The Department's primary source of funding is from the federal government via the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Those funds are used to support income-eligible Vermonters with job search, job training, and necessary wrap-around services, including staff time for case management. There is limited funding in WIOA available to support sector-specific training. However, sub-awarding funds and working with employers to create Registered Apprenticeship programs allows the Department to provide funding to local partners.

Registered Apprenticeships: It is also worth noting that Registered Apprenticeships have become a more common tool in clean energy and other clean energy workforce-related occupations. Registered Apprenticeship program participants receive national, industry-recognized, portable credentials. Registered Apprenticeships in the clean energy economy include occupations such as:

- Electricians
- Plumbers
- Environmental control system installer
- Heating and air conditioning mechanic and installer
- Line maintainer

Many other apprenticeable occupations exist that can contribute to the clean energy economy. While Vermont does not have registered apprenticeship programs currently set up in the following occupations, they could be developed and registered by interested employers, sponsors, and industry organizations, contributing to the clean energy economy (note: this list is not exhaustive).

- Energy technician
- Substation apprentice
- Gas mechanic
- Engineering technician
- Refrigeration technician
- Pipefitter
- Insulator – construction
- HVAC plumbing mechanic
- Distribution line apprentice
- Electronics engineer lab technician

U.S. Climate Alliance: The U.S. Climate Alliance (“the Alliance”) is a bipartisan coalition of 24 governors representing approximately 60 percent of the U.S. economy and 55 percent of the U.S. population. The Alliance was formed in 2017 in response to the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accords. Vermont is the only member state with a Republican governor.

In early 2024, the Department of Labor was invited to join the Alliance's conversations on creating a new initiative with new targets specifically focused on workforce development. Over 4+ months, the Department and Vermont's Climate Action Office (CAO) met with other member states to develop the [Governors'](#)



[Climate-Ready Workforce Initiative](#), which grows career pathways in climate and clean energy fields, strengthens workforce diversity, and jointly trains one million new registered apprentices by 2035 across the Alliance's states and territories. The initiative aims to create diverse, equitable, and inclusive pathways into high-quality climate jobs.

Additionally, sector-specific cohorts will help states collaborate and share best practices in clean energy workforce development. Vermont and Arizona jointly lead one of the focus areas: Resilient Communities and Lands. This cohort focuses on careers in the development and maintenance of safe, livable, and resilient communities; preparedness for and response to climate impacts such as extreme heat, wildfires, severe storms, flooding, and drought; and the deployment of natural climate solutions and climate-smart stewardship of our lands and waters.

To read the full initiative, visit [Governors' Climate-Ready Workforce Initiative](#).

National Governors Association Policy Academy: The Department of Labor was recently selected to be a part of the [National Governors' Association \(NGA\) service-to-career pathways policy academy](#). The Department and five other states (Connecticut, Maine, Minnesota, Nevada, and Oregon) will participate in this 12-month-long policy academy that is run out of the NGA's Best Practices Center. This project will focus on:

- Building connections between the CAO, SerVermont (AmeriCorps), the Department, Registered Apprenticeships, nonprofits, and higher education institutions;
- Identifying and certifying pathways for careers in line with CAO's climate action plan;
- Connecting service programs such as Registered Apprenticeships with career pathways; and
- Improving data collection on service programs' effect on employment and wages.

Efficiency Vermont and the McClure Foundation are external partners that are participating with the Department to represent Vermont. The team will also get input and guidance from the Department's E&LMI Division and the CAO in the Agency of Natural Resources.

Throughout the year, peer-to-peer learning and NGA's technical assistance will help make this policy academy successful and provide meaningful results for Vermont's service workforce. NGA will provide technical assistance and grant funding to the six states as they create service-to-career pathways.

We look forward to continuing a conversation with the Committee to help provide data on workforce development in the clean energy economy.

