

# **Labor Secretary: Green Jobs Hiring Will Pick Up**

Oskar Garcia, Associated Press Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) —Hiring in the alternative energy industry will pick up in the next 12 months, though it will take some time before so-called green-jobs will not become a bigger part of the U.S. job market, Labor Secretary Hilda Solis said Monday.

"Once you start seeing more investments made in our economy recovering, as we stabilize and we get people back to work, then I think there'll be more interest in expanding," Solis said. "There'll be more, hopefully, credit available for this expansion, because there will be more confidence because that's what we're lacking right now — that investment and confidence in the market."

After a terrible start to the year there are signs of a rebound for alternative energy, in part because of a push from the Obama administration. Yet there is a split at the state and federal level over whether there are better ways to stimulate the job market.

The second National Clean Energy Summit in Las Vegas, where Solis spoke with The Associated Press, drew a high-profile list of alternative energy backers, including former President Bill Clinton, Energy Secretary Steven Chu and U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid.

"The economic crisis, the security crisis and the climate crisis are all intertwined, and the common thread running through them is our absurd and dangerous overdependence on carbon-based fuels," said Al Gore, the former vice president.

"If you grab hold of that thread and pull on it all three of these crises will unravel, and we'll hold in our hand the solution to all three of them — that is to make a transition to a low-carbon economy and to put people to work doing it," he said.

Venture capitalists increased investments in alternative energy by 73 percent over the past three months compared with the first three months of the year, according to a report issued late last month by Ernst & Young LLP. Investors are still shaken, however, and investment remains meager compared with last year at this time.

Money had already begun to flow into the sector at a record pace last year before new government initiatives were announced, but that was before the full weight of the recession became apparent.

Wind, solar and other alternative energy companies have been forced to cut back on workers. Projects were canceled as credit markets froze and venture capital evaporated.

John Woolard, president and CEO of Bright Source Energy, Inc., said the industry still

## **Labor Secretary: Green Jobs Hiring Will Pick Up**

Published on Industrial Maintenance & Plant Operation (<http://www.impomag.com>)

---

needs help to create jobs immediately.

"We need to transition from visionary leadership to roll-up-your-sleeves leadership," Woolard said.

The Obama administration last week announced \$2.4 billion in federal grants to develop next-generation electric vehicles and batteries.

Michigan, which has been devastated by job losses in the auto industry, would see companies within its borders get \$1 billion in federal grants with the administration pushing green jobs as part of its economic cure.

Chu said federal officials have yet to award more money to other projects because they are reviewing proposals and want to make sure they pick the wisest possible investments.

"We're moving," he said.

The alternative energy sector could spark a new "industrial revolution," with better prospects for minorities and new training for workers with traditional vocational skills, Solis said.

There has been rapid growth in the industry, but employment in the green business still makes up only about half of one percent of all jobs.

Union leaders said that with traditional commercial projects and new housing nearly nonexistent, rank-and-file members are depending on the creation of large public works projects.

Danny Thompson, secretary treasurer of the Nevada chapter of the AFL-CIO, said union work is drying up in Las Vegas and elsewhere. Nevada depends heavily on tourism and casinos, which have struggled to stay afloat as consumers travel less and spend less money.

Thompson said a push for green jobs is less about increasing union membership than about putting people back to work in steady jobs.

**Source URL (retrieved on 08/02/2014 - 2:20am):**

[http://www.impomag.com/news/2009/08/labor-secretary-green-jobs-hiring-will-pick?qt-recent\\_content=0&qt-digital\\_editions=0](http://www.impomag.com/news/2009/08/labor-secretary-green-jobs-hiring-will-pick?qt-recent_content=0&qt-digital_editions=0)