

# Building a Strong Workforce

New Jersey's Energy Master Plan calls for significant investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy. Greening the state will create thousands of new jobs at a time when the economy needs it most.

The question is: Who will power the new economy?

Without a thoughtful and comprehensive approach to workforce development, we could miss this opportunity to create jobs and improve the environment.

There are some collaborative efforts already underway ... and they are worth celebrating.

The new Green Energy Academy at Bloomfield Tech is a great example of what can be achieved when you match educators and administrators with vision and a forward-thinking corporate leader. The new program is helping to introduce high school freshmen to opportunities for green jobs within the traditional trades. Supported by PSEG, it is the first of its kind in New Jersey, and can easily be replicated by other schools.

The Green Jobs Training Center, being developed by Isles and the state's Department of Labor and Workforce Development with input from PSEG, is another promising partnership. The statewide Center is slated to open next year, helping to train workers and provide opportunities for urban residents.

While these programs are a good start, we still have a lot of work ahead of us.

We need to keep an eye on emerging trends and plan for them. We need to encourage strategic partnerships and share best practices.

And we need to support President-elect Barack Obama and Governor Jon Corzine in their efforts to stimulate job growth throughout the country and here in New Jersey.

According to a new report from the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, the majority of the energy sector's green jobs are not new, but traditional jobs with new skill and knowledge requirements.

That means, with a little foresight and additional preparation, we can train electricians to install solar panels and teach engineers and builders to design and construct energy efficient buildings.

Some professions will call for greater investment, and require specially trained engineers, scientists and economists. We need to work now to fill science, math and engineering pipelines and help people view the new economy's green opportunities as meaningful careers, and not just jobs.

We need to engage educational institutions, labor, government, business and community organizations, for each has a critical role to play in helping put people to work.

Check out PSEG's green jobs policy paper, which can be found at [www.pseg.com/workforce](http://www.pseg.com/workforce) and let us know what you think can be done today to help develop tomorrow's workers.

*What's your view? Please let us know at [Opinion@PSEG.com](mailto:Opinion@PSEG.com)*



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