

THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE ECONOMY: TERMINOLOGY



How to talk about jobs in the clean or green economy

The League of Conservation Voters recommends using the following terms: clean energy jobs, clean energy economy, clean energy, and renewable energy.

Definitions of Terminology:

- **Clean Energy Jobs**

When referring to clean or green jobs, the League of Conservation Voters recommends the use of the phrase *clean energy jobs*. Although the definition of clean jobs is narrower than that of green jobs, *clean energy jobs* tends to elicit a more positive reaction from the public than green jobs.

- **Green Jobs**

The phrase *green jobs* encompasses more jobs than *clean energy jobs*, as it is not restricted by energy or production criteria.

[BLS \(2010\) defines green jobs as either](#), jobs in businesses that produce goods or provide services that benefit the environment or conserve natural resources, or jobs in which workers' duties involve making their establishments' production processes more environmentally friendly or use fewer natural resources.

Examples of green jobs include everything from renewable energy production to wildlife conservation.

- **Clean Energy Jobs**

The phrase *clean energy jobs* is used often when discussing green jobs that exist within the energy industry. This means that there are fewer jobs included under the umbrella of *clean energy jobs* than *green jobs*, but many prefer this phrase, as the public response to the word clean can be more positive than their response to the word green.

The [EPA](#) defines clean energy jobs as a subset of green jobs – those related to energy efficiency, renewable energy, and clean combined heat and power.

Examples of clean energy jobs range from energy auditors and state energy staff to wind energy technicians and manufacturers of energy efficient products.

- **Clean Energy Economy**

Clean or green energy exists as a sector of the American and world economies. Some sources refer to this sector as the *clean economy*, while the League of Conservation Voters more frequently refers to this sector as the *clean energy economy*. LCV, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, and President Obama also often use the phrase *clean economy sector*.

- **Clean Economy**

The term *clean economy* refers to both establishments and jobs that produce goods and services with an environmental benefit. *Clean economy* helps to remind voters that a healthy environment and a strong economy are not mutually exclusive.

[The Brookings Institution](#) defines the clean economy as economic activity – measured in terms of establishments and the jobs associated with them – that produces goods and services with an environmental benefit or adds value to such products using skills or technologies that are uniquely applied to those products.

Clean Energy Economy

Clean energy economy represents a segment of the clean economy. A *clean energy economy* focuses on establishments and jobs that deal with energy production and efficiency, the reduction of greenhouse emissions, waste and pollution, and conservation. You can use this phrase to speak to constituents regarding the economic development or status of clean energy businesses or occupations.

According to [PEW Charitable Trusts](#), the clean energy economy is comprised of five categories: (1) Clean Energy, (2) Energy Efficiency, (3) Environmentally Friendly Production, (4) Conservation and Pollution Mitigation, and (5) Training and Support.

- **Clean and Renewable Energy**

There are a handful of phrases that can be used to describe energy within the clean or green economy. LCV recommends using the phrase *clean energy* over the phrase *renewable energy*. Clean energy refers to types of energies which can be produced without generating pollution of air, water, or soil. *Renewable energy* refers to types of energies which are naturally replenishing. LCV does not recommend using the phrase *alternative energy*, as alternative energies are not always clean or naturally replenishing.

- **Clean Energy**

Clean energy is defined as energy whose production does not generate pollution of air, water or soil. As clean energy does not pollute, some renewable energies, such as nuclear and bio-fuels, are not considered clean energies. This is because the generation of these energies creates by-products which need to be disposed. So, clean energy is renewable, but renewable energy is not necessarily clean.

- **Renewable Energy**

The term *renewable energy* can be used to describe forms of energy that are naturally replenishing. Renewable energy jobs make up a segment of clean energy jobs.

- [The U.S. Energy Information Administration \(EIA\)](#) defines renewable energy as, “Energy sources that are naturally replenishing but flow limited. They are virtually inexhaustible in duration but limited in the amount of energy that is available per unit of time.”

Examples of renewable energies that LCV recognizes as renewable include: geothermal, hydropower, solar, wave/ocean power, and wind. Renewable energy jobs range from solar panel research to the installation of wind turbines.

- **Alternative Energy**

Alternative energy refers to energy sources that are used as an alternative to fossil fuels. Some argue that alternative energy differs from renewable energy due to the fact that the term includes re-processing waste, which is not renewable because the source is not unlimited.

- [Oxford dictionaries](#) defines alternative energy as, “energy fuelled in ways that do not use up the earth’s natural resources or otherwise harm the environment, especially by avoiding the use of fossil fuels or nuclear power.”

Examples of alternative energies range from wind power to geo-thermal. Essentially, the term is used when a form of energy is used to avoid the more damaging effects of previously used energies.

Energies that are *replaced* by alternative energies include coal, oil, and gas.