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Clean Energy Presents Work Opportunities

By Rep. Doris Matsui

Perhaps now more than ever, the American people are looking to Congress to put in place policies that will create jobs for the American workforce. In addition to infrastructure investments, these policies must include support for the small- and medium-sized businesses — a growing list of which are clean-energy companies — that represent promising job growth potential.

The growing green economy represents an enormous opportunity to train the American workforce and grow our economy while achieving energy independence. Congress has a unique opportunity to create jobs to support this burgeoning sector of the American and global economy.

Green jobs represent not just a job but a new career opportunity for millions of Americans. For those who are entering the workforce for the first time, or for those who lost a job as a result of the recession, receiving training to work in an emerging field is a valuable opportunity and is a necessary component to preparing America's workforce.

I have seen firsthand the success of this type of job training program at local community colleges and universities in my district and the larger benefits that it has on the Sacramento, Calif., region. Sacramento's clean-technology industry boasts more than 200 clean-energy companies — many of which are small businesses — and has created more than 37,000 green jobs, according to a recent Brookings Institution report.

Congress must embrace the potential of clean-energy jobs — jobs that cannot be outsourced. We must reinvigorate our nation's manufacturing sector and make the words "Made in America"

a reality once again. From home-energy retrofits to the installation of solar panels, the advancement of smart-grid technology to the making of next-generation energy-efficient military equipment, these services create American jobs on American soil.

Our international competitors understand the promise of the green economy all too clearly. According to a recent Pew study, China invested a record \$50 billion in clean energy and Germany doubled its investment just last year.

How can this Congress sit back and do nothing when millions of Americans are looking for work? The truth is we can't. We must support the U.S. clean energy sector.

Ways to spur job creation and innovation in this sector can come in many forms. Last year, the House passed legislation I authored to boost American clean-energy manufacturing to small- and medium-sized companies and create a "National Clean Energy Export Initiative" so companies would have a greater ability to sell their technologies around the world. The Department of Energy found that the increase in exports of U.S. green technology could reach \$40 billion per year and could create more than 750,000 jobs by 2020.

Making the research-and-development tax credit permanent would help American companies — especially clean-technology firms — continue to compete in a global marketplace. Doing so will empower U.S. companies to innovate, invent and grow — creating jobs at every step. I am also crafting legislation to provide greater financing opportunities for small clean-energy companies to hire and grow their businesses.

We must also consider policies that will continue federal support for green job training programs — the 1603 Treasury Grant program, which supports energy-efficiency programs, and restoring proven job creators such as the national Property Assessed Clean Energy program. A study by the Center for Strategic Economic Research concluded that the PACE program would support an estimated 225,000 jobs across the country.

We must continue to foster American innovation to create new job opportunities for American workers. Few industries have the job creation potential that the clean-energy economy does, and investing in this sector will create good jobs for the American people now, while ensuring our economic competitiveness for years to come.

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