

## GREEN JOBS by Senator Bob Smith

In these times of economic uncertainty and as we think about the outlook for the national and state economy we need to explore emerging industries here in New Jersey and our contribution to ensuring that our workforce is amongst the best in the nation. This past December, I had the opportunity to serve as moderator for the 2008 Governor's Conference on Workforce and Economic Development and reported on the potential for jobs going green and the next generation of job creation through technological innovation and sustainability. New Jersey has grown through an industrial revolution that brought rural citizens to the cities to support many blue-collar manufacturing jobs and, through access to a variety of educational opportunities, we have a highly skilled work force. New Jersey has been a great home to industry leaders and top corporations that support white collar jobs and keep America moving.

Taking their place amongst the blue-collar and white-collar workers those wearing the bluish-green and greenish-white collars represent a new sector of employees, the "green-collar" workers. As we reinvent our workforce and a new chapter in our history unfolds. The possibilities are boundless as technological breakthroughs continue to be made in the field of renewable energy. These jobs are wide-ranging and interesting and necessary. From the construction of windmills and solar panels to manufacturing, transportation, finance, research, engineering, education, architecture, and in other traditional industries there is or could be "green" components. As we strive to make an impact on global climate change abroad and at home, we need to work to ensure a better environment in the Garden State, while are creating a new and sustainable workforce.

As a conference moderator, I was able to lead a panel in the discussion of how the Energy Master Plan for the State of New Jersey corresponds to Job Growth. This happens two ways: maintaining resources through conservation and efficiency and growing opportunities through alternative/new energy sources. The 2009 Energy Master Plan will result in \$33 billion of investment into the energy infrastructure in New Jersey, which, in turn, creates 20,000 jobs

over the next five years. It is estimated that about half of these blue-green jobs will be installation and construction and the other half will be operation and maintenance. Working to expand job training to include the Green-Collar Apprenticeship and Training Programs is underway and training workers in green construction and energy-efficiency fields. Research and green-white collar jobs continue to emerge with the multitude of technological advances in the area of renewable energy.

In the recent years we, in the Legislature, have made significant steps forward in this area by passing laws to promote sustainability. These measures garner bi-partisan support and make for good public policy coming from both sides of the aisle in Trenton. One such piece of legislation that I am currently working to advance is the Energy Savings Improvement Legislation (ESIP), which would allow \$80 million of private sector investment in schools, towns, counties, and public colleges and universities. During the first year, if enacted, this investment is projected to generate \$20 million dollars in energy savings while creating 500 jobs.

On a nationwide level, a recent report by the RAND Corporation and University of Tennessee found that if 25% of all American energy was produced from renewable sources by 2025, we would generate at least 5 million new green jobs for Americans. Workers will be needed to help in the production of alternative power, to increase energy efficiency and to overhaul buildings that are currently major energy wasters. A TIME magazine article estimates that between now and 2030, 75% of the buildings in the U.S. will either be new or substantially rehabilitated. TIME also mentions that nationally, our inefficient, dangerously unstable electrical grid will need to be overhauled. Here, in New Jersey I am proud to report that we operate ahead of the curve with regard to energy and the environment and that Assemblyman Chivukula and I have sponsored Smart Grid Research Legislation.

During my time in the New Jersey Legislature, I have worked to write laws that impact our quality of life and leave a better New Jersey for our children and grandchildren. The initiatives have been wide-ranging from clean water (in our taps and in our coastal and inland waterways) to

reducing diesel particulate emissions and ensuring the proper disposal of electronic waste and recycling. As we all get older, we think about what our legacy will be and how we have worked to help others and make a positive contribution to this world. For me, perhaps my current climate change package, which includes renewable energy, is the most important array of bills that I will contribute to the future of our state. As a former science professor at Middlesex County College, this is an opportunity to enact good public policy by using good science and the benefit is a cleaner and healthier environment and the creation of new jobs for our residents here in our state. If you would like to learn more about these measures please log onto my website [www.SenatorBobSmith.org](http://www.SenatorBobSmith.org) and visit the Climate Change Exchange. Your comments and ideas are welcome. Thank you and may this New Year bring health and happiness to you and yours!