



Wisconsin's Energy Future Looks Bright

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Wisconsin's clean energy economy is growing every day, and locals are benefiting in meaningful ways. The Badger state receives over \$2 billion in private investment from the renewable energy industry, enabling capacity to grow. With these investments, citizens are getting the full package: drought-resistant income for landowners, an influx of well-paying jobs, and low-cost, reliable, clean energy.

Despite a difficult year, almost [40 percent](#) of U.S. power generation was carbon-free in 2021. Currently, renewables provide one-fifth of the country's energy needs, with wind and solar power accounting for over 12%. Solar saw its best year ever with [24.2GW added](#) while wind had its third-best year at 13GW. Wisconsin has [1,237 megawatts \(MW\)](#) of installed wind, solar and energy storage capacity powering 426,000 homes. That translates to \$7 million in property, state and local taxes paid to local homeowners and communities every year. Plus, \$7.4 million in annual land lease payments for rural landowners.

Wisconsin's solar capacity has made significant strides over the last year. The solar industry has already invested over \$643 million in Wisconsin, and the state currently has [854.52 MW](#) of operating solar power, up from 459.5 MW in 2020. That's enough to keep the lights on in over 135,936 homes. In addition, solar is the largest clean energy employer in Wisconsin, with [3,768 people](#) working in the state's 145 solar companies, including 40 manufacturers, 63 installers and developers and 42 other related companies. There's even more good news! More than 3,256 MW are projected to come online over the next five years.

According to [Clean Jobs Midwest](#), the Wisconsin clean energy sector saw its first year-to-year decline in jobs since Clean Jobs Midwest began its tracking in 2017. At the end of 2020, there were 69,343 Wisconsinites employed at clean energy companies, a 9.6 percent drop from 2019, or a loss of about 7,342 jobs. While there was an overall decline in jobs in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the second half of 2020 saw significant recovery as the Wisconsin clean energy sector grew by 6.2 percent, showing strong promise for the future. Renewable energy, which includes wind, solar and storage, remains the second largest clean energy employer in Wisconsin, with 6,121 workers.

At the end of 2020, Congress passed the [Energy Act of 2020](#), a \$900 billion COVID-19 recovery package that could stimulate \$34 billion in new spending on decarbonization over the next decade. This legislation also extends tax credits for renewables, energy efficiency and other clean energy technologies. In addition, 19 billion will be used for energy research and development over the next 10 years, including \$1 billion for energy storage alone.

Wisconsin benefits from embracing our energy future - one that is powered by wind and solar. Renewable energy is low in cost and high in demand, local businesses will thrive off of the economic ripple effect that comes from development, farmers will receive a diversified income with land-lease payments and citizens will have unique job opportunities and a plethora of new tax revenue.

Wind and solar are the way to go - it's just smart!

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