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Latest Job Census Shows Effects of Regulatory Actions on Vermont Trade Jobs

The new National Solar Jobs Census show a loss of 232 full-time jobs in the state's workforce after a 2017 marked by a volatile regulatory environment.

"More than 1,500 families are supported by a full-time Vermont solar job. Local solar workers help Vermonters cut their energy bills, do their part on climate, and help their neighbors access renewable energy," said Olivia Campbell Andersen, Executive Director of Renewable Energy Vermont. "These local, small businesses are helping build stronger communities now. Given plenty of volatility out of Washington, we need to make sure Vermont's policies keep us on track towards our climate and clean energy commitments."

Nationally, the solar trades saw a 4% slow-down which experts attribute to, among a variety of factors, general uncertainty caused the Trump administration's solar tariff, which first started to rattle the national market for panels early last summer. Vermont's job loss is over *three times* the national average, at 13%, indicating that something more than national politics is affecting the sector.

Unfortunately, the news of both the decrease in installed solar capacity and loss of jobs does not come as news to solar installers who warned of these consequences during the reconfiguration of net metering rules in 2016. Net metering is a program which allows average Vermonters to generate their own electricity and sell excess clean electricity to the grid to for their neighbors to use. [Recent analysis](#) of solar data collected by the Vermont Public Utilities Commission showed regulatory changes on the popular net metering program resulted in a sharp decline in new solar projects. Commensurate with job losses, Vermont saw it's first-ever decline in customer solar installations. Community solar projects which enable those who cannot host solar onsite due to renting, historic roofs, or shading slowed the most under the new rules.

"To grow local clean energy, we need clear and consistent rules. Changes in state policies significantly affect local solar jobs," added Campbell Andersen. "Given the tremendous local

economic benefits and urgency of climate resilience, we can't afford to slow down on local solar energy."

The [Vermont Solar Pathways study](#), supported by U.S. Department of Energy, found that if Vermont generated just 20% of our electricity from solar, we would create \$8 Billion in net benefits for Vermonters. According to the 2017 Vermont Clean Energy Jobs report, undertaken annually by the Vermont Department of Public Service and released last year, about 87% of businesses in the clean energy sector are small business, with fewer than 24 employees, meaning these changes have tremendous effect on members of Vermont communities and result in loss of economic potential.

The Vermont solar tradesmen and women are resilient and adaptable, and many local businesses also offer total clean energy solutions including cold climate heat pumps, electric vehicle charging, and energy storage.

The National Solar Jobs Census is conducted by The Solar Foundation®, a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to accelerate adoption of the world's most abundant energy source. [The full report can be found here.](#)

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About Renewable Energy Vermont

Renewable Energy Vermont represents businesses, non-profits, utilities, and individuals committed to reducing our reliance on dirty fossil fuels by increasing clean, renewable energy and energy efficiency in Vermont. Vermont's clean energy economy includes 3,751 businesses employing approximately 6% of Vermont's workforce. Together, we will achieve 90% total renewable energy (electric, thermal, transportation) before 2050. Learn more at www.revermont.org.