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## Alternative Energy

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# West Virginia Needs More Solar Jobs, Report Says

By [BEN ADDUCCHIO](#) (/PEOPLE/BEN-ADDUCCHIO)

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A new report by two independent organizations says West Virginia is lagging behind in bolstering solar energy programs and providing solar energy jobs.

The report points out surrounding states are benefiting from past investments into this renewable energy technology.

Two groups that support sustainable economic development, Downstream Strategies and The Mountain Institute, teamed up to compare West Virginia's solar energy job growth to surrounding states.

The report, "Using Solar PV to Create Economic Opportunity and Energy Diversity in



<http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/wvpr/files/201309/SolarDecath.JPG>  
Enlarge image (<http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/wvpr/files/201309/SolarDecath.JPG>)

*Credit West Virginia University*

West Virginia University competed in the Solar Decathlon last year, which report authors say should help raise the profile of solar energy in West Virginia.

West Virginia” suggests West Virginia is not doing nearly enough to promote the solar industry, or create solar jobs.

These jobs include electricians, people responsible for placing solar panels on buildings, even regulators who are involved with solar jobs. The report says neighboring Ohio, Virginia, and Pennsylvania have taken some steps, creating more than 6,000 jobs related to this industry. Aaron Sutch is a co-author, who works with the Mountain Institute as Energy Program Manager.

"West Virginia is really lagging woefully behind. We're fifty-first in per capita solar jobs, including the District of Columbia," said Sutch.

The report suggests that West Virginia should adopt new energy standards and tax incentives as other states have done to encourage industry growth. The report also promotes what's known as third party financing, in which private sector partners get involved, and provide financing to these projects.

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