

**Honorable George Miller
Chairman, House Education and Labor Committee
Full Committee Mark-Up of H.R. 2847,
the Green Jobs Act of 2007
Opening Statement
June 27, 2007**

The committee will now consider H.R. 2847, the Green Jobs Act of 2007.

I'd like to thank my good friends and colleagues, Congresswoman Hilda Solis and Congressman John Tierney, for sponsoring this legislation.

We all know that we have a short window of time in which to take serious and aggressive action to curtail global warming, or else people all over the planet will face extremely dire consequences.

But this enormous challenge also presents us with significant opportunities. We can do well for our economy by doing good for our earth.

Taking advantage of this economic and environmental win-win is what the Green Jobs Act of 2007 is all about.

This legislation would train workers for jobs in renewable energy and energy-efficient industries. These are industries that will have to undergo significant growth if we are to reduce our emissions of heat-trapping gases into the atmosphere.

Yet according to a 2006 study from the National Renewable Energy Lab, a shortage of skilled and trained workers is serving as a barrier to growth in the renewable energy and energy efficiency industries.

It is incumbent on the federal government to take a leadership role in helping prepare American workers for green collar jobs. Historically, companies have been reluctant to invest adequately in job training without some kind of jump start from the public sector, since those private sector investments can be lost when workers switch to new employers.

H.R. 2847 would accomplish two key things.

First, it would expand our nation's ability to identify and track the new jobs and skills needed to help grow our renewable energy and energy efficiency industries.

Among other things, this effort would help link research and development in the green industry to job standards and training curricula.

Second, it would establish national and state job training programs, administered by the U.S. Department of Labor in consultation with the U.S. Department of Energy, to help address job shortages that are impairing growth in green industries.

These training programs would create jobs that put workers on a path to financial self-sufficiency. Funding for these programs could be used to pay for the occupational training itself, as well for support services for workers while they are in the training, like child care.

Priority for these training programs would be given to veterans, displaced workers, and at-risk young people.

A portion of the job training funds would be targeted to help poor families prepare for and find good-paying jobs. The Pathways Out of Poverty Training Demonstration Programs would help families whose incomes are under 200 percent of the federal poverty line.

Specialized job training programs for the green industry are important for several reasons. First, specific skills are often needed to take full advantage of new energy technologies.

Under this legislation, grant funding could train workers in new skills like wind turbine siting, airfoils and composite repair,

and weather patterns that affect turbine performance. Proper training of building supervisors, maintenance workers, and engineers could substantially improve the performance of today's sophisticated heating and cooling systems.

To accomplish its labor market research and job training goals, H.R. 2847 would authorize up to \$125 million in annual funding. This is a separate authorization that will not affect existing job training programs.

Speaker Pelosi has made it clear that the two of the highest priorities for this Congress are to invest in America's economic competitiveness and to combat global warming.

By helping to create good-paying jobs in industries that are likely to continue to grow for years, this bill would take a good step towards making the American economy more competitive.

And by helping green industries to grow by providing them with a strong supply of well-trained, highly-skilled workers, this bill would remove one of the barriers that slows our progress in confronting the serious dangers posed by global warming.

This legislation has the backing of a broad coalition of business, education, environmental, civil rights, and labor

organizations, from the National Association of Energy Service Companies to the Sierra Club.

I hope it will also have the backing of all of my colleagues on this committee. I strongly urge all of you to vote 'yes' on the Green Jobs Act of 2007.

Thank you.