

# Executive Summary

In recent years the US Federal Government and the State of California have made clear commitments to addressing the climate crisis through legislative acts such as the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* and the *2022 California Climate Commitment*. Both the US and California are taking bold steps by implementing innovative policies, forming strategic partnerships, and enacting forward-thinking legislation to prepare our workforce for the green transition.

California shines as a true leader in the green occupation sector. The state currently boasts the highest number of green jobs employed in the entire nation and is poised to create greater than four million more green jobs over the next three decades.

## California Climate Commitments, 2020 - 2022

Figure 1

### California Climate Commitment (2022)

Record \$54B investment over 5 years in climate action, focused on fossil fuel usage and pollution

### Climate Adaptation Strategy (2021)

One of the most comprehensive plans to protect climate vulnerable communities and natural resources, underpinned by scientific data, focus on equity, and feasibility of practical implementation

### State Carbon Pricing (2020)

California was the first US state to adopt a cap-and-trade program (refreshed in 2020), setting statewide limits on GHG emissions

Sources: California Climate Commitment, Georgetown Climate Center, Center for Climate and Energy Solutions

**>4M new green jobs which require rapid training and upskilling**

With entirely new green jobs emerging and many existing jobs evolving to integrate green skills, we can expect a growing need for talented individuals in the sustainability sector. The demand for professionals with skills and expertise in renewable energy and sustainable development surpasses the available workforce.

**9% GREEN JOB GROWTH IS EXPECTED OVER THE NEXT DECADE, WHICH IS 8X GREATER THAN TOTAL WORKFORCE GROWTH**

**DEMAND FOR GREEN JOBS SKILLS HAS SURGED BY 8%, WHILE THE NUMBER OF PROFESSIONALS POSSESSING THESE SKILLS HAS ONLY RISEN BY 6%**

Within California, we have identified six key areas that will experience significant growth, emphasizing the need for green jobs in clean energy & buildings, sustainable food systems, transportation, sustainable governance, water conservation & use, and waste management sectors (see Figure 2). These six areas also provide opportunities for student-led climate action in school communities.

## Six Areas of Green Job Growth in California (10 Yr. Forecast)

Figure 2

- 12%** **CLEAN ENERGY & BUILDINGS**  
New, electric-friendly statewide building code (2023)
- 11%** **SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS**  
Increased demand for hydroponic farming in areas at risk for drought
- 9%** **TRANSPORTATION**  
100% of new car sales to be zero-emissions vehicles (ZEVs) by 2035
- 9%** **SUSTAINABLE GOVERNANCE**  
Law proposals for companies to disclose full value chain emissions
- 8%** **WATER CONSERVATION & USE**  
Conservation goal of 30% of CA's lands and coastal waters by 2030
- 7%** **WASTE MANAGEMENT**  
Highest recycling waste in the country; recent "minimum recycled content" bill

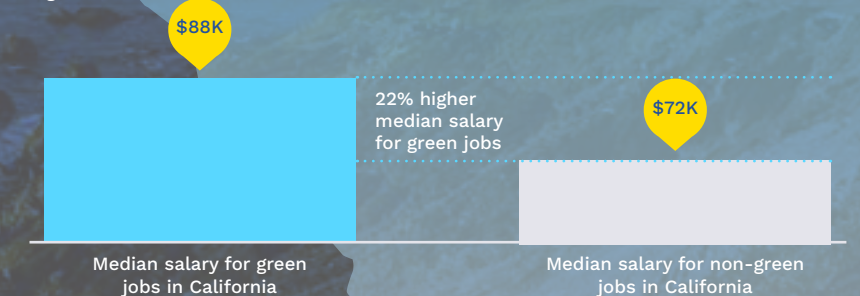
Sources: Lightcast™, NRDC CA Building Decarbonization, WBUR News, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom, Reed Smith EHS Law Insights, NRDC 10 New Environmental Laws in CA

In our effort to develop a green workforce that can meet this outsized demand, we will need to bring along all participants in California's workforce, especially those in communities that have been historically underrepresented in green careers and in communities that disproportionately bear the brunt of climate change's effects.

Fortunately, green jobs provide significant opportunities to create sustainable and economically resilient communities. Green jobs offer higher median salaries than non-green jobs and provide many lucrative opportunities that do not require the ever-growing tuition expenses needed for a bachelor's degree (see Figure 3)

## Median Salary for Green Jobs vs. Non-Green Jobs in California

Figure 3



Sources: Lightcast™

With political will, financial investment, and cross-industry innovation setting the foundation for climate action and green job demand moving forward, the true challenge will be finding effective ways to train and mobilize a green workforce while ensuring equitable access and support for all Californians.

Today, the nonprofit organization Climate Action Pathways for Schools (CAPS) is actively engaged in this endeavor. CAPS is focused on grassroots outreach to K-12 schools in under-resourced communities in an effort to equip these students with green skills and pathways to green careers, preparing the emerging workforce with tools and opportunities to impact California's climate agenda and the world's climate crisis at large.