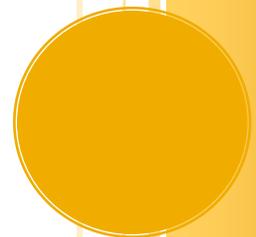


# NEVADA ENERGY JUSTICE SNAPSHOT



National Association for the Advancement of Colored People,  
Environmental and Climate Justice Program

5/1/2017



# NEVADA ENERGY JUSTICE SNAPSHOT

## SUMMARY

Access to clean energy is not just an environmental issue, but also a civil right. Communities of color bear a disproportionate share of the burdens of a fossil fuel based energy economy. This is why the NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program stands for just energy policies that will help protect our communities from harmful energy production processes and provide equitable access to the clean energy economy.

Nevada has been at the fore of the clean energy transition. As the state positions itself as a regional and national clean energy leader, it is important that we as energy justice advocates ensure that civil and human rights are central in systems and programs focused on energy efficiency and clean energy.

This Snapshot will profile Nevada's energy portfolio, evaluate key state energy policies, document state utility disconnection policies, and outline opportunities in the clean energy economy. This snapshot will provide information that will inform NAACP members on avenues for engagement.



## STATE ENERGY PROFILE

Nevada's reliance on fossil fuels disproportionately impacts communities of color. For example, residents of the West Las Vegas area, which is more than 90% people of color, are in the 80th percentile or higher for exposure to fossil fuel pollutants. Even though Nevada currently relies predominantly on fossil fuels to supply its energy needs, the state has widespread renewable energy generating potential. This potential must be tapped.

Since adopting a Renewable Portfolio Standard in 1997 Nevada has been a leader in renewable energy development and carbon pollution reduction efforts, however there is still significant room for progress. Despite making some strides towards a clean energy economy, natural gas is still the primary fuel for power generation in Nevada. In addition to maintaining a strong Renewable Portfolio Standard, energy justice advocates should push for ambitious Energy Efficiency Resource Standards, strong Net Metering standards, and equitable energy enterprise policies in order to facilitate a just transition to a clean energy economy.

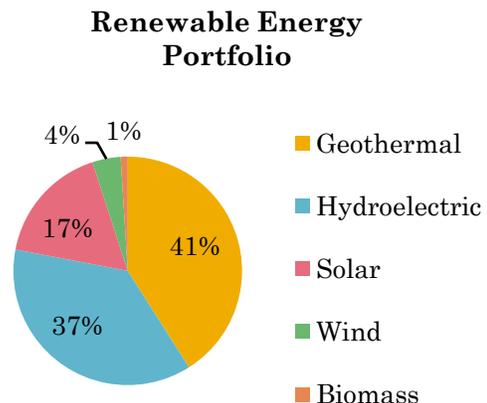
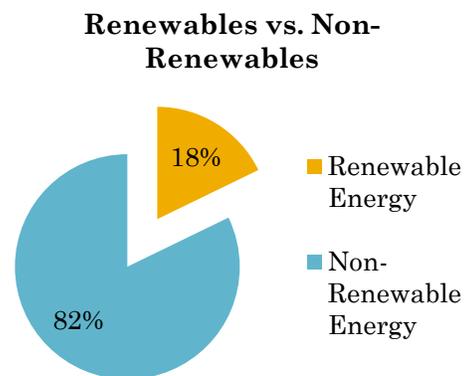
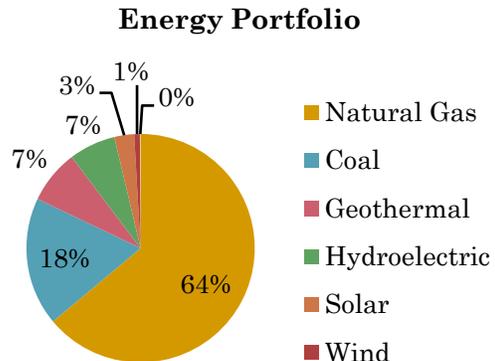
## Energy Portfolio

Natural gas is the Nevada's primary energy source. The extraction (fracking) and processing of natural gas produce detrimental social and environmental outcomes. The Las Vegas Generating Station, a natural gas plant, is located in North Las Vegas where 75% of the population is people of color.

Just shy of 20% of Nevada's electricity is generated from coal-fired power plants. In compliance with state law, Nevada's largest utility company plans to phase out most of its coal-fired electricity generation by 2019. Most of Nevada's energy is imported from out of state. Interstate pipelines supply Nevada with a majority of its natural gas and the state's three coal-fired power plants are supplied by railroad from out-of-state mines.

Even though the potential for clean, renewable energy is abundant in Nevada, only about one-fifth of the state's electricity generation is fueled by renewable energy. Nevada is among the few states with utility-scale geothermal electricity generation, and has the country's largest untapped geothermal resources. There is also large-scale hydroelectricity. Nevada has wind power potential in its mountainous regions and opened its first utility-scale commercial wind farm in 2012.

Nevada leads the nation in solar potential. Between 2014 and 2015, electricity generation from solar almost doubled, as solar continues to become a rapidly increasing portion of Nevada's clean energy production.<sup>1</sup>



Figures 1-3: <http://spotforcleanenergy.org/state/nevada/>

For more detailed information and data on Nevada's energy portfolio visit:

<http://www.eia.gov/state/?sid=NV>

## State Energy Policies<sup>ii</sup>

Policy Type	NAACP Recommended Policy Standards	Nevada Policy Details
<b>Net Metering</b>	<p>Net Metering Standards require utility companies to provide retail credit for new renewable energy produced by a consumer.</p> <p><b>Capacity Limit Recommendation:</b> 2,000 kW (minimally), per system  <b>Mandatory/Voluntary:</b> Mandatory</p>	<p>In June 2017 Nevada lawmakers approved AB 405, which restored net metering rates close to retail for rooftop solar customers. This decision follows the state's 2015 decision to drastically reduce compensation for distributed energy generators.</p>
<b>Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS)</b>	<p>A RPS requires electric utility companies and other retail electric providers to supply a specific minimum amount of customer load with electricity from eligible renewable energy sources.</p> <p><b>Recommended Standard:</b> Minimally 25% renewable by 2025  <b>Mandatory/Voluntary:</b> Mandatory  <b>Allowable Sources:</b> Wind, solar, geothermal, ocean/wave energy</p>	<p><b>Standard:</b> 25% by 2025</p> <p><b>Mandatory/Voluntary:</b> Mandatory</p> <p><b>Allowable Sources:</b> Solar Water Heat, Solar Space Heat, Geothermal Electric, Solar Thermal Electric, Solar Thermal Process Heat, Solar Photovoltaics, Wind (All), Biomass, Hydroelectric, Geothermal Heat Pumps, Municipal Solid Waste, Landfill Gas, Solar Pool Heating, Geothermal Direct-Use, Anaerobic Digestion</p>
<b>Energy Efficiency Resource Standard (EERS)</b>	<p>A EERS establish a requirement for utility companies to meet annual and cumulative energy savings targets through a portfolio of energy efficiency program.</p> <p><b>Recommended Standard:</b> Minimally 2% annual reduction of each previous year's retail electricity sales.  <b>Mandatory/Voluntary:</b> Mandatory</p>	<p>To date, Nevada does not have an EERS. Although energy efficiency can be incorporated into the state RPS.</p>
<b>Local Hire Provision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra renewable energy credit multipliers for in-state installation and in-state manufactured content</li> <li>• Renewable energy credits for utility providing incentives to build a plant in-state</li> <li>• Renewable energy credit for utility that makes an investment in a plant located in-state</li> <li>• Quota for government assisted construction project employers to hire a percentage of workers locally</li> <li>• Bidding Preferences for companies that hire a percentage of their employees in-state for state-funded public works projects and service contracts</li> </ul>	<p>Nevada lacks a local hire provision. Establishing a local hire provision that encompasses energy projects would significantly increase the amount of tax dollars that Nevada reinvests into the local economy and will provide local jobs to enable people to work near where they live.</p>
<b>Disadvantaged Business Enterprise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide training opportunities</li> <li>• Notify DBEs of state business opportunities</li> <li>• Set-aside funds for DBEs</li> </ul>	<p>Nevada DOT certifies DBEs for federally assisted transportation contracts. Nevada must expand an improved DBE model to encompass all sectors, including its energy industry.</p>

## Utility Disconnection Policies<sup>iii</sup>

<b>Notice</b>	Disconnection notices must be delivered at least 10 days prior to scheduled disconnection. If a customer does not respond to a first notice, a second must be provided at least 48 hours prior to disconnection.
<b>Date Based Protection</b>	None
<b>Temp Based Protection</b>	Utility disconnection may not occur during a period when weather is below 15°F or above 105°F. For elderly customers or customers utility disconnection may not occur when weather is below 20°F or above 95°F
<b>Payment Plan</b>	Payment plans are available for any customers at any time.
<b>Reconnection Fee</b>	Yes
<b>Disconnection Limitations</b>	Disconnections may not occur on the day before a weekend, on a weekend, or on a state holiday.
<b>Other Protections</b>	For customers with special medical needs, disconnection will be postponed for 30 days with medical certification and entry into a payment plan. Medical certification may be renewed for an additional 30 days. Utility companies may not terminate service to a customer if the amount owed is \$100 or less for electricity, gas, or gas and electric combined.

More than  
**70,000**  
 people living in Nevada  
**ARE ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE**  
 to extreme heat

\*Especially vulnerable people are under 5 years old or 65 and older, living in poverty

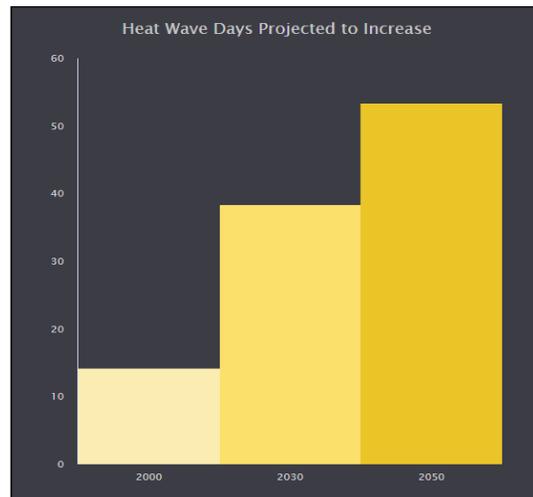


Figure 4-5: [reportcard.statesatrisk.org/report-card/nevada/extreme\\_heat\\_grade](http://reportcard.statesatrisk.org/report-card/nevada/extreme_heat_grade)

Without utility services Nevadans are at risk of exposure to both extreme heat and extreme cold. Folks should not be forced to choose between paying for medications or their energy bill. Public officials have implemented some policies that protect consumers from the life-threatening practice of utility disconnection, however, energy justice advocates must continue to hold utility companies and regulators accountable to human rights and basic but life-saving protections.

More details about disconnection policies in Nevada are available at:  
<http://puc.nv.gov/>

## DEVELOPING THE BLACK-GREEN PIPELINE

African Americans are inadequately represented in the clean energy sector. It is the goal of the NAACP Black-Green Pipeline Initiative that African Americans will have increased representation across all sectors of the clean energy economy. The Black-Green Pipeline Initiative promotes the equitable inclusion of communities of color into the green economy in order to address unemployment in our communities and to increase the voices and influence of our communities in the green economy.

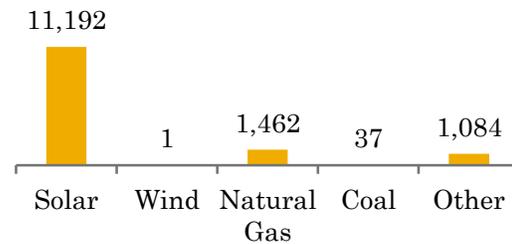
To subscribe to the Black-Green Pipeline Initiative Weekly Digest send a blank email to:  
[naacp-bgp-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:naacp-bgp-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

### The Green Labor Market and Communities of Color

Nevada's concentration of energy employment parallels national averages with 28, 892 traditional energy workers statewide. The electric power generation segment employs the largest portion of that figure, with 13,776 workers in Nevada. The majority of those are in solar, followed by traditional fossil fuel generation.<sup>iv</sup>



### Electric Power Generation Employment by Sub Technology



According to Solar Energy Industries Association, there are currently 102 solar companies at work throughout the solar value chain in Nevada, employing over 8,700 people.<sup>v</sup> The 2015 PUCN decision ending net metering in Nevada threatened the growth of the rooftop solar industry, but hopefully the 2017 reinstatement will reinvigorate the once strong industry. In 2014 the Solar Foundation reported that Nevada's solar industry employment growth rate grew by 146% and ranked first in the country for solar jobs per capita. In fact, at that time solar employment in Nevada grew more than 53 times faster than the state's average employment growth rate of 2.7%.<sup>vi</sup>

And while the Solar Foundation reports that the solar industry outpaces most other sectors of the economy, adding workers at a rate nearly 12 times faster than the overall economy, African Americans are underrepresented in this economic boom. In 2015 African Americans made up 5.2% of the solar workforce compared to the 11.4% of the national workforce.<sup>vii</sup>

**Action step:** Host a *Bridge the Gap: Connecting Black Communities to the Green Economy* Program to establish working groups with existing organizations to increase African American engagement with local green economy.

## TAKE ACTION

The Nevada-Utah-Idaho Tri-State Conference has been a leader among NAACP state conferences in taking action on energy justice. In 2014 the state conference released the NAACP Just Energy Policies Report for Nevada, which among other things evaluates the state of Nevada's energy policies and advocates for the focal policies outlined in this snapshot. By releasing this report, the Nevada NAACP took a strong stand on energy justice advocacy, but there is more work to be done!

### Host a Bridging the Gap: Connecting Black Communities to the Green Economy Roundtable

- The NAACP ECJ Program is committed to advancing a meaningful dialogue and concerted action on engagement of communities of color in the green economy.
- To start taking action, organize a multi-stakeholder roundtable with socially responsible energy business leaders, historically black colleges and universities, environmental groups, civil rights organizations, labor unions, and others to discuss developing and implementing a strategy to ensure that policies/laws/regulation, research initiatives, community level practices, corporate social responsibility measures, etc. are in place to ensure greater engagement of communities of color in the green economy.

### Implement a demonstration project such as a rooftop solar project

- Interested in taking a direct role in implementing clean energy practices in your community? Install rooftop solar.
- There are several rebates and incentives available to Nevadans interested in pursuing renewable energy projects. Visit [energy.gov](http://energy.gov) for a list of renewable energy incentive program available on the state and federal levels.
- You can also check out funding opportunities offered through the Department of Energy SunShot Initiative, which aims to support solar energy adoption by making solar energy accessible to all Americans.

### Advocate for a focal policy

- The NAACP can play an important role in ensuring that civil rights are at the center of clean energy policy.
- Identify a policy priority for the state conference.
- Develop a committee of NAACP members and external allies and devise an advocacy action plan.

### Make public the NAACP energy justice platform and engage the public through media

- Develop and place an op-ed by NAACP Unit President or ECJ Chair in a local newspaper
- Participate in a radio interview, TV interview, podcast
- Be quoted in a local newspaper
- Post an article or blog to an online platform

**RenewNV:** a partnership of organizations working to build and enhance Nevada's clean energy economy.

**VoteSolar:** organization that works on the state level to support policies and programs that advance a clean energy economy.

**Clean Energy Project:** non-partisan organization dedicated to educating and engaging policy leaders, community leaders, and citizens on benefits of clean energy.

**Climate Justice Alliance:** coalition of organizations united for a just transition to a clean energy economy.

**PLAN:** The Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada brings together diverse organizations for social and environmental justice.

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#### **Nevada Partners**

**Nevada Workforce Connection  
STEM Career Pathways**

**Sierra Nevada Job Corps Center**

***Need additional support,  
resources, or other assistance?***

Contact: [ecjp@naacpnet.org](mailto:ecjp@naacpnet.org)

## **CLOSING**

Today there is unprecedented urgency for climate action and a just transition to clean renewable energy. States like Nevada have the power to be leaders in the energy transition. As NAACP Tri-State Conference of Idaho-Nevada-Utah President Jeanetta Williams penned in a [2014 op-ed](#) in support of net metering, "our nation's choice to get the vast majority of energy from dirty fossil fuel sources has serious consequences for the physical and economic health of our communities."

Embracing a transition to clean, renewable energy sources will not only will not only provide significant environmental and health benefits for Nevadans, but will also diversify and strengthen the state's renewable energy economy. NAACP just energy leaders should advocate on behalf of a strong Renewable Portfolio Standard, Energy Efficiency Resource Standard, and Net Metering standards. As a key and important voice in energy policy arena, NAACP leaders can play a key role in advancing strong energy policies that will bring environmental and economic benefits to Nevada.



## JULY 2017

### Created by the NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program

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<sup>i</sup> "Nevada State Profile and Energy Estimates," *United State Energy Information Administration*, last modified on 15 December 2016,

<https://www.eia.gov/state/analysis.php?sid=NV>.

<sup>ii</sup> "Programs," *DSIRE*, accessed 11 July 2017,

<http://programs.dsireusa.org/system/program?fromSir=0&state=NV>.

<sup>iii</sup> Jacqueline Patterson, Marcus Franklin, Caroline Kurtz, Mike Alksnis, Lorah Steichen, Chiquita Younger, "Lights Out In the Cold: Reforming Shut-Off Policies as if Human Rights Matter," *NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program*, March 2017,

[http://www.naacp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Lights-Out-in-the-Cold\\_NAACP-ECJP-4.pdf](http://www.naacp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Lights-Out-in-the-Cold_NAACP-ECJP-4.pdf).

<sup>iv</sup> "2017 US Energy and Jobs Report State Charts," *United States Department of Energy*, accessed 11 July 2017,

<https://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2017/01/f34/2017%20US%20Energy%20and%20Jobs%20Report%20State%20Charts%200.pdf>.

<sup>v</sup> "Nevada Solar," *Solar Energy Industries Association*, accessed 11 July 2017,

<http://www.seia.org/state-solar-policy/nevada>.

<sup>vi</sup> "National Solar Jobs Census 2014," *The Solar Foundation*, accessed 11 July 2017,

<http://www.thesolarfoundation.org/national-solar-jobs-census-2014/>.

<sup>vii</sup> "National Solar Jobs Census 2015," *The Solar Foundation*, accessed 11 July 2017,

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