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San Diego: Fastest Growing Region for Clean Jobs
Industries account for one in ten jobs

SAN DIEGO – Dec. 15, 2010 – San Diego County stands out as an established leader in California in the remodeling of the business environment to leverage the growing clean economy according to research released today by The San Diego Foundation. All trends indicate that clean energy and technology industries will be major job creators in the region for years to come.

The report, “Economic Vitality: Clean Jobs in the San Diego Region,” analyzed past studies and interviewed employers, public officials, industry associations and experts to find out what drives the clean jobs industry in San Diego.

“The green economy in San Diego County is still in development, but it’s on the rise. Our findings show that one in ten jobs will be linked to green industries and that traditional industries are starting to change in order to take advantage of emerging technologies,” said Laura Coleman, author of the study. “Eventually we’ll stop saying green, and just call it industry.”

According to the report, the San Diego region has attracted \$445 million in clean technology venture capital in the last five years, serving as a vital jobs creator in the region. The National Venture Capital Association estimates that each \$100 million in venture capital funding helps create 2,700 jobs.

“These emerging industries are a bright spot for our region’s economy and quality of life,” said Scott Peters, Chair of The San Diego Foundation’s Climate Initiative and CleanTECH San Diego board member.

The study finds that San Diego County’s strong, green economy and subsequent job growth is supported by several key factors, including: significant local venture capital investment in regional clean-tech companies; state and local policy that creates more opportunities for development; local demand for installing renewable energy, and improvements in energy efficiency technologies. “San Diego is steadily establishing itself as a leader in the emerging

clean technology industry,” said Mayor Jerry Sanders. “With our entrepreneurial business culture, an educated workforce and plenty of skilled labor, our region is ideal for supporting this vibrant new sector.” The report indicates a majority of clean jobs require less than two years of education or training, and that San Diego already has a prepared workforce that has transferrable skills.

“The San Diego region leads the state because our education system and military are invested in renewable energy. People here get it because they want to preserve the paradise we live in today for the enjoyment of our children,” said Bob Kelly, President and CEO of The San Diego Foundation. “This report is consistent with a recent poll The San Diego Foundation commissioned showing nearly eight in ten believe we can have a strong economy while developing clean energy. We can have both,” he emphasized.

The study examined subsectors of clean jobs in San Diego County, including renewable energy, energy efficiency, biofuels and farming, water, waste, and wastewater management, transportation and alternative-fuel vehicles, and compliance and sustainability planning. The San Diego region is strongest in renewable energy, specifically solar and biofuels, which has brought in over \$1 billion in venture capital and other investments to the region. It is likely that future investments could bring an additional \$200 million to \$1 billion in coming years, resulting in an estimated 5,400 to 27,000 more jobs. According to the CleanTECH San Diego database, the San Diego region is home to more than 180 solar company installers and innovators. The San Diego Center for Algae Biotechnology is conducting new research on biofuels and there are approximately 30 companies within the region in biofuel development. Energy efficiency and green building follow closely behind, said the study, accounting for four out of 10 green jobs.

San Diego County Supervisor Ron Roberts noted that, “Clean technology innovation will play a critical role in reducing our region’s greenhouse gas emissions, protecting air quality, and most importantly in creating real jobs.”

Because of location and climate, San Diego County is well-positioned to invest in solar installations, the report shows. Additionally, the report illustrates that San Diego’s renowned research institutions -- including Scripps Institution of Oceanography and the University of California San Diego -- play a key role in the development of skilled labor.

“The San Diego region is strongest in renewable energy,” Coleman said. “But the area’s emphasis on innovation in its thriving biotech industry can lead to developments in areas like biofuels, another sub-sector this region is known for.”

The report can be downloaded at www.sdfoundation.org/cleanjobs.

About The San Diego Foundation

The San Diego Foundation is proud to stand as San Diego's leading resource for information about charitable giving and community needs. We encourage, support and facilitate meaningful dialogue on issues affecting each of our communities, and work with philanthropists to develop creative solutions to meet critical community needs.

Since our inception in 1975, The San Diego Foundation has helped public-spirited citizens find ways to address community problems. The funds we manage now number in the thousands. Through them, our donors support numerous organizations and serve a variety of extraordinary causes. Our donors and funds all share a common purpose: to make San Diego a better place to live, work and play.

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