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Spending on green energy falls short on jobs

What has America gotten so far from spending on clean energy, and has it been worth the cost? The multibillion-dollar outlays of the past four years had equally big goals: putting people to work right away, but also future jobs in a growing global endeavor to cut pollution and the risks from climate disruption.

The federal spending has become an issue in the 2012 campaign. Republicans say the federal government squandered taxpayers' money, whether it was on \$27-a-gallon biofuels for a test of an aircraft carrier battle group last month, subsidies for renewable energy or the taxpayers' loss of \$535 million to the bankrupt solar manufacturer Solyndra.

Four years ago, the Democrats' promises on clean energy were all about jobs. As Obama took office seeking nearly \$1 trillion in spending and tax cuts to boost a free-falling economy, he wanted to include green energy spending and he stressed the job benefits. "We'll put nearly half a million people to work building wind turbines and solar panels, constructing fuel-efficient cars and buildings, and developing the new energy technologies that will lead to new jobs," he said on Jan. 16, 2009, in a speech pitching the stimulus proposal.

On jobs, the promise fell short. The White House said its clean-energy stimulus funds created 224,500 jobs. An independent study this year concluded that 70,000 jobs were added to clean technology industries from 2007 to 2010. That study was done by the Brookings Institution, the Breakthrough Institute and the World Resources Institute.

Obama and his team argued that spending on clean energy would have other benefits. They said it would help the United States get some of the renewable energy manufacturing that otherwise would go to China, where energy technology is subsidized. It also would create jobs in the future and help the environment.

"Whenever the government has been involved in so-called stimulus, it's really more than stimulus," said Diane Lim Rogers, the chief economist for the Concord Coalition, a budget watchdog that advocates for fiscal responsibility.

The 2009 stimulus, she said, was aimed at helping people make ends meet, increasing demand for goods and services in order to create jobs, and making a long-term shift in the way resources are used in order to better reflect social values and costs.

In the case of the clean-energy spending, that third part included a way of addressing climate change.

Renewable energy doubled from 2006 to 2011 and prices fell, according to the Brookings-Breakthrough-WRI report.

Electricity Pricing Areas – Sep, 2012

On-Peak	Per kWh
West Hub	\$.03178
NI Hub	\$.02634

ComEd Average Day Ahead LMP Electric Price

Time Period	Average per Kwh
Aug, 2011	\$.04064
Sep, 2011	\$.03058
Oct, 2011	\$.02968
Nov, 2011	\$.02816
Dec, 2011	\$.02971
Jan, 2012	\$.03043
Feb, 2012	\$.02963
Mar, 2012	\$.02894
April, 2012	\$.02659
May, 2012	\$.02816
June, 2012	\$.03089
July, 2012	\$.04303
Aug 1 thru Aug 13	\$.03368

Extended Temperature Forecast:

Chicago Area

	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
High	82	87	85	72	75
Low	66	70	64	60	69

