PEMBINA Institute

Discussion Paper

State of Play

The clean energy workforce in B.C.

November 2026

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The Pembina Institute recognizes and affirms these unceded ancestral territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. We respectfully acknowledge the presence of many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples on these lands.

These acknowledgements are part of the start of a journey of several generations. We share them in the spirit of truth, justice and reconciliation, and to contribute to a more equitable and inclusive future for all.

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Executive summary

In recent years, British Columbia's climate policy ambition has waned, risking its ability to capitalize on opportunities arising from the transition to a clean energy economy. Skills misalignment and weakened training capacity are driving high job vacancy rates, and employment growth in the clean economy may be stymied if B.C. is unable to meet the labour needs of key industries.

This report provides an overview of B.C.'s current policy landscape, workforce challenges and labour market dynamics across five clean energy sectors: buildings, electricity, transportation, critical minerals, and forestry and mass timber. It then highlights best practices from successful workforce programs, outlines preliminary findings from a review of policy gaps and proposes areas for future research.

Overall, we find that B.C. lacks sector-specific approaches to workforce development. Long-term planning is needed to better account for the evolving nature of sustainable industries, workforce trends, and economic disruptions in a way that is responsive to regional needs. In our industry-level analysis, we found that provincial support has driven growth in clean economy sectors with activities ranging from constructing electric vehicle charging infrastructure and implementing energy-efficient building retrofits to installing renewable power sources. However, communities will only see the benefits of economic and workforce growth in these future-oriented sectors if they are supported by consistent policy and a long-term commitment to a clean energy economy.

Beneath the imperative for forward-looking, job-creating strategies lies a critical need to address labour market barriers such as skills shortages, limited training capacity, eroding job quality, and persistent inequities. The provincial government should convene industry and educators and provide targeted funding to align training pipelines with sectoral needs so that employers can invest in upskilling their workers and post-secondary institutions can expand training in priority areas.

B.C. needs an integrated, people-centred approach that aligns climate, industrial and workforce policies around shared outcomes: decent work, equity, regional prosperity and emissions reductions. A strong, well-designed plan for workers can reduce resistance to climate action and accelerate the energy transition while supporting more resilient communities and better socio-economic outcomes for workers.

1. Introduction

Over the last decade, B.C. has been lauded as a climate leader. The provincial government enjoyed political licence to advance CleanBC, a climate plan to lower greenhouse gas emissions by 40% below 2007 levels by 2030.[1] This plan has generated economic and employment growth by incentivizing the creation and expansion of clean energy industries and supply chains.

Should the Government of B.C. continue to prioritize achieving net-zero emissions by 2050, the future for clean energy employment looks bright. One estimate suggests that achieving net-zero would grow the clean energy workforce by 317,700 jobs by 2050.[2] However, B.C.'s approach to climate policy is being restructured, and new political imperatives are shaping government priorities. A rollback on climate policy could mean that B.C. misses out on major economic benefits and employment opportunities.

Furthermore, employment growth in clean energy may be stymied if the province is unable to meet the labour needs of key industries. Skills misalignment, lower labour participation, an aging population, and constrained training capacity, especially in rural areas, have driven B.C. to one of the highest job vacancy rates in the country. This is especially true in the skilled trades, where vacancies have ballooned 47% over the past decade.[3]

There is a clear link between climate action, the creation of good-quality jobs and long-term economic well-being for B.C. What's needed is a clearly articulated plan that equips workers to access the jobs and economic opportunities of the clean energy transition. Such a plan should address issues related to labour supply, training capacity and job quality. This plan must also rest on the stable foundation of a climate action and energy transition plan for investment certainty. Both plans would provide workers with the information and confidence they need to plan their futures, whether training to work in growing clean industries or successfully navigating disruption as the world shifts away from fossil fuels.

This report provides an overview of B.C.'s current and projected clean economy labour market, examines the current policy environment, outlines preliminary findings on policy gaps and proposes areas for future research. By highlighting policies that advance decent work, skills development and economic diversification, we aim to support decision-makers in realizing the greatest social and economic benefits of the transition to net-zero.

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[1] Government of British Columbia, *CleanBC* (2018). https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/climate-change/action/cleanbc/cleanbc_2018-bc-climate-strategy.pdf

[2] Clean Energy Canada, *A Pivotal Moment* (2023). https://cleanenergycanada.org/report/a-pivotal-moment/

[3] Statistics Canada, "Table 14-10-0443-01: Job vacancies, proportion of job vacancies and average offered hourly wage by occupation and selected characteristics, quarterly, unadjusted for seasonality," spreadsheet, December 16, 2025. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=1410044301

2. Policy context

The current state of the clean energy workforce has been shaped by decades of changing government priorities, shifting global markets, and advancing technologies. An evolving policy context will continue to influence projections for job creation and economic growth across regions and sectors. This section provides an overview of the major policies shaping the current workforce environment.

2.1 CleanBC: B.C.'s climate plan

Released in 2018, CleanBC introduced measures to reduce emissions from transportation, buildings, waste and industry, shifting from fossil fuels to clean energy sources. Due to changing economic circumstances following its launch, CleanBC's emphasis on technology and emissions targets lost resonance with voters as more pressing concerns, such as affordability and economic security, took priority.[4] Some key commitments never materialized, including a "CleanBC Labour Readiness Plan," which would have strengthened the connection between CleanBC policy measures and employment benefits. The absence of such a plan makes it harder for workers to know how to access opportunities and risks leaving the workforce insufficiently prepared to support clean energy initiatives.

Further, the effectiveness of CleanBC has been questioned, as the province is not on track to meet its targets. Despite significant reductions in emissions intensity and other indicators of progress (e.g., increased uptake of zero-emission vehicles and heat pumps), the 2025 *Climate Change Accountability Report* projects that B.C. will miss its 2030 target, achieving only a 15% reduction from 2007 levels under current and emerging policies.[5] Without sustained support and public buy-in, progress risks backsliding.

CleanBC review

In May 2025, the province launched an independent review of CleanBC programs to ensure that they are working as intended: reducing emissions while increasing affordability and strengthening the economy.[6] The review panel produced a series of recommendations to

[4] Stephanie Cairns, Janina Stajic, and Dylan Clark, *People First, Climate Forward: Recentering B.C. Climate Policy* (Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions, 2025). https://climatesolutions.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/CleanBC-Paper-2_People-First-Climate-Forward_FINAL.pdf

[5] Government of British Columbia, "Climate Change Accountability Report shows lower emissions, more work to do," media release, December 3, 2025. https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2025ECS0048-001198

[6] Government of British Columbia, "CleanBC review launched to strengthen climate action, results for people," media release, May 7, 2025. https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2025ECS0019-000423

reinvigorate CleanBC, increase its effectiveness and better align it with people-centred outcomes.[7] It is not yet clear how these recommendations will be implemented.

The current policies that underpin many economic and employment projections, like CleanBC, are changing, so future-focused clean economy labour market scenarios must be revisited to ensure British Columbians and decision-makers have the best information about the future of the province and its workforce. This lack of policy certainty creates inconsistent demand signals for clean economy investors, employers, training institutions and workers.

2.2 Look West: B.C.'s economic strategy

In November 2025, B.C. released an economic strategy, *Look West: Jobs and Prosperity for a Stronger BC and Canada*, outlining its vision to respond to current economic issues.[8] The strategy is grounded in ambitions to fast-track major projects, diversify the economy and increase support for workers, including a commitment to double investment in trades training over three years. The strategy largely mirrors federal priorities, responding to cost-of-living pressures and ongoing tariff disputes with the United States. For instance, it names 18 priority projects for investment support and accelerated regulatory review, four of which have also been referred to the federal Major Projects Office. These projects could create as many as 8,000 jobs, including in clean energy and critical minerals.

In June 2026, the province launched the Look West Workforce Readiness Initiative, which commits $40 million over three years for project-based funding to create more training pathways for trades and support for apprentices. This program takes a particular focus on rural and remote areas, major project and priority sectors, and Indigenous and other equity-deserving groups.[9]

[7] CleanBC Independent Review Panel, *Rising to the Moment: Renewing CleanBC to improve affordability, strengthen the economy, and ensure a cleaner future* (2025). https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/121/2025/11/CleanBC-Independent-Review-Final-Report-November-2025.pdf

[8] Ministry of Jobs and Economic Growth (B.C.), *Look West: Jobs and Prosperity for a Stronger BC and Canada* (2025). https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/employment-business-and-economic-development/look-west-strategy/lookwest.pdf

[9] Government of B.C., "Improving access to skilled trades training in rural, remote communities," media release, June 15, 2026. https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2026PSFS0029-000699

2.3 Canadian Sustainable Jobs Act and action plans

In June 2024, Canada passed the Canadian Sustainable Jobs Act, grounded in principles of decent work, social dialogue, respect for regional differences and workforce equity in the shift to a net-zero economy.[10] The act introduces three important governance and accountability mechanisms: (1) establishing a sustainable jobs secretariat to coordinate policy across federal departments and implement the act; (2) creating an independent sustainable jobs partnership council made up of unions, Indigenous groups, industry, ENGOs and other stakeholders to provide advice to government; and (3) developing five-year sustainable jobs action plans. These plans must set out how Canada will create sustainable jobs and support workers in the shift to net-zero, as well as provide a summary of labour market information.

Progress to date

In February 2026, following the submission of formal advice from the Sustainable Jobs Partnership Council, informed by public input from diverse stakeholders including the Pembina Institute, the first action plan was released. The plan, which covers 2026–2030, mainly lists existing federal workforce programs, but lacks clear timelines, defined responsibilities, paths for inter-departmental coordination, or new funding.[11]

2.4 Federal major projects and workforce agenda

In 2025, the federal government launched the Major Projects Office (MPO) to identify and support major projects in the national interest, including through expedited regulatory processes and coordination of financing.[12] Thus far, projects referred to the MPO include both conventional and clean energy infrastructure, including the B.C. North Coast Transmission Line, the Pacific Link Pipeline (West Coast Oil Pipeline), and the Labrador Trough Clean Power, Critical Minerals and Infrastructure Corridor.

[10] Government of Canada, *Canadian Sustainable Jobs Act*, S.C. 2024, c. 13. https://lois-laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-23.25/FullText.html

[11] Pembina Institute, "Sustainable Jobs Action Plan sets important foundation, but more action needed," media release, February 27, 2026. https://www.pembina.org/media-release/sustainable-jobs-action-plan-sets-important-foundation-more-action-needed

[12] Prime Minister of Canada, "Prime Minister Carney launches new Major Projects Office to fast-track nation-building projects," media release, August 29, 2025. https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2025/08/29/prime-minister-carney-launches-new-major-projects-office-fast-track-nation-building-projects

In 2026, the federal government announced several workforce measures to support its major projects agenda and address broader labour shortages. These include Team Canada Strong, an $8 billion investment aimed at recruiting and retaining Red Seal apprentices,[13] and Workforce Alliances, which bring together industry, labour, training institutions, and community stakeholders to address sectoral labour shortages, including in energy and electricity, mining and minerals, and housing and construction.[14] Both initiatives are still being rolled out, so their impact remains to be seen.

The government has also released strategies for key growth sectors, including *Powering Canada Strong: A National Strategy for an Electrified Canadian Economy,* the *Defence Industrial Strategy,* and the *Nuclear Energy Strategy for Canada*. Many include workforce commitments but offer few specific initiatives beyond previously announced programs.

2.5 Lack of industry- and region-specific workforce development supports

As highlighted in our Recruit, Train, Retain report, B.C. lacks industry- and region-specific workforce development supports.[15] Existing workforce development programs largely target specific populations or demographics, such as unemployed or under-employed people, Indigenous people or young people, and may not account for unique regional or sectoral challenges, like accessing specialized training in remote areas. These programs increase overall employment, but often do not connect workers to job opportunities in line with industrial policies that advance broader economic objectives. However, recent announcements suggest a shift toward more coordinated workforce planning, including the Look West Workforce Readiness Initiative and federal Workforce Alliances, which aim to align training with major projects and priority sectors.

[13] Employment and Social Development Canada, "Backgrounder: Team Canada Strong," September 18, 2026. https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/news/2026/09/backgrounder--team-canada-strong.html

[14] Employment and Social Development Canada, "Workforce Alliances," May 5, 2026. https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/workforce-alliances.html

[15] Megan Gordon, *Recruit Train Retain: Fostering low-carbon industries through regional workforce planning* (Pembina Institute, 2025). https://www.pembina.org/sites/default/files/2025-05/Recruit_Train_Retain.pdf

3. Workforce challenges in the clean energy economy

The clean energy economy remains poised for growth, with existing policies and market drivers generating new economic activity and employment across clean energy industries. Despite this growth, its labour market faces a host of challenges that could dampen employment growth in clean energy sectors, as well as many other sectors critical to B.C.'s economy.

Insufficient training capacity and increasing labour shortages have made it more difficult to meet current vacancies in the skilled trades, which have increased from 10,640 to 15,620 over the past decade, as well as projected vacancies.[16] B.C.'s Labour Market Outlook anticipates that between 2024 and 2034, there will be another 186,000 trades vacancies to fill, or 17% of all job openings, a trend consistent with the rest of Canada.[17] Meeting this demand will be even harder in rural and northern areas, where training capacity is more limited, especially for skilled trades. Women and Indigenous workers also continue to face greater barriers to employment and career growth.

This section identifies some of the most salient challenges that must be addressed through workforce planning to ensure a successful clean energy transition.

3.1 B.C.'s labour market outlook

While some labour market trends are unique to the clean economy, they are not insulated from trends impacting the entire B.C. economy and workforce.

The 2025–2035 B.C. Labour Market Outlook predicts that there will be more than one million job openings, over three-quarters of which will require credentials and skills gained through post-secondary education.[18] However, the number of workers to fill openings is projected to fall short. This is mostly due to lower-than-anticipated levels of immigration and temporary

[16] Reference period: Q2 2015–Q2 2025.

"Table 14-10-0443-01: Job vacancies, proportion of job vacancies and average offered hourly wage."

Note: from 2015 to 2025, the size of the trades labour force has only increased by approximately 13.2%.

Statistics Canada, "Table 14-10-0416-01: Labour force characteristics by occupation, annual," spreadsheet, January 9, 2026. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=1410041601

[17] Government of British Columbia, *British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2024 Edition* (2024). https://www.workbc.ca/sites/default/files/2025-02/BC%20LMO%20Report%202024.pdf

[18] Government of British Columbia, *British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2025–2035 Forecast* (2025). https://www.workbc.ca/sites/default/files/2025-10/B.C.%20Labour%20Market%20Outlook%20Report%202025.pdf

residents, including international students. Notably, federal caps on the Temporary Foreign Worker Program will impact occupations needed for the clean economy, including construction trades helpers and labourers, carpenters, and transport truck drivers. These trends underscore the importance of aligning workforce development programs with evolving skills demand.

While there is no consensus on the definition of a "clean energy economy," for the purposes of this report, we use the Canadian Sustainable Job Act's definition of a net-zero economy: one that is "consistent with a credible pathway to achieving net-zero emissions."[19] Below we outline certain industries and associated jobs that are relevant to B.C.'s clean economy, as well as projected job openings over the next decade from both retirements and new vacancies created through industry growth. While this list does not represent all clean economy sectors, these industries all have the potential to make large emissions reductions, develop clean technology or produce sustainable materials.

Note: The following tables use the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) to classify industries and the National Occupational Classification (NOC) to classify occupations.

Table 1. Ten-year job outlook for selected industries in the clean economy

Category (NAICS)	Industry	Job openings	Description	Possible associated sustainable jobs
Forestry, logging and support activities		4,000	Establishments engaged in growing and harvesting timber	Harvesting wood that can be used to create mass timber or other sustainable materials
Mining and oil and gas extraction	Oil and gas extraction	2,500	Establishments engaged in operating oil and gas field properties	N/A
	Mining	8,100	Establishments engaged in mining, beneficiating, or otherwise preparing metallic and non-metallic minerals, including coal	Mining of critical minerals needed for the battery supply chains and other renewable energy applications
	Support activities	2,100	Establishments engaged in providing support services, on a contract or fee basis, for mining and quarrying, as well as oil and gas extraction, including exploration for minerals other than oil and gas	Contracted support services for critical minerals mining such as drilling, blasting, draining, and exploration

[19] Government of Canada, *Canadian Sustainable Jobs Act*, S.C. 2024, c. 13. https://lois-laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-23.25/FullText.html

Category (NAICS)	Industry	Job openings	Description	Possible associated sustainable jobs
Utilities		6,000	Establishments engaged in operating electric, gas and water utilities (generation, transmission, control and distribution of electricity)	Operation and maintenance of renewable energy infrastructure, including production, storage, transmission and distribution
Construction	Heavy and civil engineering construction	5,900	Establishments that construct entire engineering projects (e.g., highways and dams) and specialty trade contractors whose primary activity is producing specific component for such projects	Construction of renewable utility infrastructure such as power lines, as well as land-clearing activities that can support public green space or green buildings
	Specialty trade contractors	45,800	Establishments engaged in trade activities generally needed in the construction of buildings and structures, such as masonry, painting, or electrical work	Construction and retrofit of green buildings in residential and non-residential sectors
	Residential building construction	30,900	Establishments engaged in the construction or remodelling and renovation of single-family and multi-family residential buildings	
	Non-residential building construction	4,600	Establishments engaged in the construction (including new work, additions and major alterations) of industrial, commercial and institutional buildings	
Manufacturing	Wood product manufacturing	4,500	Establishments engaged in manufacturing products from wood, including sawing logs into lumber, making plywood or engineered wood products, and making other wood products like millwork	Manufacturing mass timber or other sustainable wood products

Category (NAICS)	Industry	Job openings	Description	Possible associated sustainable jobs
	Primary metal manufacturing	2,600	Establishments engaged in smelting and refining metals from ore or scrap, including creating iron, aluminum, or other metal ingots (blocks of pure metal to be later used for casting or forging)	Processing of critical minerals like high-purity iron, aluminum, copper, or nickel, many of which are important for clean technology applications
	Fabricated metal product manufacturing	4,100	Establishments engaged in creating all types of metal products, from cutlery to structural components	Manufacturing parts and implements that are important for building clean technology and infrastructure
	Machinery manufacturing	5,200	Establishments engaged in manufacturing machinery for commercial and industrial purposes	Manufacturing of clean technology such as wind turbines and heat pumps, as well as machinery to support other clean economy industries like construction
	Transportation equipment manufacturing (excluding shipbuilding)	2,000	Establishments engaged in manufacturing vehicles like cars, trains, planes, and ships	Manufacturing of electric and hybrid light-, medium-, and heavy-duty vehicles
Retail trade	Motor vehicle and parts dealers	9,500	Establishments engaged in retailing motor vehicles	Includes sales of electric and hybrid vehicles and parts
Professional, scientific & technical services	Architectural, engineering and related services	20,600	Establishments engaged in structural design, building inspection, surveying, and other design services	Designing and engineering buildings compliant with net-zero building codes and other energy-efficient building design
Other services (except public administration)	Automotive repair and maintenance	5,800	Establishments engaged in repairing and maintaining cars, trucks, vans, and trailers	Repairing and maintaining electric and hybrid vehicles and parts

STEM employment has grown rapidly in recent years, with clean technology jobs in B.C. increasing from 34,000 in 2014 to 52,000 in 2024.[20] Below we outline the trades and STEM occupations expected to be most in demand, many of which overlap with the occupations and associated skillsets required for the clean economy — from carpenters who construct green building frames to electrical and mechanical engineers who design electric vehicles.

Table 2. Ten-year forecast of demand in skilled trades (>1,000 openings)

Description (NOC)	Job openings
Carpenters	10,420
Construction trades helpers and labourers	10,030
Heavy-equipment operators	4,490
Electricians (except industrial and power system)	3,930
Welders and related machine operators	3,110
Plumbers	2,900
Construction millwrights and industrial mechanics	2,760
Painters and decorators	2,760
Heavy-duty equipment mechanics	2,350
Landscape and horticulture technicians and specialists	1,420
Heating, refrigeration and air conditioning mechanics	1,380
Plasterers, drywall installers and finishers, and lathers	1,360
Industrial electricians	1,040
Roofers and shinglers	1,010

[20] Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada, "Employment in the environment and clean technology products sector," modified May 20, 2025. https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/clean-growth-hub/en/employment-environmental-and-clean-technology-products-sector

Table 3. Ten-year forecast of demand in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (>1,000 openings)

Description (NOC)	Job openings
Civil engineers	3,920
Electrical and electronics engineers	2,930
Engineering managers	2,580
Electrical and electronics engineering technologists and technicians	2,280
Mechanical engineers	2,280
Contractors and supervisors, electrical trades and telecommunications occupations	1,760
Mechanical engineering technologists and technicians	1,340
Civil engineering technologists and technicians	1,030

While the most recent available projections indicate that B.C.'s clean energy economy is poised for growth, the economic conditions and policy environment that underpin those projections have shifted significantly, requiring updated modelling with revised assumptions. Analyzing clean economy job trends is complicated by challenges with data classification and granularity. The NOC and NAICS assign codes to each of their categories but do not differentiate between clean and conventional work. For instance, wind turbine technicians and solar panel installers do not have distinct codes, but instead are classified under power systems operators (NOC 92100) and residential and commercial installers (NOC 73200), respectively.[21] Moreover, many trades, such as HVAC mechanics, work on a contract basis, meaning that their work may span both conventional systems and retrofit projects. This variability can make it difficult to determine whether these occupations should be classified as clean economy jobs. Collectively, these challenges make it harder to quantify how clean industries are contributing to economic growth and communicate opportunities in the clean energy economy to decision-makers and the broader public.

[21] Electricity Human Resources Council, *Electricity in Demand: Labour market insights* (2024). https://ehrc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Electricity-in-Demand-Labour-Market-Insights.pdf

3.2 Job vacancies and labour shortages

Globally, skilled trades make up 25% of energy workers,[22] but are also the most significant bottleneck for expansion.[23] The International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates that worldwide, six in ten of the energy-related occupations with the most acute shortages are skilled trades, such as electricians.[24] For established technologies like wind and solar, which are being built out rapidly, tradespeople like installers and technicians are in much higher demand than professionals like engineers, underscoring the importance of trades in growing the clean energy economy.[25] However, trades are facing a shortage as demand for skilled workers increases across the country. B.C. is no exception.[26] It has had one of the highest job vacancy rates of any province for the past decade (see Figure 1), at 3.5% as of Q2 2025.[27] The following are a few of the notable trends in the province:

- The **construction** industry in particular has consistently had a 2–4% higher vacancy rate than the Canadian average for the past decade.
- In **utilities** (electricity, water, and gas), the vacancy rate has increased significantly and the gap with the Canadian average has widened to between 1% and 3% since 2022.
- The vacancy rate in **manufacturing** has remained around 0.5% above the Canadian average for the past decade. This includes the wood, auto and metals manufacturing downstream of the natural resource industries highlighted in this report.
- Vacancies in **forestry and mining** are generally more volatile, sometimes staying near the Canadian average, and at other times diverging by as much as 2% above or below, but overall following national trends.

[22] International Energy Agency, *World Energy Employment 2025* (2025). https://iea.blob.core.windows.net/assets/e5b9e908-26fe-4228-8978-e4ee36c555ed/WorldEnergyEmployment2025.pdf

[23] International Energy Agency, *World Energy Outlook 2025* (2025). https://iea.blob.core.windows.net/assets/71bc1da5-4ee8-41a3-9b2f-d82338841959/WorldEnergyOutlook2025.pdf

[24] *World Energy Outlook 2025*.

[25] *World Energy Employment 2025*, 32.

[26] Delphi Group, *British Columbia's Workforce Readiness for a Clean Economy Future: Industry Strategy* (2020), 33. https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/121/2024/04/BC-Clean-Economy-Workforce-Industry-Strategy-edited.pdf

[27] Statistics Canada, "Table 14-10-0442-01: Job vacancies, payroll employees, job vacancy rate, and average offered hourly wage by industry sub-sector, quarterly, unadjusted for seasonality," spreadsheet, December 16, 2025. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=1410044201

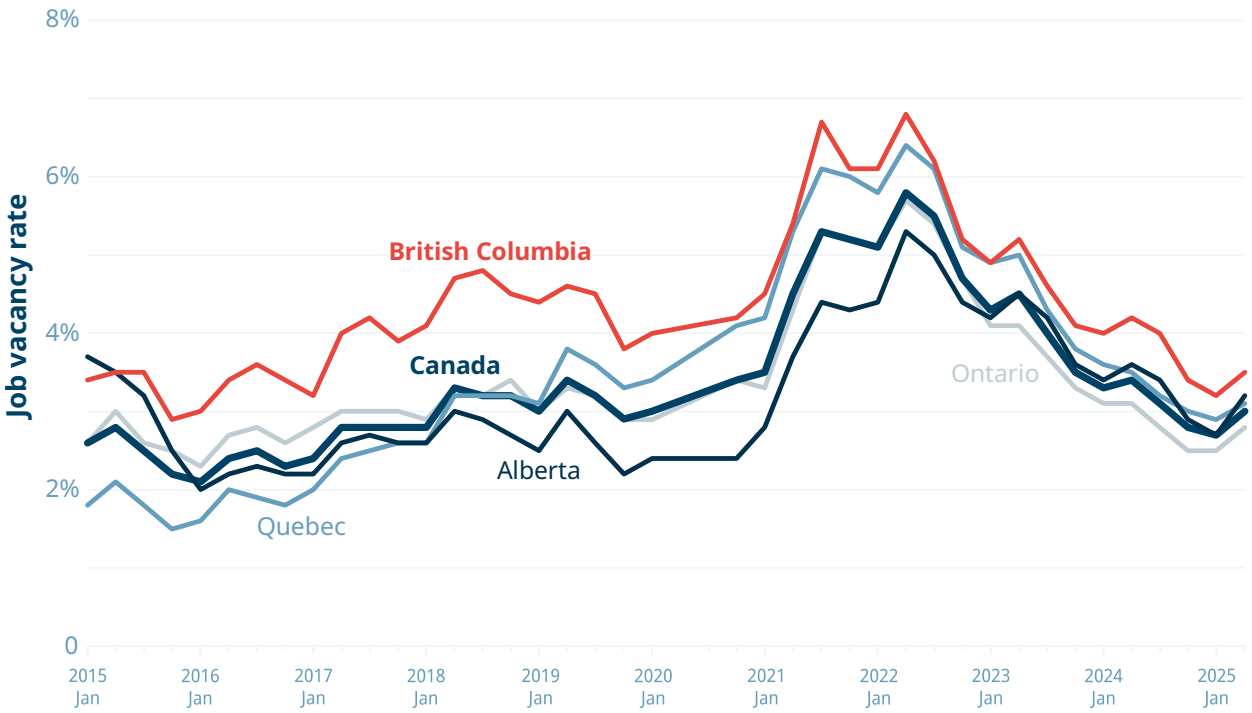


Figure 1. Vacancy rates across all industries in B.C. and Canada, 2015–2025

Data source: Statistics Canada[28]

This shortage in trade vacancies is expected to balloon by the end of the decade given the province's age demographics. As of July 2026, 20.3% of B.C.'s labour force was over the age of 55, compared to 19.7% for the rest of Canada.[29] As baby boomers continue to retire, the number of retirees will grow significantly, leaving further vacancies in every industry. For trades, where skills are passed down from journeyperson to apprentice, the formation of an experience vacuum could lead to the loss of important skills and institutional knowledge.[30] Despite high vacancies, B.C. has consistently low unemployment, sitting at 5.6% in 2024 compared to 6.3% federally.[31] This indicates that one of the province's key challenges is simply attracting enough talent.

Job quality drives recruitment and retention. High wages, work-life balance, benefits, and a positive working environment support workforce stability. Increasingly, Canadians value work-

[28] "Table 14-10-0442-01."

[29] Statistics Canada, "Table 14-10-0017-01: Labour force characteristics by gender and detailed age group, monthly, unadjusted for seasonality (x 1,000)," spreadsheet, August 7, 2026. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1710000501

[30] Helen Goodland, Kelly Walsh, Albert Lam, Ben Clark, Sayemin Naheen, Kevin Hanvey, *BC Energy Step Code Capacity Study* (Scius Advisory, Delphi Group, Omicron, 2021), 68. https://web.archive.org/web/20250423150946/https://energystepcode.ca/app/uploads/sites/257/2021/09/BCESC-Capacity-Study-07_07_2021.pdf

[31] "Table 14-10-0416-01."

life balance and meaningful work over high-level job titles. Young people especially seek purpose-driven work opportunities, with 87% of Generation Z job seekers in B.C. preferring to work for socially or environmentally responsible companies.[32] At the same time, young job seekers are motivated by financial concerns,[33] particularly in B.C., where the cost of living is high and purchasing power is among the lowest in the country.[34]

3.3 Training capacity and approaches

While B.C. possesses well-established post-secondary institutions and apprenticeship systems, the push for new clean energy projects and rapid development of specialized technologies are placing increasing pressure on existing training pipelines. Realizing the benefits of these projects, including improved affordability and energy security, will require the education system to scale quickly enough to meet the surge in demand for a low-carbon workforce.

Colleges, universities and technical institutes have seen declining government funding across Canada in recent decades.[35] New federal caps on study and work permits for international students have eroded a major source of revenue for these institutions, resulting in program cuts, staff layoffs and reduced training capacity.[36,37]

A lack of flexible and responsive training is a consistent issue. Energy-efficient, low-carbon and climate-resilient technologies in all sectors are progressing quickly, leading to greater demand for workers with complex problem-solving and critical thinking skills, as well as other transferable skills.[38] In a 2020 industry survey of B.C. employers across diverse industries, only

[32] Employment and Social Development Canada, *Building a Modern 21st Century Workforce: Discussion Paper* (2024). https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/esdc-edsc/documents/programs/training-agreements/workforce-summit/wf-discussion-paper/21st-century-workforce-summit-en.pdf

[33] Electricity Human Resources Council, *Power Move: Positioning the Electricity Sector as an Employer of Choice* (2024). https://ehrc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Power_Move-Report-EHRC-2024.pdf

[34] Brandon Landry, Ryan Macdonald, Peter Tarassoff, and Jenny Watt, *Purchasing Power Parities for Consumption and Household Income Across the Canadian Provinces and Territories* (Statistics Canada, 2025). https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/11-633-x/11-633-x2025003-eng.pdf?st=rqwJbtyP

[35] Jackie Pichette, *Testing Times: Fending off a crisis in Canadian postsecondary education* (RBC Thought Leadership, 2025). https://www.rbc.com/en/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2025/03/Testing-Times-Fending-off-a-crisis-in-Canadian-postsecondary-education-RBC.pdf

[36] Colleges and Institutes Canada, "Colleges and Institutes Speak Out on the Community Impact of International Student Policy Reforms," November 25, 2024. https://www.collegesinstitutes.ca/colleges-and-institutes-speak-out-on-the-community-impact-of-international-student-policy-reforms/

[37] Universities Canada, "Universities Canada's submission to the Standing Committee on citizenship and immigration," December 19, 2024. https://univcan.ca/publication/universities-canadas-submission-to-the-standing-committee-on-citizenship-and-immigration/

[38] *British Columbia's Workforce Readiness for a Clean Economy Future: Industry Strategy, 27.*

39% said that they were mostly or extremely satisfied with B.C.'s post-secondary institutions' ability to understand and meet their training needs.[39]

Employers may be well positioned to offer or sponsor targeted training most closely aligned to their needs. Such training is incentivized through the B.C. Employer Training Grant, which subsidizes up to 80% of training costs for employees and prospective hires.[40] However, this training subsidy cannot be used for long-term training or degree and diploma programs. In practice, employer-delivered training is more often used for requisite short-term training like first aid rather than long-term certificate programs that equip workers with transferable skills.[41] Without the ability to respond to industry trends, training institutions risk producing graduates who are unequipped to meet employers' needs, while learners lack clarity on the skills required for employment and the courses they should enrol in.[42] This further highlights the need for clarity from employers, stronger collaboration with training providers, and closer partnerships between trades and training institutions.[43]

3.4 Rural labour market challenges

Rural and northern communities tend to be less economically diverse and more reliant on natural resource industries, leaving them more exposed to global market volatility.[44] Boom-and-bust cycles in these regions can lead to widespread layoffs and subsequent ripple effects such as population out-migration, which can deplete regional talent pools. Local jobs across clean economy sectors are often in the trades, while higher-paid professionals like engineers tend to be located at company headquarters in urban areas.[45]

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[39] *British Columbia's Workforce Readiness for a Clean Economy Future: Industry Strategy*, 32.

[40] WorkBC, "B.C. Employer Training Grant." https://www.workbc.ca/find-loans-and-grants/industry-and-employers/bc-employer-training-grant

[41] Abigail Jackson, Rachel Samson, and Ricardo Chejfec, *Resilient Workers, Resilient Communities: The Need for Place-Based Skills Development* (Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2025). https://irpp.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Resilient-Workers-Resilient-Communities.pdf

[42] *BC Energy Step Code Capacity Study*, 5.

[43] Greater Vancouver Board of Trade, *Solving B.C.'s Workforce Challenges: Preparing for the Jobs of Today and Tomorrow* (2023), 27. https://www.boardoftrade.com/files/advocacy/2023-labour-report/solving-bcs-workforce-shortage.pdf

[44] Rachel Samson, Abigail Jackson and Ricardo Chefjec, *Empowering Community-Led Transformation Strategies: Government-backed community development plans are most likely to succeed* (Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2025). https://irpp.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Empowering-Community-Led-Transformation-Strategies.pdf

[45] Delphi Group, *BC Clean Economy Workforce Readiness Project: Phase 2 Labour Market Information Research – Summary Report* (2020), 35, 56, 82, 121. https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/121/2024/04/CleanBC-LMI-Summary-Report-FINAL_May-14-2020.pdf

Major projects that occur in resource-based areas, such as energy infrastructure projects, drive employment during the construction phase, but these temporary jobs are often filled by non-local workers due to insufficient skilled workers locally.[46] This limits the extent to which workers' earnings circulate within local economies, reducing the broader benefits that residents derive from clean economy jobs.

Rural areas have less access to training due to constrained educational capacity. Post-secondary institutes exist in every region of B.C., with most concentrated in the Lower Mainland. The regions vary significantly in their enrolment capacity, with B.C.'s four northern PSIs[47] having an average of 15.1 enrolments per 1000 people compared to 37.4 enrolments per 1000 across southern institutions.[48] Northern institutions also serve much larger and more sparsely populated areas, resulting in greater travel times and expenses. For a student in Vancouver, class could be a SkyTrain ride away, while someone on the North Coast may need to leave their community, often at their own expense.

Delivering training in remote areas can be difficult and expensive, especially for programs offered to only a small number of students.[49] While remote learning can be used for some kinds of education, in-person training is often essential for trades. Some post-secondary institutions offer mobile training, whereby instructors visit remote communities to provide short-term programs, but delivery is costly for institutions. Existing post-secondary funding shortfalls greatly exacerbate these challenges to delivering rural training.

Rural areas may also lack specialized workers, including those needed for building retrofits and EV maintenance. Some rural areas do not have the capacity to develop or adopt high-efficiency standards, and many struggle to find qualified energy advisors.[50] This challenge is amplified by a lack of local training institutions. Because northern and remote regions tend to have larger Indigenous populations, Indigenous people are more likely to have to travel or move to access training, especially in skilled trades. Further, workers who develop skills compatible with key clean energy technologies often find work more easily in urban centres.[51]

[46] *British Columbia's Workforce Readiness for a Clean Economy Future: Industry Strategy*, 34.

[47] Coast Mountain College, College of New Caledonia, Northern Lights College, and University of Northern B.C.

[48] Author's own calculations based on fiscal year 2023/24 enrolment and 2021 census population counts.

[49] Mercer Pommer and Megan Gordon, *Northern Talent, Clean Future* (Pembina Institute, 2026). https://www.pembina.org/sites/default/files/2026-07/Northern_Talent%2C_Clean_Future_June_2026_Final.pdf

[50] *BC Clean Economy Workforce Readiness Project: Phase 2 Labour Market Information Research*, 56.

[51] *BC Energy Step Code Capacity Study*, 72.

3.5 Equity

3.5.1 Gender equity

Achieving gender equity in energy and resource industries is a challenge as many trades are male-dominated, with sectors like clean power, green building, and clean transportation all employing over 80% men.[52] This imbalance reflects multiple barriers to entry for women: from discouragement at the outset, to a lack of role models and mentors as apprentices, to discriminatory hiring and bullying as journeypersons, all leading to lower training completion rates.[53] Many women in the trades describe a hostile work environment, with 42% reporting bullying and harassment as a significant barrier to success and 14% reporting sexual assault.[54] Entering or advancing in the workplace can be difficult as well, with 46% of women reporting discriminatory hiring and 36% reporting fewer opportunities for advancement.[55]

Gendered expectations play a role in keeping women out of trades, with 44% of women reporting that balancing work with other family responsibilities was a major barrier.[56] For most trades-based industries examined in this report (e.g., construction, manufacturing, utilities, transportation, mining and forestry), women work more hours per week than the average for women across all industries — 5.8 hours more in the case of mining and forestry.[57] What is more, women who are able to find work in the trades in B.C. experience a significant pay gap, earning only 74% as much as men, below the provincial median across all occupations (78%) and the national median (80%).[58] Young women especially tend to rank pay as their top priority, followed by skills development, making these career choices even less attractive.[59]

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[52] *British Columbia's Workforce Readiness for a Clean Economy Future: Industry Strategy*, 36.

[53] David Gyarmati, Basia Pakula, Cam Nguyen, Dominique Leonard, *Enhancing the Retention and Advancement of Women in Trades in British Columbia: Final Report* (Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 2017), 33. https://www.workbc.ca/sites/default/files/Construction_Retention_and_Advancement_of_Women_in_Trades_Feb-2017.pdf

[54] *Enhancing the Retention and Advancement of Women in Trades in British Columbia: Final Report*, 50.

[55] *Enhancing the Retention and Advancement of Women in Trades in British Columbia: Final Report*, 51.

[56] *Enhancing the Retention and Advancement of Women in Trades in British Columbia: Final Report*, 51.

[57] Statistic includes forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas.

Statistics Canada, "Table 14-10-0037-01: Actual hours worked by industry, annual," May 8, 2026. https://doi.org/10.25318/1410003701-eng

[58] Median weekly gender wage ratio in 2025.

Statistics Canada, "Employee Wages by Occupation, Annual," spreadsheet, January 9, 2026. https://doi.org/10.25318/1410041701-eng

[59] Manpower Group, *Closing the Skills Gap: What Workers Want* (2020). https://esinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/MPG_WhatWorkersWant_2020.pdf

Combined, these barriers make trades much less attractive as a career to women and make retention difficult, contributing further to labour shortages. Improving the recruitment of women has substantial potential to close labour gaps in male-dominated trades.

3.5.2 Indigenous equity

Approximately 290,000 people across the province identify with one or more Indigenous identities, comprising 5.9% of the population, higher than the Canadian average of 5%.[60] In northern areas, the First Nations population is significant, making up 30.1% of the Nechako region and 62.8% of the North Coast region.[61] These regions are more reliant on natural resource industries and are home to current and proposed energy and critical minerals projects, many of which are on Indigenous lands.

Indigenous workers are well represented in mining jobs, but underrepresented in leadership.[62] Indigenous workers, as well as other racialized groups and people with language barriers, have struggled to break into these higher-paying professions due to a lack of culturally sensitive and inclusive training.[63] This makes partnerships with Indigenous nations and increased inclusion of Indigenous workers vital to clean growth and community development.

Developing and scaling training that focuses on the unique needs of women and Indigenous workers is an important part of closing economic disparities and labour shortages in the clean energy economy. An effective workforce plan will need to emphasize recruiting, training, and retaining these equity-deserving populations.

[60] Statistics Canada, "Table 98-10-0292-01: Indigenous identity population by gender and age: Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations," spreadsheet, November 15, 2023. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810029201

[61] British Columbia Assembly of First Nations, "First Nations in BC." https://www.bcafn.ca/first-nations-bc

[62] Mining Industry Human Resources Council, *Equity Deserving Groups in Canada's Mining Industry 2024* (2024). https://mihr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Mihr-Equity-Deserving-Groups-2024-EN.pdf

[63] *British Columbia's Workforce Readiness for a Clean Economy Future: Industry Strategy*, 35.

4. The state of B.C.'s clean energy labour market by sector

This section highlights five industries in B.C. critically important to the clean energy transition and future economy: clean electricity, clean buildings, clean transportation, critical minerals, and forestry and mass timber. Understanding trends in these sectors can inform industrial policies and workforce development needs. These industries represent some of B.C.'s highest sources of emissions and greatest opportunities for decarbonization. According to recent projections, buildings, transportation, and electricity are potential drivers of significant economic growth and employment, while mining and forestry contribute to key domestic and international supply chains and are major employers in northern and rural communities.

4.1 Clean electricity

Summary

- **Workforce:** Utilities (including electricity, water, and gas) employed 17,900 people in 2024, but data on subsectors is unavailable due to confidentiality requirements under the *Statistics Act.*
- **Geography:** Most jobs, especially planning and technology jobs, are concentrated in the Lower Mainland, where BC Hydro and Fortis are headquartered. Trades and engineering jobs are spread across the province.
- **Associated professions:** Power line workers, electrical and power systems engineers, facility operations managers, construction workers, heavy-equipment operators, project supervisors, procurement managers.
- **Job quality indicators:** Public utilities are unionized with good pay, benefits and DEI initiatives.
- **Subsectors:** Power generation (utility-scale hydro, wind, solar, geothermal), distributed energy resources, energy infrastructure.
- **Labour market challenges:** High vacancy rate, concentration of jobs in urban areas, skill shortages in rural areas, and growing demand for workers with specialized skills needed for emerging technologies.
- **Opportunities driven by policy direction:** Calls for power, Power Smart commitments, northern grid infrastructure, Site C community benefits agreement.

Because most electricity in B.C. comes from hydro, with small amounts from biomass, wind and natural gas, power generation makes up less than 1% of the province's emissions. As industries, businesses and homes electrify, electricity demand could grow by 15% or more by 2030 compared to 2022[64] and more than double by 2050,[65] which will require developing more renewable energy sources and energy infrastructure.

4.1.1 Power generation

B.C.'s utilities are mostly operated by two major providers, BC Hydro and Fortis BC, and supplemented by many smaller private firms and communities. In Forbes' annual ranking of the country's top employers, based on a survey of over 37,000 workers, both rank very high, with BC Hydro at #7 and Fortis at #46.[66] According to a survey of 1,800 current and prospective electricity sector employees by Electricity Human Resources Canada, 82% agreed that the electricity sector offers good pay and benefits, with 76% also agreeing that the work was interesting and fulfilling.[67] The sector is highly paid, at $51.63 per hour in 2025,[68] and highly unionized at 62.8%.[69]

BC Hydro in particular has focused on diversity, monitoring the representation of equity groups and tracking progress on recruitment, hiring and promotion targets, which has led to a workforce comprising 30% women,[70] above the Canadian average of 24.4%.[71] However, women remain less likely to have a positive view of the electricity sector than men, and young people are

[64] Government of British Columbia, *Powering our Future: BC's Clean Energy Strategy* (2024). https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/electricity-alternative-energy/community-energy-solutions/powering_our_future_-_bcs_clean_energy_strategy_2024.pdf

[65] Canada's Energy Regulator projects that demand would increase by 1.96 times under a current measures scenario, 2.44 times under a Canada net-zero scenario, and 2.22 times under a global net-zero scenario

Canada Energy Regulator, "Canada's Energy Future 2023: Energy Supply and Demand Projections to 2050 – Data Supplement," modified November 29, 2023. https://www.cer-rec.gc.ca/en/data-analysis/canada-energy-future/2023-data-supplement/

[66] Based on criteria like compensation, flexibility, training opportunities, and leadership programs.

Rachel Rabkin Peachman, "Canada's Best Employers 2026," *Forbes*, January 20, 2026. https://www.forbes.com/lists/canada-best-employers/

[67] *Power Move*.

[68] Statistics Canada, "Table 14-10-0064-01: Employee wages by industry, annual," January 9, 2026. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=1410006401

[69] As of January 2026.

Statistics Canada, "Table 14-10-0069-01: Union coverage by industry, monthly, unadjusted for seasonality (x 1,000)," February 6, 2026. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=1410006901

[70] *Power Move*.

[71] Statistics Canada, "Table 14-10-0023-01: Labour force characteristics by industry, annual," spreadsheet, January 9, 2026. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1410002301

more likely to have safety concerns with the work.[72] This indicates that recruitment could be improved by addressing the concerns behind low participation rates, as well as increasing public awareness around the positive aspects of work in the sector.

Due to confidentiality requirements under the Statistics Act, detailed utilities employment numbers are unavailable, but B.C.'s broader utilities sector, which includes electricity, natural gas distribution, and water systems, employed 17,900 people in 2024.[73] A 2022 report by the PLACE Centre predicts that electricity and low-emissions energy could create between 3,000 and 7,000 jobs between 2020 and 2030 in B.C.,[74] and Clean Energy Canada projects that the clean energy supply sector could employ 27,800 people by 2050 in a net-zero scenario, more than quadrupling in size from 2023.[75]

In 2024, most jobs (10,700) in the utilities sector were in the Lower Mainland,[76] where BC Hydro and Fortis are headquartered,[77] with clean power jobs in this area being largely associated with planning, project design and technology. [78] Meanwhile, engineers, power line workers and power system electricians are more evenly distributed across the province,[79] with another 3,200 workers concentrated in the Thompson Okanagan region, where Fortis maintains its electricity headquarters in Kelowna.[80] Due to CleanBC's prioritization of rural and remote renewable projects, as well as the planned expansion of energy infrastructure into the Northeast and North Coast, rural employment in clean power is expected to increase.[81,82]

[72] *Power Move*.

[73] Government of British Columbia, "Annual Employment and Unemployment Rates by Industry for British Columbia and Economic Region," spreadsheet, March 2025. https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/466ddecd-2701-4e97-84fb-df60bd5aca95/resource/b8098cfe-d6b4-49d7-ae1e-b7588e9692bd

[74] Mohsina Atiq, Hem Dholakia, John McNally, and Nicholas Renzetti, *As the weather changes: How Canadian climate action and clean growth could be affected by increased economic disruptions and decreased trade globally* (2022). https://placecentre.smartprosperity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/As-the-Weather-Changes-1.pdf

[75] *A Pivotal Moment*.

[76] "Annual Employment and Unemployment Rates by Industry for British Columbia and Economic Region."

[77] BC Hydro's headquarters is in Vancouver and Fortis' head office for gas is in Surrey.

[78] *BC Clean Economy Workforce Readiness Project: Phase 2 Labour Market Information Research*, 35.

[79] *BC Clean Economy Workforce Readiness Project: Phase 2 Labour Market Information Research*, 35.

[80] "Annual Employment and Unemployment Rates by Industry for British Columbia and Economic Region."

[81] *BC Clean Economy Workforce Readiness Project: Phase 2 Labour Market Information Research*, 36.

[82] Natural Resources Canada, *British Columbia Regional Energy and Resource Table: Framework for Collaboration on the Path to Net-Zero* (2023), 9–10. https://natural-resources.canada.ca/sites/nrcan/files/climate-change/BC-regional-table-collaboration-framework_2023-06.pdf

4.1.1.1 Hydroelectricity

Hydroelectricity provides 91% of B.C.'s power and is a well-established sector in the province. The province has 31 major hydroelectric generation stations located in the following power regions: Columbia Region, Peace Region, Vancouver Island, Lower Mainland and Coast.[83] Many stations date back to the early- to mid-1900s and require ongoing maintenance. As of 2026, BC Hydro has 48 ongoing projects of varying scales to upgrade, expand, and maintain these facilities and other infrastructure, such as substations and transmission and distribution systems across the province, creating a steady source of work for utility workers.[84]

Employment profile: Site C hydroelectric dam

Since the start of its construction in 2015, the Site C dam has generated thousands of jobs in the construction trades, engineering, security, management, administration and other roles, all located in the Northeast/Peace Region. Most hiring was done by companies awarded contracts to work on the project, with a small number of BC Hydro workers directly employed in roles such as project managers, construction managers and engineers.[85]

At its peak employment level of 6,069 workers during construction in June 2023, 19% of contractors were from the Peace River Regional District.[86] While many of these jobs involved mobile work, with workers travelling for shifts from across the province, country, and internationally, local hiring was a priority, with BC Hydro investing $1.5 million into local skills and training programs, among other social benefits.[87] However, the project was criticized by organized labour for under-delivering on promises to employ and train local apprentices.[88]

The project became fully operational in August 2025 and construction jobs have steadily wound down to 958 in November 2025.[89] The expected number of ongoing, permanent operations and maintenance jobs for Site C is not publicly available.

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[83] BC Hydro, "Our Facilities." https://www.bchydro.com/energy-in-bc/operations/our-facilities.html

[84] BC Hydro, "Projects." https://www.bchydro.com/energy-in-bc/projects.html

[85] Site C Clean Energy Project, "Jobs & Business Opportunities." https://www.sitecproject.com/job-opportunities/how-to-apply

[86] Site C Clean Energy Project, "Site C Monthly Employment Statistics." https://www.sitecproject.com/document-library/employment-statistics

[87] Site C Clean Energy Project, "Regional and Community Benefits," April 2018. https://www.sitecproject.com/sites/default/files/info-sheet-regional-and-community-benefits-april-2018.pdf

[88] Zoë Ducklow, "Site C Is Shortchanging BC Workers and Apprentices, Say Unions," April 4, 2019. https://thetyee.ca/News/2019/04/04/Site-C-Shortchanging-BC-Workers/

[89] Site C Clean Energy Project, "Site C Employment by Month: November 2025," November 2025. https://www.sitecproject.com/sites/default/files/November%202025%20Workforce%20Report.pdf

As of 2021, there were 68 run-of-river projects awarded to independent proponents through power purchase agreements that supply electricity to BC Hydro.[90] These projects are widely distributed across the province and create jobs for locals and labour-commuters in both construction (into the hundreds depending on the size of the projects) and operations.[91] We estimate that there are 377 permanent operations jobs created by run-of-river sites across B.C.[92]

4.1.1.2 Solar and wind

As B.C.'s anticipated electricity demand continues to increase, the province has turned its focus to renewables other than hydroelectricity, approving nine new wind projects and one solar project through its 2024 call for power, followed by four additional wind projects through its 2025 call.

Job generating initiative: B.C. Hydro's calls for power

In 2024, B.C. Hydro made a call for power with the goal of adding 5% to its current supply of electricity.[93] This call resulted in one solar and nine wind projects with 49–51% Indigenous ownership, which are expected to create approximately 2,000 construction jobs and 5,000 gigawatt-hours of power annually.[94] In 2025, the province issued another call for power, awarding contracts to four new wind projects that together make up another 3,500 gigawatt-hours and could create another 1,500 construction jobs per year.[95] These projects will be a source of job growth in more rural, northern, or fossil fuel–dependent areas like the Nechako and Peace River regions, which have struggled to keep up with the energy transition and are less well-connected to infrastructure.

[90] Clean Energy BC, "Run-of-River". https://cleanenergybc.org/sector/run-of-river/

[91] Government of British Columbia, "Tretheway Creek, Shovel Creek and Big Silver Creek hydroelectric projects," media release, August 20, 2012. https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2012ENV0051-001193

[92] Author's own calculation, assuming an average of 0.19 jobs per MW × total MW (1,983 MW) of run-of-river hydropower in BC.

[93] Government of British Columbia, "BC Hydro receives strong response to call for clean electricity to power economy," media release, September 18, 2024. https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2024EMLI0068-001550

[94] BC Hydro, "The Participants." https://www.bchydro.com/work-with-us/selling-clean-energy/2024-call-for-power/participants.html

Government of British Columbia, "B.C. boosts clean-energy supply, drives economic growth," media release, July 28, 2025. https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2025ECS0033-000724

[95] Government of British Columbia, "Strong response to 2025 call for power, delivering clean, affordable energy," media release, May 13, 2026. https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2026ECS0014-000552

Solar and wind energy companies tend to be smaller and more reliant on contract workers, which can make hiring and retention challenging and limit workers' ability to envision career progression.[96]

4.1.1.3 Geothermal

Canada does not produce utility-scale geothermal power but B.C. has identified 16 potential sites where projects could be built.[97] While a lack of policy support and high up-front risks have made starting these projects a difficult proposition, some projects are underway and could be nearing completion.[98] One promising project to transform a gas field in Fort Nelson First Nation, the Tu Deh-Kah Geothermal project,[99] is 100% Indigenous community-owned and currently in its design phase.[100] If completed, the project is expected to create 25 to 30 jobs that draw on transferrable skills held by oil and gas workers with drill rig experience, a factor of particular importance in the Northeast, where the economy has historically been driven by the fossil fuel industry.[101] For Indigenous communities like Fort Nelson, these types of projects can also be a path to energy sovereignty. In order to unlock the full workforce potential of geothermal energy, however, developing worker supports and training programs will be necessary, as none currently exist in the province.

4.1.2 Electrical infrastructure

BC Hydro's 10-year capital plan includes expansion projects for the province's grid to connect new industry and underserved remote and northern areas.[102] These include transmission lines to support northern infrastructure, installing new substations and upgrading generating facilities like dams. For instance, the proposed North Coast Transmission Line, which was

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[96] Electricity Human Resources Council, *Winds of Change: Labour Market Dynamics in Renewable Energy* (2025). https://ehrc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/EHRC-Winds-of-Change-2025.pdf

[97] Environment and Climate Change Canada, *British Columbia: Clean electricity snapshot 2022–2024* (2024). https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/weather/climatechange/climate-plan/clean-electricity/overview-british-columbia.html

[98] Clean Energy Canada, "Media Brief: Geothermal energy and its potential in Canada," July 26, 2020. https://cleanenergycanada.org/media-brief-geothermal-energy-and-its-potential-in-canada/

[99] "Tu Deh-Kah Geothermal." https://tudehkah.com/about

[100] Matteo Cimellaro, "A First Nation's geothermal project shows how fossil fuels can power the next seven generations," *Canada's National Observer*, July 15, 2024. https://www.nationalobserver.com/2024/07/15/news/first-nations-geothermal-project-shows-how-fossil-fuels-can-power-next-seven

[101] "A First Nation's geothermal project shows how fossil fuels can power the next seven generations."

[102] BC Hydro, *Power Pathway: Building B.C.'s energy future* (2024). https://www.bchydro.com/content/dam/BCHydro/customer-portal/documents/corporate/capital-plan/capital-plan-2024.pdf

recently selected by the federal government for fast-tracking,[103] would connect Prince George in central B.C. to Terrace in the west to support the north's growing industrial base. According to the provincial government, the line will power major projects in northern B.C., which are expected to generate 9,700 direct jobs.[104]

In addition to these transmission projects, both FortisBC and BC Hydro are investing in demand-side management: BC Hydro recently announced plans to invest $1 billion over three years through its Power Smart 2.0 program to provide customers with a suite of rebates and supports to improve energy efficiency.[105] This could deliver 800 megawatts of capacity savings and 2,200 gigawatt hours of annual energy savings by 2030 through greater energy efficiency and the deployment of distributed energy resources in industry, homes and businesses across B.C. The investment is expected to create as many as 3,500 jobs annually across the utility and building sectors.

4.1.3 Analysis

B.C.'s public utilities are highly regarded employers, delivering good pay and benefits, as well as successful equity initiatives. However, labour shortages persist, indicating a need for increased outreach and public education about the quality of utilities jobs, especially for women. While many utilities jobs are white collar and concentrated in urban areas where utility companies are headquartered, CleanBC's plans to build out the power grid will create more jobs in rural and remote areas. For many of these areas, local renewable projects could be a source of jobs, but a lack of local expertise may make project proponents look elsewhere to bring in workers. Pairing these projects with training programs and local employment guarantees as part of community benefits agreements — such as the Site C dam project's $1.5 million investment in local skilled trades training — can ensure that economic benefits stay local. Workers from declining industries in regions impacted by the energy transition may also have pathways to re-skill into green jobs, such as former oil and gas workers moving into the geothermal sector in Fort Nelson First Nation. Further research into skill overlaps between fossil fuel-related jobs — which have previously sustained many communities — and clean energy jobs is essential to an equitable transition and may reveal new opportunities.

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[103] Amy Judd, "B.C. government fast-tracks North Coast Transmission Line," *Global News*, October 20, 2025. https://globalnews.ca/news/11486314/bc-government-fast-tracks-north-coast-transmission-line/

[104] Government of British Columbia, "New legislation powers economy with clean energy, North Coast Transmission Line," media release, October 20, 2025. https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2025ECS0044-001032

[105] Government of British Columbia, "New plan helps people save money, reduce energy use: Power Smart 2.0 is the largest conservation investment in BC Hydro's history," media release, May 19, 2026. https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2026ECS0024-000567

4.2 Clean buildings

Summary

- **Workforce:** As of 2024, 226,700 people were employed in the building construction sector; 53,700 in architectural and engineering services.
- **Geography:** Concentrated in the Lower Mainland/Southwest.
- **Associated professions:** Electricians, carpenters, plumbers, HVAC mechanics, construction workers, civil engineers, architects, building envelope specialists, energy advisors, building automation and control technicians, specialized project managers.
- **Job quality indicators:** Modest pay, seasonal and contract-based work in skilled trades occupations, low unionization, poor diversity and pay equity in trades.
- **Subsectors:** Green construction, energy retrofits.
- **Labour market challenges:** Recruitment difficulties, need for upskilling to keep pace with building standards.
- **Opportunities driven by policy direction:** Strong policy support through Step Code, which improves building standards, and Better Homes and Better Buildings programs, which subsidize retrofits.

Buildings are responsible for 14% of emissions in B.C., but increasing building efficiency and electrifying heating and cooling systems can drive major emissions reductions if achieved at scale.[106] New codes and standards incentivize the construction of green buildings, while deep energy retrofits can reduce emissions from the existing building stock.

B.C.'s building construction sector employed 226,700 people in 2024,[107] making it one of the largest sectors in the province. A further 53,700 worked in architecture, engineering and related sectors.[108] According to a 2021 Pembina Institute study, at least 21,800 workers worked in the

[106] Government of British Columbia, "Provincial inventory of greenhouse gas emissions," spreadsheet, December 3, 2025. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/climate-change/data/provincial-inventory

[107] Includes building construction (NAICS 236) and specialty trade contractors (NAICS 238).

"Annual Employment and Unemployment Rates by Industry for British Columbia and Economic Region."

[108] "Annual Employment and Unemployment Rates by Industry for British Columbia and Economic Region."

green building sector, including work beyond construction.[109] According to Clean Energy Canada, the green buildings sector could employ as many as 78,100 people by 2050 in a net-zero scenario.[110] By 2035, construction is expected to generate 8% of job openings in the province, with nearly one third created by industry expansion, including through green building initiatives.[111] However, construction has the highest vacancy rate of the industries we investigated — 3.8% as of 2025[112] — while maintaining a below-average unemployment rate of only 4%, indicating difficulty in attracting enough talent to meet labour demand.[113]

Jobs created by clean buildings are not evenly spread across the province. New green construction jobs and retrofit building jobs are concentrated in the southwest and urban areas,[114] both in terms of raw numbers and as a proportion of total workforce. In 2024, nearly 9% of jobs in the Thompson Okanagan, North Coast, Nechako and Northeast regions were in building construction, with the lowest proportion of employment in the Cariboo region at nearly 7%.[115] Because of the availability of experts and easier access to training in urban areas, workers in those areas are generally likelier to be prepared for increases in energy efficiency standards.[116] Conversely, rural areas will need more workforce development support to ensure that the local workforce is well trained and able to fill vacancies, especially as major projects ramp up.

The unionization rate in the construction industry is 16.1%, slightly above the rest of the private sector at 14% but far below 78.8% in the public sector.[117] Wages are modest, with a median of $37 per hour in 2025 compared to the provincial median of $32.49,[118] and while construction work has historically been a dangerous occupation, safety levels have been steadily improving, with injuries falling from 7.3 per 100 workers in 1992 to 3.3 in 2024.[119] Work hours in

[109] Including architects, engineers, and other associated professions.
Betsy Agar and Hannah Nadler, *Growth in B.C.'s green building sector spurs job creation: Increased investments will help accelerate a clean energy economy* (2021). https://www.pembina.org/reports/bc-green-building-jobs-2021-12.pdf

[110] *A Pivotal Moment*, 19.

[111] *British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2025–2035 Forecast*.

[112] Q2 2025. "Table 14-10-0442-01."

[113] "Table 14-10-0023-01."

[114] *British Columbia's Workforce Readiness for a Clean Economy Future: Industry Strategy*, 23.

[115] "Annual Employment and Unemployment Rates by Industry for British Columbia and Economic Region."

[116] *BC Energy Step Code Capacity Study*, 8.

[117] As of January 2026.

"Table 14-10-0069-01: Union coverage by industry, monthly, unadjusted for seasonality (x 1,000)."

[118] "Table 14-10-0064-01: Employee wages by industry, annual."

[119] Jami Makan, "Construction safety improving in B.C. despite high-profile incidents," *Business Intelligence for B.C.*, September 3, 2025. https://www.biv.com/news/real-estate/construction-safety-improving-in-bc-despite-high-profile-incidents-11157004

construction are 11.1% above the provincial average,[120] contributing to increased burnout, which can make recruitment difficult among young people, who tend to value work-life balance.[121] Women also face higher barriers to advancement in construction, having lower apprenticeship completion rates and retention rates, reflecting gaps not just in recruitment, but in supports for women already working.[122] Increased unionization could help mitigate some of these issues, as unionized companies retain workers more effectively and can make them feel more supported.[123]

According to modelling by the Delphi Group, the clean buildings sector is likely to experience one of the highest levels of job transformation from the energy transition, suggesting that upskilling and career development initiatives in the construction sector will be especially important.[124]

4.2.1 Green construction

As affordability concerns dominate much of the political discourse, the provincial government aims to increase the housing supply, driving demand for new residential construction that meets higher energy efficiency standards and contributes less to emissions. B.C. has committed to making all new homes net-zero energy-ready by 2032 through the BC Energy Step Code, a voluntary framework that municipalities can adopt to incrementally increase efficiency requirements in new construction.[125] The code yielded early results: between 2015 and 2020, green buildings certified in B.C. increased by 13% per year.[126] When first introduced in 2017, the Step Code was expected to create and transform thousands of project-based construction and maintenance jobs in HVAC, appliances, and lighting by 2050.[127,128] However, there are no recent estimates on the number of jobs this initiative has generated.

[120] "Table 14-10-0037-01: Actual hours worked by industry, annual."

[121] Nipun Kumarage et al., "Strategies to alleviate Canada's impending construction labour shortage: a critical review," *Canadian Journal of Civil Engineering* 51, no. 12 (2024). https://cdnsciencepub.com/doi/10.1139/cjce-2023-0486

[122] *Enhancing the Retention and Advancement of Women in Trades in British Columbia*.

[123] "Strategies to alleviate Canada's impending construction labour shortage."

[124] *British Columbia's Workforce Readiness for a Clean Economy Future: Industry Strategy*.

[125] Government of British Columbia, "BC Energy Step Code," modified June 9, 2025. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/construction-industry/building-codes-standards/bc-codes/2024-bc-codes/step-codes/energy

[126] *Growth in B.C.'s green building sector spurs job creation*.

[127] *British Columbia's Workforce Readiness for a Clean Economy Future: Industry Strategy*, 23.

[128] *A Pivotal Moment*, 10.

4.2.2 Building retrofits

Alongside facilitating new green building, the Government of B.C., BC Hydro, and FortisBC have launched numerous building retrofit programs in the residential and commercial sectors. These include CleanBC's Better Homes[129] and Better Buildings[130] programs, which provide rebates and coaching for residential and commercial energy upgrades, and the Facilities Electrification Fund,[131] which provided $84 million to subsidize the electrification of 14 large infrastructure and industrial projects.

Data on the size of the retrofitting workforce is unavailable, possibly because many workers perform both renovations and new construction without being part of a specialized retrofitting firm. According to a Delphi Group analysis of workforce supply for non-residential green retrofits, B.C. is expected to have some of the largest shortages of any province or territory in key retrofit trades like carpenters, electricians, gasfitters, glaziers and roofers.[132] The analysis also anticipates a shortfall in all types of designers and consultants.[133]

Job generating initiative: Retrofit Accelerators

In 2024, the provincial government launched its Multi-Unit Residential Building Retrofit Program to provide rebates for building owners to switch to energy-efficient technologies.[134] A joint venture with BC Hydro, the project is funded for $61 million over three years and will target multi-unit apartment buildings.

The Zero Emissions Innovation Centre (ZEIC) also launched the BC Retrofit Accelerator, with funding from Natural Resources Canada, to decarbonize 500 large buildings over three years.[135] ZEIC's program will offer property owners coaching on navigating the complexities of transitioning their HVAC systems, and aims for deeper retrofits in 125 buildings, including heat pump installation.

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[129] Better Homes BC. https://www.betterhomesbc.ca/

[130] Better Buildings BC. https://betterbuildingsbc.ca/

[131] BC Hydro, "Facilities Electrification Fund." https://www.bchydro.com/powersmart/business/programs/electrification/facilities-fund.html

[132] Delphi Group, *Green Retrofit Economy Study: Summary Report* (2022). https://www.cagbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Green-Retrofit-Economy-Study.pdf

[133] Delphi Group, *Green Retrofit Economy Study – Technical Memo: Summary of Workforce Supply* (2022). https://delphi.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Technical-Memo-Summary-of-Workforce-Supply.pdf

[134] Government of British Columbia, "Retrofitting buildings will save people money on energy bills," media release, September 17, 2024. https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2024EMLI0066-001539

[135] Zero Emissions Innovation Centre, "BC Retrofit Accelerator Launches to Kick-Start Energy Upgrades and Climate Action in BC Buildings," media release, September 18, 2024. https://www.zeic.ca/news/bc-retrofit-accelerator-launches-to-kick-start-energy-upgrades-and-climate-action-in-bc-buildings/

These programs together target both knowledge and financing gaps to building retrofits and create jobs for HVAC installation and maintenance personnel.

4.2.3 Analysis

The pace of green building construction and retrofitting in B.C. is encouraging, and has been driven by robust support from the government and public utilities. However, workforce growth is not keeping pace, with a high vacancy rate for the industry as a whole, and many of the most important construction trades — carpenters, electricians, roofers — are expected to face significant shortages. This suggests that recruitment and retention are unable to keep up with the pace of construction; poor work-life balance, low unionization, and difficulty attracting and retaining women could be contributing factors. At the same time, the existing workforce is struggling to keep up as construction jobs are transforming rapidly due to the introduction of new standards, technologies and materials. Upskilling initiatives, especially in rural and remote areas that have a less-developed base of expertise, will be important to prepare the building workforce for this evolving landscape.

4.3 Clean transportation

Summary

- **Workforce:** As of 2024, 123,200 people were employed in transportation,[136] 12,300 in transportation manufacturing,[137] 43,800 in motor vehicle and parts dealing, and 25,800 in auto repair and maintenance.[138] As of 2025, there were 9,700 transit operators,[139] and over 8,000 workers in the EV sector specifically.[140]
- **Geography:** EV design and tech hub in Vancouver; charging infrastructure expanding across the province.

[136] All transportation industries (NAICS 48), excluding postal service, couriers, and warehousing (NAICS 49). NAICS 48 includes pipeline transportation because it is aggregated with transit and sightseeing transportation as a single statistic in B.C.'s employment data.

[137] NAICS 336, including motor vehicles and parts, aerospace, rail, and ships.

[138] "Annual Employment and Unemployment Rates by Industry for British Columbia and Economic Region"

[139] *British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2025–2035 Forecast*.

[140] CleanBC Independent Review Panel, *Renewing CleanBC to improve affordability, strengthen the economy and ensure a cleaner future* (2025), 77. https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/121/2025/11/CleanBC-Independent-Review-Final-Report-November-2025.pdf

- **Associated professions:** Electrical engineers, mechanical engineers, automotive salespeople, automotive service technicians, electricians, transit operators, transport and delivery truck drivers, EV charger installers, project managers, construction supervisors.
- **Subsectors:** EV design and manufacturing, EV sales, EV maintenance and repair, charging infrastructure, public transit, commercial transport.
- **Labour market challenges:** Rapidly evolving technology and skill needs, retention of tech talent in competition with the U.S., planning challenges due to uncertain future of EVs in the province.
- **Opportunities driven by policy direction:** Increased adoption of EVs, Electric Highway charger network.

Transportation infrastructure is essential to clean industry, enabling connections across sectors. This is especially true in northern regions, where natural resource industries like mining and forestry are major employers but often lack sufficient access to transportation networks or the electricity grid.

Transportation makes up 34.4% of B.C.'s greenhouse gas emissions — the largest share of any sector[141] — and it employed 123,200 people in freight and passenger transport in 2024. Over 8,000 workers are employed at nearly 400 companies in the zero-emission vehicle sector specifically, contributing $920 million to the province's GDP.[142] Vehicle manufacturing, repair and sales are significant employers in B.C. as well: 43,800 workers in vehicle sales and parts dealing, 25,800 in repairs and maintenance, and 12,300 in transportation manufacturing.[143] EV uptake among consumers is also increasing rapidly: 22.7% of new light-duty vehicle sales were for EVs as of 2023.[144] The shift to clean transportation is expected to create temporary construction jobs from the expansion of charging infrastructure and permanent positions operating and maintaining electric vehicles.[145]

According to Clean Energy Canada, transportation could see the largest job growth of any clean energy sector in B.C. in a net-zero scenario, with jobs in the EV sector alone projected to rise from 5,100 in 2025 to 205,800 in 2050, accounting for most of the clean jobs in the province.[146]

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[141] "Provincial Inventory of greenhouse gas emissions."

[142] *Renewing CleanBC to improve affordability, strengthen the economy and ensure a cleaner future*

[143] "Annual Employment and Unemployment Rates by Industry for British Columbia and Economic Region."

[144] CleanBC, *Zero-Emission Vehicle Update 2023* (2023). https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/electricity-alternative-energy/transportation/2023_zero-emission_vehicle_update.pdf

[145] *British Columbia's Workforce Readiness for a Clean Economy Future: Industry Strategy*, 24.

[146] *A Pivotal Moment*, 19.

This is partly due to increased market penetration of EVs.[147] However, the redrawing of B.C.'s Zero Emissions Vehicles Act to reduce EV sales targets from 100% to 75% by 2035,[148] and the recent removal of the federal EV mandate in favour of greenhouse gas emissions standards,[149] calls into question the optimism of these projections.

4.3.1 EV design and manufacturing

B.C. has little current EV manufacturing or assembly in the province due to its distance from major component manufacturing hubs in Eastern Canada and Michigan.[150] While Vancouver is home to the headquarters of some EV companies, such as GreenPower Motors and Damon Motorcycles, these companies manufacture in the U.S. with parts from around the world.[151,152,153] Meanwhile, one of the only manufacturers that assembled in B.C.,[154] Vicinity Motor, went into receivership in 2024, leaving the fate of its facilities unclear.[155] These trends indicate that most EV production jobs in B.C. are likely to be in design. A key challenge will be to retain engineers, designers and entrepreneurs in-province when the EV market in the U.S. is larger and their tech talent hub is well developed and well paying.[156,157,158]

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[147] *BC Clean Economy Workforce Readiness Project: Phase 2 Labour Market Information Research*, viii.

[148] The Canadian Press, "B.C. to cut 2035 zero-emission vehicle sales mandate from 100% to 75%," *CBC*, April 1, 2026. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/bc-2035-ev-sales-mandate-electronic-vehicle-9.7150813

[149] Government of Canada, "Prime Minister Carney launches new strategy to transform Canada's auto industry," media release, February 5, 2026. https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2026/02/05/prime-minister-carney-launches-new-strategy-transform-canadas-auto

[150] Nelson Bennett, "How B.C. is building its brand in bespoke electric vehicles," *Business Intelligence for B.C.*, July 16, 2024. https://www.biv.com/news/transportation/how-bc-is-building-its-brand-in-bespoke-electric-vehicles-9224063

[151] Electric Mobility Canada, *Electrifying Progress: A complete economic outlook of the Canadian EV industry* (2025), 22. https://emc-mec.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/PUBLIC-OFFICIAL-April-10-2025-EMCs-Economic-Report_EN.pdf

[152] "How B.C. is building its brand in bespoke electric vehicles."

[153] Canadian Manufacturing, "Damon Motors advances towards commercialization for their electric motorcycle," March 12, 2024. https://www.canadianmanufacturing.com/manufacturing/damon-motors-advances-towards-commercialization-for-their-electric-motorcycle-298146/

[154] "How B.C. is building its brand in bespoke electric vehicles."

[155] Emma Jarratt, "Vicinity Motor Corp goes into receivership," *Electric Autonomy Canada*, November 21, 2024. https://electricautonomy.ca/automakers/2024-11-21/vicinity-motor-receivership-canada-electric-bus-truck/

[156] Oliver Trescases, "Canada needs a new labour force to become a global EV superpower. Here's how to do it.," *MacLean's*, August 21, 2023. https://macleans.ca/economy/business/canada-ev-superpower/

[157] "How B.C. is building its brand in bespoke electric vehicles."

[158] Sean Silcoff and Joe Castaldo, "Tech founders leaving Canada at accelerating rate, survey finds," *The Globe and Mail*, September 22, 2025. https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/article-tech-founders-leaving-canada-at-accelerating-rate-survey-finds/

The province's emerging status as a critical minerals hub could position it well to develop a battery supply chain. For example, Taiwanese manufacturer E-One Moli Energy has invested in building a plant in Maple Ridge, which could support as many as 450 jobs starting in 2028.[159] Because EV and battery manufacturing is concentrated largely in Eastern Canada, B.C. lacks the same level of expertise and will need greater workforce support to promote the industry's growth.[160]

4.3.2 EV sales

In 2024, B.C.'s motor vehicle sales and parts dealing sector employed 43,800 people, up from 38,500 the previous year,[161] and is expected to fluctuate through the 2030s.[162] The auto sales workforce is also expected to transform as B.C.'s vehicle fleet shifts to EVs due to changing sales models and rapidly advancing technology; EV buyers are generally more open to purchase their cars online, which is how many EVs are sold.[163] This could slow down the growth of in-person sales jobs and require sales and administrative workers to develop digital literacy and online marketing skills to reach their customers. Workers will also have to learn about quickly evolving EV technology to inform customers, which could create new expert positions to support sales staff.[164] As many of these cars become increasingly computerized and generate more user data, demand for IT positions is expected to increase as well.[165] Accordingly, a 2022 study by MNP found that software programming, data analytics, and IT were some of the largest skill gaps in the aftermarket workforce, and continuous learning will be required to keep workers up to date with the state of technology.[166]

[159] Mehanaz Yakub, "B.C. lands $1-billion E-One Moli Energy battery cell plant," *Electric Autonomy Canada*, November 17, 2023. https://electricautonomy.ca/news/2023-11-17/e-one-moli-battery-cell-plant/

[160] MNP, *Clean Energy Vehicle Economic Opportunities Assessment* (2016). https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/electricity-alternative-energy/transportation/cev_economic_opportunities_final_report.pdf

[161] "Annual Employment and Unemployment Rates by Industry for British Columbia and Economic Region."

[162] *British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2025–2035 Forecast*.

[163] Cox Automotive, "Cox Automotive's Car Buyer Journey Study Shows Growing Frustration with Car Buying Process," media release, January 18, 2023. https://www.coxautoinc.com/insights/2022-car-buyer-journey-study/

[164] MNP, *Electrification and Automation of the BC Automotive Aftermarket Service Sector: Labour Market Research* (2023). https://www.ara.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Electrification-and-Automation-of-the-BC-Automotive-Aftermarket-Service-Sector-Labour-Market-Research-Final-Report.pdf

[165] *Electrification and Automation of the BC Automotive Aftermarket Service Sector: Labour Market Research*.

[166] *Electrification and Automation of the BC Automotive Aftermarket Service Sector: Labour Market Research*.

4.3.3 EV maintenance and repair

In 2024, B.C.'s auto maintenance and repair sector employed 25,800 workers, up from 20,100 the previous year,[167] and it is expected to continue growing by 0.4% annually to 2035.[168] The median wage for mechanics and service technicians is $35 per hour, with moderate employment prospects across the province.[169] Collision repair workers fare slightly worse at only $31.82 per hour, with more limited employment prospects.[170]

Though EV infrastructure continues to expand, aftermarket services like maintenance and repair have lagged behind, resulting in attendant skill and labour shortages. Automotive service technicians are one of the most in-demand occupations in the province, with nearly 5,000 job openings anticipated between 2025 and 2035,[171] and the nature of the work is becoming increasingly complex as technology advances, requiring a better understanding of electronics, software and batteries.[172] The high-voltage systems in EVs also present a different set of workplace risks than traditional engines, so electrical safety training will be vital in equipping the workforce for the clean economy.[173] However, EVs also require less frequent maintenance, which could impact job growth and shift the balance of jobs in the sector away from skilled trades and toward more technical positions. Work may also move away from independent repair shops and towards dealerships, as some cars have proprietary technology.[174] CleanBC's Go Electric training program offers training for automotive service technicians to upskill for servicing light-duty EVs, with over 600 students having taken the course.[175]

4.3.4 Charging infrastructure

The B.C. government has taken significant strides to expand its EV charging network. At the local level, the Go Electric EV Charger Rebate Program offers financial aid for home, building and business owners to purchase and install EV chargers, with additional rebates for Indigenous

[167] "Annual Employment and Unemployment Rates by Industry for British Columbia and Economic Region."

[168] *British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2025–2035 Forecast*.

[169] Government of Canada Job Bank, "Automobile Mechanic in British Columbia," modified January 28, 2026. https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/marketreport/summary-occupation/14789/BC

[170] Government of Canada Job Bank, "Auto Body Worker in British Columbia," modified January 28, 2026. https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/marketreport/summary-occupation/7683/BC

[171] WorkBC, "Top Demand Trades," retrieved January 26, 2025. https://www.workbc.ca/research-labour-market/top-demand-trades

[172] *Electrification and Automation of the BC Automotive Aftermarket Service Sector: Labour Market Research*.

[173] *Electrification and Automation of the BC Automotive Aftermarket Service Sector: Labour Market Research*.

[174] *Electrification and Automation of the BC Automotive Aftermarket Service Sector: Labour Market Research*.

[175] CleanBC, *Zero-Emission Vehicle Update 2024* (2024). https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/ZEV_Annual_Report.pdf

communities.[176] In 2024, this resulted in the installation of 5,320 new chargers in homes, multi-unit buildings and workplaces. Notably, the Go Electric program is also paired with a Red Seal electrician training program to help meet demand for charger installers, which has so far trained over 400 workers (see section 5).[177] In addition to these local-level installations, the provincial government has invested in expanding its highway EV network.

Job generating initiative: B.C.'s Electric Highway

In September 2024, B.C. completed its "Electric Highway" project, outfitting the province's highways with electric charging stations every 150 km to allow EV travel across the entire province.[178] The network is made up of 155 charging sites, bringing the province's total to 5,300, more than halfway to its 2030 goal of 10,000 stations.[179] The project was funded with a $13 million grant from the province's Go Electric Public Charger Program and completed through collaboration with local government, utilities and Indigenous communities, with Indigenous groups retaining full ownership of some of the stations on their land.[180] Projects like these create installation and maintenance jobs, but also induce more demand for EVs by making them convenient for consumers to adopt.

4.3.5 Public transit

Transit operators in B.C. are in high demand across the province, but still earn a slightly below-median wage of $31.11 per hour.[181] B.C.'s transit system has experienced labour shortages in recent years, especially for maintenance personnel and transit operators,[182] the latter having declined from 10,030 workers in 2024[183] to 9,710 in 2025.[184] This has contributed to reduced

[176] CleanBC, "Rebates for home and workplace charging." https://goelectricbc.gov.bc.ca/rebates-and-programs/for-individuals/save-on-home-and-workplace-charging

[177] *Zero-Emission Vehicle Update 2024*.

[178] BC Hydro, *Driving Forward: BC Hydro's EV public charging progress report* (2025). https://www.bchydro.com/content/dam/BCHydro/customer-portal/documents/power-smart/electric-vehicles/bc-hydro-ev-public-charging-progress-report.pdf

[179] Government of British Columbia, "Completion of Electric Highway makes EV travel possible throughout province," media release, September 6, 2024. https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2024EMLI0062-001447

[180] "Completion of Electric Highway makes EV travel possible throughout province."

[181] Government of Canada Job Bank, "Bus Operator in British Columbia: Wages," modified November 19, 2025. https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/marketreport/wages-occupation/23319/BC

[182] BC Transit, *BC Transit 2023/24 Annual Service Plan Report* (2024). https://www.bctransit.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/bct.pdf

[183] *British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2024 Edition*.

[184] *British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2025–2035 Forecast*.

service in some communities served by BC Transit, including unexpected trip cancellations.[185] However, the workforce demand is expected to expand, with 1,090 new openings over the next decade, as well as 2,890 vacancies to fill from retirements.[186] To meet this need, BC Transit has prioritized recruitment through marketing activities and job fairs, which has led to some increase in applications and hires.[187]

As part of its 2025 budget, the provincial government announced $9 billion in capital funding over three years for new subway and SkyTrain projects in the Greater Vancouver Area, as well as $47 million for BC Transit to maintain their bus and handyDART services in areas outside the Lower Mainland.[188] This capital investment could create as many as 50,400 infrastructure construction jobs.[189]

4.3.6 Analysis

B.C. has established an ecosystem that incentivizes and supports consumer adoption of EVs through its rebates and extensive charging network — one of the most extensive in the country. This successful network buildout is in part due to the province's proactive deployment of programs to help train the electrician workforce that installed the charging stations, as well as the maintenance personnel who keep the cars on the road.

Because of its distance from Eastern Canada's auto manufacturing ecosystem and its commensurate lack of manufacturing expertise, B.C. has not established a large-scale car manufacturing industry. However, its proximity to critical minerals offers the opportunity to grow its battery and high-tech auto part manufacturing base if more skills and expertise can be developed. Further, its existing tech sector has supported a burgeoning EV design industry, but STEM training and retention initiatives could help the province remain competitive as nearby California's large EV sector is often able to offer higher pay.

Recent fluctuations in federal and global policies have made the future of EVs in the province unclear. These changes could disrupt the domestic EV industry and complicate future projections. New trade deals with countries like China could increase EV sales by driving prices

[185] *BC Transit 2023/24 Annual Service Plan Report*.

[186] *British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2025–2035 Forecast*.

[187] *BC Transit 2023/24 Annual Service Plan Report*.

[188] Government of British Columbia, "Standing strong for B.C.: Budget prepares to defend British Columbians," media release, March 4, 2025. https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2025FIN0010-000165

[189] Calculated using total input-output multiplier, assuming 100% engineering construction, impacts within province only, 2022 data (most recent year).

Statistics Canada, "Table 36-10-0113-01: Input-output multipliers, provincial and territorial, summary level," spreadsheet, November 19, 2025. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=3610011301

down, but the withdrawal of the federal EV mandate could have a depressing effect on sales. How these two effects will interact is yet unclear.

4.4 Critical minerals

Summary

- **Workforce:** In 2024, 17,400 workers were employed in the mining sector and 8,900 in mining support activities,[190] 7,600 in primary metal manufacturing, and 15,500 in fabricated metal manufacturing.[191]
- **Geography:** Mining concentrated in the northwest and on Indigenous lands, processing plants in Kitimat and Trail.
- **Associated professions:** Mining engineers, underground miners, metal processing workers.
- **Job quality indicators:** High pay, poor diversity.
- **Subsectors:** Mining, processing and manufacturing.
- **Labour market challenges:** Difficulty with recruitment.
- **Opportunities driven by policy direction:** High global demand for critical minerals, prospective mining and processing projects poised for fast-tracking.

B.C. is home to deposits of many elements considered essential for a clean economy, including nickel, cobalt and lithium, which are used in batteries; molybdenum, whose only Canadian deposit is in B.C.; and copper, of which B.C. is the largest producer in the country.[192] Increased electrification of infrastructure and demand for EVs are also likely to increase domestic and global demand for these minerals, as well as their refined and fabricated derivatives.

Mining is not a major contributor to B.C.'s emissions, making up only 0.9% of the province's emissions, while processing makes up 1.9%.[193] However, the mining industry can still have environmental impacts through habitat fragmentation, water pollution, and other damages to

[190] Much of the mining sector is still engaged in coal extraction. Mining support also includes support work for the oil and gas industry.

[191] "Annual Employment and Unemployment Rates by Industry for British Columbia and Economic Region."

[192] *British Columbia Regional Energy and Resource Table: Framework for Collaboration on the Path to Net-Zero*, 5.

[193] Including both non-ferrous smelting and refining and iron and steel refining.

"Provincial inventory of greenhouse gas emissions."

ecosystems if not properly regulated. Nonetheless, critical minerals have an important role to play in the energy transition, with many of them serving as essential components for clean technology like batteries and computing parts, and B.C. is particularly well poised to lead Canada in this emerging industry.

4.4.1 Mining

In 2024, the mining sector employed 17,400 workers, with another 8,900 employed in support activities.[194] B.C.'s Labour Market Outlook projects the mining workforce to grow by 1% annually by 2035, adding about 2,200 jobs.[195] The Mining Association of British Columbia and the Centre of Training Excellence in Mining projects higher growth, estimating between 5,400 to more than 12,000 additional jobs by 2035.[196] The mining and quarrying industries in B.C. enjoy a high median pay — $2,140 per week compared to an all-industry average of $1,210 as of October 2025[197] — but the industry continues to struggle to attract talent. It is considered one of the least preferred career paths for many young people given its reputation for dangerous working conditions and high physical demands.[198]

Critical minerals projects are particularly concentrated in the northwest, which hosts more than half of the province's exploration and mining sector.[199] Indigenous groups in particular are deeply involved with the sector, with the Tahltan Nation being home to 41% of mineral exploration in the province.[200] The nation enjoys a historic consent-based decision-making agreement with the province on the operation of the Red Chris copper and gold mine,[201] which employs 220 nation members.[202] The nation has also recently entered into a partnership with

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[194] "Annual Employment and Unemployment Rates by Industry for British Columbia and Economic Region."

[195] *British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2025–2035 Forecast*.

[196] Mining Association of British Columbia and Centre of Training Excellence in Mining, *Mining Skills Innovation Research Project* (2026). https://mining.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Mining-Skills-Innovation-Research-Project-Final.pdf

[197] Mining Industry Human Resources Council, "Monthly Labour Market Dashboard," January 2026. https://mihr.ca/labour-market-information/monthly-report/

[198] Mining Industry Human Resources Council, *Perceptions and Interest in a Mining Sector Career* (2023). https://mihr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/MiHR-Youth-Perceptions-Survey-Presentation-2023.pdf

[199] Tahltan Nation Development Corporation, "Nisga'a nation, Tahltan Nation Development Corporation, and Arrow Transportation to acquire the Port of Stewart bulk terminal," media release, August 25, 2025. https://www.tndc.ca/nisgaa-nation-tahltan-nation-development-corporation-and-arrow-transportation-to-acquire-the-port-of-stewart-bulk-terminal/

[200] Tahltan Central Government, "OnTrack – Jobs in the Resource Industry." https://ontrack.tahltan.org/about/mining/

[201] Government of British Columbia, "Tahltan Nation, B.C. sign historic consent-based decision-making agreement," media release, November 1, 2023. https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2023ENV0061-001707

[202] Akshay Kulkarni, "What is the Red Chris mine, and why is B.C. fast-tracking its expansion?," *CBC*, July 23, 2025. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/red-chris-mine-where-expansion-fast-track-1.7592693

the Nisga'a Nation and Arrow Transportation to purchase a port terminal that will enable the transport of critical minerals to market, further supporting Indigenous economic sovereignty.[203]

The provincial government has moved to make critical minerals a key part of the economy, committing $6 million to developing a critical minerals strategy,[204] and promising the expedited approval of new mining and refining projects, including the Red Chris expansion, which is also on the federal list of major projects.[205,206]

4.4.2 Processing and manufacturing

Downstream of B.C.'s mines, primary metal manufacturing (smelting and refining activities) employed 7,600 people in 2024[207] and is expected to grow 0.9% annually to 2035.[208] Fabricated metal manufacturing, which employs 15,500 people, is also expected to grow by 0.6% over that same period. As of 2023, B.C. hosted only two critical mineral processing facilities, an aluminum smelter in Kitimat and a lead-zinc refinery in Trail, but has two more processing projects in advanced stages of development: a lithium refinery in Delta and an EV battery recycling plant in Trail.[209] This lack of downstream capacity means that processing jobs that could add value to B.C.'s critical minerals sector are being left on the table.

Job generating initiative: Northwest B.C. Highway Corridor Improvements Project – Linking construction, transportation and critical minerals

In 2024, B.C. and the federal government announced a joint investment of $195 million, through B.C.'s Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and the federal government's Critical Minerals Infrastructure Fund, to make upgrades to three northern highways: 37, 37A, and 51. These roads serve much of B.C.'s northwest coast, the Tahltan Nation and the

[203] "Nisga'a nation, Tahltan Nation Development Corporation, and Arrow Transportation to acquire the Port of Stewart bulk terminal."

[204] *British Columbia Regional Energy and Resource Table: Framework for Collaboration on the Path to Net-Zero*, 5.

[205] "What is the Red Chris mine, and why is B.C. fast-tracking its expansion?"

[206] Kate McKenna and Peter Zimonjic, "Carney recommends 5 'nation-building projects' for approval, including LNG expansion," *CBC*, September 10, 2025. https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/carney-major-projects-list-1.7630470

[207] "Annual Employment and Unemployment Rates by Industry for British Columbia and Economic Region." https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/annual-labour-force-characteristics-and-wages-from-labour-force-survey-lfs-/resource/c410f178-39c7-4061-9851-0a2c2582ce8d

[208] *British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2025–2035 Forecast*.

[209] Natural Resources Canada, "Canada's Critical Minerals Map," retrieved December 2025. https://atlas.gc.ca/critical-minerals/en/index.html

mineral-rich "Golden Triangle."[210] Improvements will include widening shoulders, creating pullouts for slow-moving vehicles and increasing Wi-Fi access. In addition to connecting communities safely, these improvements will allow increased industrial activity along the roads, including for critical minerals projects, which could create up to 3,000 jobs through increased industrial activity.[211] The highway project was developed in consultation with the Tahltan Nation, ensuring that benefits from new industrial activity are felt by Indigenous and northern communities.

4.4.3 Analysis

Global demand for critical minerals has presented B.C. with the opportunity to be a leader in the mining, processing and manufacturing sector due to its natural mineral abundance, but recruitment has failed to keep pace with new project proposals. While wages are high, the sector has consistently struggled to attract new workers, and it remains one of the least preferred industries for young people based on perceptions of unsafe working conditions and high physical demands. The industry also struggles particularly with equity issues, with low levels of women in the workforce and in leadership. With the emergence of new technologies, safety and physical demands of the work have improved significantly, and recruitment programs should reflect that reality to prospective employees. Public workforce development planning in the mining sector is lacking in B.C., though initiatives from the Mining Industry Human Resources Council and Centre for Training Excellence in Mining have begun to close this gap. [212]

4.5 Forestry

Summary

- **Workforce:** In 2024, 14,800 people were employed in upstream forestry activities and 28,000 in wood and paper product manufacturing.[213]
- **Geography:** Jobs concentrated in Cariboo, Northeast, North Coast and Nechako.

[210] Natural Resources Canada, "Canada and B.C. Invest in Infrastructure Upgrades to Support Critical Minerals Development in Northwest B.C. and Create Jobs Across the Province," media release, July 15, 2024. https://www.canada.ca/en/natural-resources-canada/news/2024/07/canada-and-bc-invest-in-infrastructure-upgrades-to-support-critical-minerals-development-in-northwest-bc-and-create-jobs-across-the-province.html

[211] "Canada and B.C. Invest in Infrastructure Upgrades to Support Critical Minerals Development in Northwest B.C. and Create Jobs Across the Province."

[212] *Key Elements*.

[213] "Annual Employment and Unemployment Rates by Industry for British Columbia and Economic Region."

- **Associated professions:** Logging and forestry workers, forestry technologists, wood manufacturing workers.
- **Job quality indicators:** At or slightly above all-industry median for most forestry and processing professions, but wages are lagging behind inflation.
- **Subsectors:** Upstream activities, such as logging, and downstream wood and paper manufacturing, including value-added products such as mass timber.
- **Labour market challenges:** Declining labour force; upskilling needs for manufacturing, especially in the north.
- **Opportunities driven by policy direction:** Mass Timber Action Plan, Mass Timber Demonstration Program, CleanBC Building Innovation Fund, BC Manufacturing Jobs Fund.

Forestry has long been one of the most important industries in B.C. and is likely to continue to be a part of the clean economy.[214] This sector includes both upstream activities and downstream wood and paper product manufacturing. Together, they accounted for 1.5% of B.C.'s workforce in 2025,[215] but 19.4% of international exports, making forestry products the province's second-largest export category.[216]

In 2024, B.C.'s upstream forestry industry employed 14,800 people, while downstream wood and paper manufacturing employed another 28,000.[217] These industries are particularly concentrated in the Cariboo region, where together they account for 9.4% of all employment. However, the forestry sector has experienced a severe downturn in recent decades, threatening rural communities in Cariboo, the Northeast, North Coast and Nechako that rely on forestry facilities to support their economy.[218] In 2014, these industries employed 65,200 people, 52% more than 2024 employment levels.[219]

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[214] *British Columbia Regional Energy and Resource Table: Framework for Collaboration on the Path to Net-Zero*, 17.

[215] "Annual Employment and Unemployment Rates by Industry for British Columbia and Economic Region."

[216] BC Stats, "Annual B.C. Origin Exports," spreadsheet, February 19, 2026. https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/ca3ad618-b023-4f22-b3f2-e9de1bee92d3/resource/596619b7-990f-44c1-a5cd-7753f3a3a540/download/exp_annual_bc_exports.pdf

[217] "Annual Employment and Unemployment Rates by Industry for British Columbia and Economic Region."https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/annual-labour-force-characteristics-and-wages-from-labour-force-survey-lfs-/resource/c410f178-39c7-4061-9851-0a2c2582ce8d

[218] Jim Stanford and Ken Delaney, *A Better Future for B.C. Forestry: A sector strategy for sustainable value-added forest industries* (Unifor, United Steelworkers, and Public and Private Workers of Canada, 2024). https://centreforfuturework.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/A_better_future_for_BC_forestry-1.pdf

[219] "Annual Employment and Unemployment Rates by Industry for British Columbia and Economic Region."

Prevailing wages in the forestry industry are near or slightly above the provincial median for all industries in 2025 ($32.49 per hour),[220] ranging from $27 per hour for silviculture and forestry workers[221] to $42 per hour for logging supervisors.[222,223] While job prospects are limited across the province, pay and labour demand tend to be highest in the Vancouver Island/Coast region. Similarly, most wood processing workers make close to the provincial median wage for all industries, ranging from a low of $25 per hour for woodworking machine operators[224] to a high of $43.50 per hour for sawmill supervisors.[225,226] Demand for processing jobs tended to be highest in the Lower Mainland/Southwest and Thompson Okanagan regions. Moreover, wages across both up- and downstream forestry sectors have failed to keep up with inflation, with wages adjusted for purchasing power declining as a result.[227] This could further impact recruitment issues.

4.5.1 Value-added manufacturing

To expand the market for B.C. lumber, the provincial government has invested in mass timber, a pre-fabricated building material made from layers of wood, which is growing in popularity as a low-carbon substitute for steel and concrete.[228] As of 2023, B.C. leads the country in mass timber construction with 370 buildings completed or underway[229] and 22 mass timber companies employing over 700 people.[230] The province projects that by 2035, the sector could

[220] "Table 14-10-0064-01."

[221] Government of Canada Job Bank, "Clearing Saw Operator – Forestry in British Columbia – Wages," modified Dec. 1, 2025. https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/marketreport/wages-occupation/9239/BC

[222] Government of Canada Job Bank, "Hook Tender – Logging in British Columbia – Wages," modified Dec. 1, 2025. https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/marketreport/wages-occupation/8696/BC

[223] Key occupations considered were silviculture and forestry workers (NOC 84111); chain saw and skidder operators (NOC 84110); logging and forestry labourers (NOC 85120); supervisors, logging and forestry (NOC 82010); and logging machinery operators (NOC 83110).

[224] Government of Canada Job Bank, "Barrel Cooper – Woodworking in British Columbia – Wages," modified Dec. 1, 2025. https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/marketreport/wages-occupation/19378/BC

[225] Government of Canada Job Bank, "Sawmill Supervisor in British Columbia – Wages," modified Dec. 1, 2025. https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/marketreport/wages-occupation/20286/BC

[226] Key occupations considered were woodworking machine operators (NOC 94124); labourers in wood, pulp and paper processing (NOC 95103); sawmill machine operators (NOC 94120); lumber graders and other wood processing inspectors and graders (NOC 94123); other wood processing machine operators (NOC 94129); and supervisors, forest products processing (NOC 92014).

[227] *A Better Future for B.C. Forestry*.

[228] Government of British Columbia, *CleanBC: Roadmap to 2030* (2021), 56. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/climate-change/action/cleanbc/cleanbc_roadmap_2030.pdf

[229] Government of British Columbia, *Mass Timber Action Plan: Progress Update* (2024). https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/ministries-organizations/ministries/jobs-economic-development-competitiveness/mass_timber_action_plan_progress_update_2024.pdf

[230] Government of British Columbia, *Stronger BC Future Ready Action Plan* (2023). https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/Future-Ready-May2023.pdf

produce another 1,880 jobs in technology, upstream forestry, engineering and design, as well as another 2,350 in manufacturing.[231] The PLACE Centre also predicts a bounce-back in job growth in the forestry sector broadly, between 2,300 and 4,700 new jobs by 2030, especially in the Cariboo region.[232]

Upskilling to use the novel material is possible for manufacturing workers, like steel workers, who work with heavy machinery, but soft skills will be important as well, as mass timber requires more coordination between sectors like manufacturing, design and construction.[233] Post-secondary institutions such as the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) and Northern Lights College offer programs relevant to mass timber, but a lack of firms working with the material in the north make it difficult for workers to gain experience and for the benefits of the industry to be felt in that region.

Job generating initiative: B.C.'s Mass Timber Action Plan

In 2022, the B.C. government launched its Mass Timber Action Plan to develop mass timber as a sustainable economic sector,[234] committing to expanding the building code, raising awareness of the material, and providing financial support through the Mass Timber Demonstration Program[235] and CleanBC Building Innovation Fund.[236] It also includes a workforce strategy to identify barriers to training, create new education programs, and upskill workers.

Since the plan's release, buildings that receive provincial funding are now required to incorporate mass timber when feasible, helping to add another 41 mass timber buildings across B.C.[237] Beyond simply expanding the market for the material, this also enables construction firms and workers to build practical experience with it. By 2024, the BC Manufacturing Jobs Fund had committed $32.2 million to mass timber projects, which catalyzed over $200 million in private investment and created 219 forest sector jobs while

[231] Government of British Columbia, "Mass Timber," modified March 10, 2026. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/construction-industry/mass-timber

[232] *As the Weather Changes*.

[233] PLACE Centre, *Skills needs for mass timber production and adoption in British Columbia* (2024). https://fsc-ccf.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/MT3-PLACE-Cluster-Report-EN.pdf

[234] Government of British Columbia, *B.C.'s Mass Timber Action Plan* (2022). https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/business/construction-industry/bc_masstimber_action_plan_2022.pdf

[235] BC Mass Timber Demonstration Program. https://www.masstimberbc.ca/

[236] Government of British Columbia, "CleanBC Building Innovation Fund," modified July 7, 2023. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/electricity-alternative-energy/energy-efficiency-conservation/programs/cleanbc-building-innovation-fund

[237] *Mass Timber Action Plan: Progress Update*, 4.

protecting 548 more.[238] It has also invested $63.6 million into the value-added wood sector, which is expected to create another 714 manufacturing jobs and protect 1,219 more.[239]

4.5.2 Analysis

Forestry has been the foundation for the economy of many communities in rural and remote regions like Cariboo, Northeast, the North Coast and Nechako, and its decline could severely impact them. However, mass timber and other advanced wood products offer a potential new avenue for low-carbon construction and a new market for northern B.C.'s wood. Workers in existing wood manufacturing facilities have transferrable skills that can be applied to mass timber. Reskilling initiatives, as well as focused programs at skilled trade training institutions, can help build a workforce to support this new industry.

4.6 Summary of findings

As B.C.'s natural resource, construction and manufacturing industries grow, create jobs and contribute to the clean energy transition, it is crucial to educate, upskill and retain workers. These industries face diverse recruitment and retention challenges, underscoring the need for a sectoral approach to workforce planning and a focus on job quality. Non-profits, industry, unions and the provincial government offer a diverse range of programs and policies to help prepare workers, including young people and equity-deserving groups, for work in sustainable jobs. There is particularly strong workforce support in B.C. for building and electrical trades, while programs targeting critical minerals are notably absent. In the next section, we outline several successful programs that should inform a sustainable workforce strategy in B.C.

[238] *Mass Timber Action Plan: Progress Update*, 12.

[239] *Mass Timber Action Plan: Progress Update*, 14.

5. Best practices in workforce development approaches

A variety of successful workforce programs that support the development of a clean energy workforce have been developed in B.C., especially in the construction and electricity sectors. In this section, we profile eight programs from B.C. and two from other jurisdictions, highlighting best practices for developing workers' skills, as well as engaging marginalized and underrepresented groups and youth.

5.1 Provincial program highlights

5.1.1 British Columbia Infrastructure Benefits

British Columbia Infrastructure Benefits (BCIB) has been successful at creating a positive environment for women, Indigenous and racialized workers and getting them into the workforce. Created through a community benefits agreement with major construction unions, it operates as a provincial Crown corporation. BCIB guarantees that contractors who obtain work on major infrastructure projects hire the unionized workers that BCIB deploys to them, and is responsible for investing in training, prioritizing local employment and increasing representation in the workforce. In addition to providing workers, BCIB also runs on-site initiatives to break down toxic work environments and collects payroll data to help them continue to meet their equity goals. As a result of these efforts, they have twice as many Indigenous employees and 1.5 times as many women employees as the provincial average for construction.[240]

5.1.2 BC Manufacturing Jobs Fund

The BC Manufacturing Jobs Fund,[241] launched in 2024, provides funding for capital projects across B.C. with the goal of increasing high-growth manufacturing projects, giving specific attention to diversifying the economy in regional and Indigenous communities. It provides $50,000 for final-stage planning and between $100,000 and $10 million in capital investment.

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[240] John Calvert, *Building Better: The positive impact of community benefits agreements on the B.C. construction workforce* (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2025), 3. https://www.policyalternatives.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/building-better.pdf

[241] Government of British Columbia, *BC Manufacturing Jobs Fund: Program Guide* (2024). https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/employment-business-and-economic-development/economic-development/find-support-organizations/rural-economic-development/photos/bc_manufacturing_jobs_fund_program_guide_june_2024.pdf

This could help rural communities that are vulnerable to boom-bust cycles (such as forestry-based communities) increase their economic resilience and support long-term, high-paying jobs.

5.1.3 StrongerBC Future Skills Grant

The StrongerBC Future Skills Grant,[242] first introduced in 2023, provides up to $3,500 to cover the costs of short-term skills training in areas identified by B.C.'s Labour Market Outlook data, with a general focus on meeting the goals of the province's economic, healthcare and climate plans.[243] The program lists mining as a priority area for 2026 and 2027.[244] It is expected to train 8,500 workers over its three-year lifespan across multiple priority areas.[245] This type of small targeted grant may be effective at incentivizing workers to attain micro-credentials that will be useful for clean economy jobs without over-investing them in training that could become obsolete as technology progresses. Notably, this is the only program that is tied to provincial labour market outlooks, which is a strategy that more programs should adopt.

5.1.4 International Credentials Recognition Act

The International Credentials Recognition Act,[246] enacted in 2024, improves the efficiency of the international credential recognition process. The act removes work experience requirements that immigrants may struggle to meet, provides standards for transparency in the application process and creates an accountability framework for regulatory authorities. As Canada's workforce needs, including in skilled trades, are expected to be met in large part through immigration, it is essential to remove barriers that prevent new immigrants from using the complete range of their skills.

5.1.5 ZEIC: Sustainable Workforce Coalition

The Sustainable Workforce Coalition is an initiative that convenes stakeholders from industry, government, labour, education and community groups to advance workforce strategies for the

[242] EducationPlannerBC, "StrongerBC Future Skills Grant." https://www.educationplannerbc.ca/future-skills-grant

[243] *StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan*, 24.

[244] WorkBC, "StrongerBC Future Skills Grant." https://www.workbc.ca/find-loans-and-grants/students-and-adult-learners/strongerbc-future-skills-grant

[245] *StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan*.

[246] Government of British Columbia, "The International Credentials Recognition Act (ICRA)." https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/organizational-structure/ministries-organizations/regulatory-authorities/oicr/about/icra-overview

clean energy transition.[247] Led by the Zero Emissions Innovation Centre (ZEIC), a climate non-profit, the coalition hosts events and workshops that prepare workers for the sustainable economy and promote workforce attraction and retention. For instance, their "Creating real, tangible pathways into B.C.'s Clean Economy" research project seeks to identify five high-impact clean economy jobs and develop clear career guides for them.[248] Such a focused, data-driven approach that leverages the expertise of diverse coalition partners, including labour, ensures that resources are used efficiently when developing workforce development strategies.

5.1.6 Go Electric Training Programs

In support of its Go Electric EV adoption program, the B.C. government launched two workforce development programs: one to train Red Seal electricians in charger installation and one to train Red Seal auto service technicians in EV maintenance.[249] The EV Maintenance Training Program is offered at post-secondary institutions across south and central B.C. and in the north in Prince George. The Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program is delivered by the Electrical Joint Training Committee, a training and apprenticeship organization for the province's unionized electrical sector, in Port Coquitlam or online.[250] Go Electric funding is also available to support electricians to complete the course.[251] As of 2023, the two programs had trained 817 skilled workers. Unions are important partners in training, as they are best equipped to understand and meet the needs of workers. However, programs like these need to be more widely available across the north as charging infrastructure becomes increasingly prevalent in northern areas.

5.1.7 Youth Climate Corps B.C.

Youth Climate Corps B.C. (YCCBC), founded in 2020, is an organization that provides young people in B.C. with paid work and training on climate-related projects, including emissions reduction and climate resiliency initiatives.[252] In 2024, the organization received $3 million from the province to expand their young workforce and establish chapters in more

[247] Zero Emissions Innovation Centre, "Sustainable Workforce Coalition: Building a Workforce for the Clean Economy." https://www.zeic.ca/programs/economic-development-market-transformation/sustainable-workforce-coalition/

[248] Zero Emissions Innovation Centre, "ZEIC and Future Skills Centre Launch New Project to Map Careers in BC's Clean Economy," July 14, 2025. https://www.zeic.ca/news/zeic-and-future-skills-centre-launch-new-project-to-map-careers-in-bcs-clean-economy/

[249] *Zero-Emission Vehicle Update 2023*, 11.

[250] E2 Inc., "EVITP." https://ejtcenterprises.com/courses/evitp/

[251] *Zero-Emission Vehicle Update 2023*, 11.

[252] Youth Climate Corps British Columbia. https://www.youthclimatecorps.com/about

communities.[253] YCCBC's projects are diverse, ranging from Indigenous food security and community engagement projects in North Vancouver Island to home retrofits in Squamish, reaching participants in six communities across B.C. and providing 35 youth with work experience and job readiness skills.[254] Some projects have also included union partnerships, such as 2024's collaboration with the BC Insulators Union to deliver paid pre-apprenticeship work and training for eight young people in a key area for reducing buildings emissions.[255] Outreach and training for young people — and beginning their careers with paid, unionized work — is an essential component of meeting demand for a skilled workforce, which is facing increasing retirements.

5.1.8 Building It Green

Canada's Building Trades Unions (CBTU) launched the Building It Green program in 2021 to integrate climate literacy into construction trades curricula.[256] It is the first program of its kind to have been created by and for tradespeople, and includes a foundational online course, delivered through CBTU's union training centres, to equip trainers to deliver the program, and provides trade-specific on-the-job supports. The project includes ongoing measurement of the program's impact on the application of green building practices in order to develop best practices that can be applied across Canada. The success of such worker-developed programs highlights the importance of developing building strategies with input from unions and workers, who are best equipped to understand their own needs and learning styles.

5.2 Highlights from other jurisdictions

5.2.1 Contact North

Contact North is a free training and education service targeted at people living in rural and remote communities in Ontario. In partnership with public post-secondary institutions, as well as skills providers and non-profits, Contact North connects people with online education and skills development services to prepare them for the workforce or advance their careers without

[253] Government of British Columbia, "Province supports Nelson youth group fighting climate change," media release, June 10, 2024. https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2024ENV0025-000897

[254] Youth Climate Corps British Columbia, *Annual Report 2024–25* (2025). https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bCNpsyUzcJLql_X5q4sAGjvFz8v600OF/view

[255] Youth Climate Corps British Columbia, "BC Insulators and Youth Climate Corps BC Join Forces to Tackle the Climate Crisis," media release, November 13, 2024. https://www.youthclimatecorps.com/post/bc-insulators-and-youth-climate-corps-bc-join-forces-to-tackle-the-climate-crisis

[256] Canada's Building Trades Unions, *Building It Green: Interim Project Report* (2024). https://www.buildingtrades.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/INTERIM-PROJECT-REPORT-EN-FINAL-2024.pdf

having to leave their communities.[257] Their services include one-on-one coaching to access financial, technical and program information, a laptop loan program, and recruitment help for providers to register more students. Annually, Contact North fulfills over one million service requests and helps over 50,000 online learners across the province.[258] For those seeking online certificates — one of the most common goals among clients — 70% were able to complete that objective, while 32% of those registering in courses to find a job were able to do so.[259] Contact North's easily-accessible online training service, human and virtual assistance, and rural focus provide a model that can be developed for reaching underserved populations in B.C.'s north, who have less access to skill and career development services.

5.2.2 Apatisiiwin Skills Development Program

Apatisiiwin Skills Development is an organization managed by the Grand Council of the Crees that provides various employment and training services in Eeyou Istchee jobs, a Cree territory within northern Quebec. Services include youth programs providing work experience and career counselling, capacity-building programs to support Cree education and career development, and workforce development programs supporting job creation and helping workers build skills and competencies.[260] In 2024, the organization approved over 500 workforce projects and conducted over 3,500 training and employment activities for participants, a significant reach in a territory of around 20,000 people.[261] Apatisiiwin is a strong example of a program that, while receiving federal funding,[262] is built by and for the population it serves, allowing it to be responsive to the unique needs of northern Indigenous communities through comprehensive and culturally-sensitive services.

[257] Contact North. https://contactnorth.ca/about-us/

[258] Contact North.

[259] Contact North, *Contact North Annual Student Outcome Survey 2023–2024* (2024). https://contactnorth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Contact-North-I-Contact-Nord-2024-Annual-Student-Outcomes-Survey-Report.pdf

[260] Apatisiiwin Skills Development. https://apatisiiwin.ca/

[261] Apatisiiwin's annual reporting only lists the number of interventions with clients, not the number of clients themselves. Some clients may have received multiple interventions.
Grand Council of the Crees, *Apatisiiwin Skills Development Annual Report 2024–2025* (2025). https://apatisiiwin.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/AR_2024-25_ASD_SECTION.pdf

[262] *Apatisiiwin Skills Development Annual Report 2024–2025.*

6. Policy gaps and areas for further research

Despite its well-developed ecosystem of training institutions and successful programs, B.C. faces several gaps in program availability and workforce planning. Below, we outline some of the most significant gaps, as well as areas that would benefit from further research.

Lack of regional specificity

Broadly, B.C. lacks region-specific and place-based workforce development supports,[263] with many of the initiatives in our scan being offered only in southern areas and urban centres. EV infrastructure, for instance, is an emerging source of installation and maintenance jobs, and B.C.'s charging infrastructure is extensive, reaching into the north, but Prince George is the only northern community where the province's Go Electric training programs are offered. Similarly, though northern regions supply the raw materials for mass timber, few training opportunities for mass timber exist in the north. This presents an opportunity for more programs to support northern workers and industry in keeping jobs in their communities.

Lack of sector-specific approaches

While there is a diverse array of programs aimed at job creation and training in buildings, transportation, electricity and mass timber, critical minerals programs are nearly absent. As highlighted in our report *Key Elements for Developing a Critical Minerals Workforce*, B.C. has released a critical minerals strategy that includes workforce development commitments, but has followed through with few.[264] Considering the industry's struggles with recruitment, the provincial government must make workforce development a priority to meet its ambitious goals for the critical minerals industry. Comprehensive assessments of workforce readiness for new initiatives, similar to the *BC Energy Step Code Capacity Study*, could be replicated for programs and policies in other sectors.[265]

[263] Megan Gordon, *Recruit, Train, Retain: Fostering low-carbon industries through regional workforce planning* (2025). https://www.pembina.org/sites/default/files/2025-05/Recruit_Train_Retain.pdf

[264] Megan Gordon and Mercer Pommer, *Key Elements: Nurturing a critical minerals workforce with lessons from British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario* (2025). https://www.pembina.org/sites/default/files/2025-11/Key_Elements_Nurturing_a_Critical_Minerals_Workforce_Final_December.pdf

[265] *BC Energy Step Code Capacity Study*.

Need for long-term approach to career development

In construction,[266] and across all clean industries, [267] there is a general lack of incentives for longer-term training and upskilling, as it is expensive and may be undervalued, especially in rural areas. While requirements for building efficiency are increasing, requirements for building worker credentials are not.[268] This means that while workers may be required to construct high-efficiency buildings, they may not require aligned certifications and training. This merits further research on the interaction between occupational licensing and green standards in various industries.

Throughout their careers, skilled workers can expect their jobs to transform multiple times as technology and green standards evolve. There is a growing need to support micro-credential programs for in-demand industries, with a focus on critical thinking and digital skills, which are likely to be transferrable.[269] However, more research is needed on what constitutes a "green skill" and what skills workers will need to respond to this rapidly changing labour market.

Need for standardized and recognized training standards

The *BC Energy Step Code Capacity Study* noted that workers expressed a lack of trust in training delivery systems, finding it difficult to assess the quality of trainers or curricula.[270] This raises questions about how trainers themselves are trained, the standards they are held to, and the credentials they should possess — particularly in clean buildings and fields like transportation.

Explore strategic use of worker-focused policies

Smaller renewable energy projects — especially community- or Indigenous-owned projects — can be an opportunity for local employment and self-sufficiency in areas that are not served by the province's main energy grid, but care must be taken that the community reaps those benefits.[271] A 2024 study of over 3,900 Spanish municipalities' solar and wind projects showed that new jobs often do not stay with local communities, and go to non-local workers due to a

[266] *BC Energy Step Code Capacity Study*, 63.

[267] *British Columbia's Workforce Readiness for a Clean Economy Future: Industry Strategy*.

[268] *BC Energy Step Code Capacity Study*, 63.

[269] *Solving B.C.'s Workforce Challenges: Preparing for the Jobs of Today and Tomorrow*.

[270] *BC Energy Step Code Capacity Study*.

[271] Arthur Bledsoe, Emily He, and Rosa Brown, *Restoring the Flow: Policies to support Indigenous-led clean energy in remote communities* (2025). https://www.pembina.org/sites/default/files/2025-12/restoring-the-flow-pembina-institute-october-2025.pdf

lack of local skills.[272] To compensate for this, local training programs and other community benefits should be negotiated as part of a project plan, a strategy that was deployed at the Site C dam. Further research in the Canadian context is needed to understand the employment effects of clean energy projects in rural and remote areas and how community benefits agreements could be used to secure local benefits.

Invest in skills matching to support rural and remote community transition

Communities that rely on natural resource extraction are more vulnerable to global market forces and the energy transition. Many of these communities are already building community energy projects, adopting the Step Code, and diversifying their economies. However, new standards and technologies require new skills, and jobs in legacy industries like coal mining are likely to decline over time. The example of Tu Deh-Kah geothermal project demonstrates how new and innovative technologies could generate new opportunities for workers from legacy industries given the opportunity for reskilling. Further research is needed to identify viable career paths and reskilling opportunities for workers in those industries.

[272] Natalia Fabra, Eduardo Gutiérrez, Aitor Lacuesta, Roberto Ramos, "Do renewable energy investments create local jobs?," *Journal of Public Economics* 239 (2024). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2024.105212

7. Conclusions and call to action

B.C.'s net-zero transition remains a major economic and employment opportunity, but only if policy certainty and workforce readiness advance together. Although existing projections point to significant job growth across multiple sectors (i.e., clean buildings, clean electricity, clean transportation, critical minerals supply chains and value-added forestry), increasing uncertainty undermines workers' ability to make informed training and career decisions.

CleanBC's future hangs in the balance. The province is not on track for its 2030 target, and shifting political priorities could weaken investor confidence and slow clean economy growth. At the same time, labour shortages, especially in skilled trades, are already constraining expansion. Training capacity is under pressure, and rural and northern regions face structural barriers that limit access to education and reduce the chance that local communities capture long-term benefits from major projects.

The takeaways are clear: climate ambition without a labour market plan could slow the transition to a clean economy, and a labour market plan without stable climate and energy policy will lack the certainty needed to drive labour demand. B.C. needs an integrated, people-centred approach that aligns climate, industrial and workforce policies around the following shared outcomes: emissions reductions, decent work, regional prosperity and equity. Government, employers and industry, and post-secondary institutions all have a role to play in achieving these outcomes.

Governments should align workforce development programs across jurisdictions and direct funding toward emerging clean growth industries, expand rural and regional training capacity through targeted funding, require companies receiving public funding to deliver benefits for workers and local communities, and maintain stable, long-term climate policies. They should also bring industry and training institutions together to ensure training programs reflect local community and labour market needs.

Employers and industry should invest in ongoing worker training and upskilling to keep pace with emerging technologies and evolving industry needs, expand recruitment and career development opportunities to support a diverse and inclusive workforce, and engage local and Indigenous communities early in project planning to ensure they benefit from major projects. They should also collaborate with government and post-secondary institutions to develop and share labour market data that informs workforce planning.

Post-secondary institutions should adapt training programs to meet evolving sector and worker needs by collaborating with industry and labour, updating curricula and equipment to keep pace with advancing technologies, and expanding access to training for rural learners.

Government and industry must provide the funding and partnerships needed to support these efforts.

Designed well, a plan for workers can increase engagement and reduce resistance to climate action, providing politicians with a mandate to implement ambitious solutions that accelerate the clean energy transition while supporting more resilient communities and better socio-economic outcomes for people in B.C. Developing and applying such a plan is critical as only 24 years remain to achieve net-zero and prevent the worst impacts from climate change.



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