The Good Energy Jobs Act of 2026
Offices of Rep. Paul Tonko (NY-20), Rep. Nikki Budzinski (IL-13), and Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-NM)
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Background

From 2022 through 2024, Department of Energy (DOE) financial assistance was instrumental in catalyzing a boom in private sector energy investments, resulting in massive growth in high-quality construction and energy technology manufacturing jobs throughout the United States.

In many cases, DOE required strong labor standards and community benefits plans as conditions for receiving financial assistance. These modest requirements on project developers ensured that public investments made by DOE resulted in shared prosperity with the workers building the projects and the communities hosting them.

The Good Energy Jobs Act would build upon this progress and codify labor and community benefit requirements, mandating that DOE financial assistance supports high-quality jobs, broad community benefits, domestic manufacturing, and investments in small and disadvantaged communities.

This legislation would require—

1. DOE funded construction, maintenance, and repair projects to adhere to prevailing wage and registered apprenticeships requirements.
    - Prevailing wage requirements ensure that energy jobs pay well. Analysis has found that DOE-supported projects meeting local prevailing wage requirements had hourly compensation, including benefits, roughly 40% above average U.S. construction compensation.
    - Registered apprenticeship requirements help develop and maintain the workforce for the future.
2. submission and adherence to community benefit plans, which may include one or more legally enforceable community benefits agreements. These agreements may support workforce training, local hiring, union partnerships, and direct commitments to nearby communities and residents.
    - A large number of DOE-supported projects utilized project labor agreements and labor neutrality commitments or collective bargaining agreements. These types of agreements have been proven to provide a wide range of benefits to both workers and project developers, often resulting in accelerated project construction and reduced risks of work stoppage or other delays.
    - Community benefits agreements can help build support and address concerns of local residents for projects.
3. submission of domestic manufacturing plans and prohibitions on offshoring the manufacture of products developed or commercialized using DOE assistance without prior approval by DOE.

4. at least 40% of financial assistance from DOE, provided through a pre-determined list of covered programs, benefit small and disadvantaged communities.

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Section-by-Section Summary

Section 1 establishes a short title for this Act.

Section. 2 amends the Department of Energy (DOE) Organization Act to insert the following:

Section 664 (Prevailing Wages and Apprenticeships) applies Davis-Bacon prevailing wage and registered apprenticeship requirements to construction, maintenance, and repair projects receiving financial assistance from DOE. Davis-Bacon reporting requirements may be modified to better align with payroll schedules of employees who are party to collective bargaining agreements. DOE is required to publish annual aggregate data on wage compliance, apprenticeship utilization, and enforcement actions.

Section 665 (Labor Neutrality) requires entities, including their contractors and subcontractors, receiving financial assistance from DOE to make a labor neutrality commitment with respect to the exercise of employees and labor organizations of the right to organize and bargain in accordance with the National Labor Relations Act for the term of such assistance, including any construction, operations, and maintenance covered by such assistance.

Section 666 (Project Labor Agreements) requires the use of a project labor agreement for any construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair project involving a DOE facility, including contractor-operated facilities, costing more than $1 million. Agreements are required to include targeted and local recruitment goals as well as utilization of registered apprenticeships.

Section 667 (Community Benefits Plans and Associated Agreements) requires an entity's application for DOE financial assistance for a construction, maintenance, or repair project to include a detailed community benefits plan, informed by a community needs assessment, to ensure broadly shared prosperity resulting from such assistance. Such a plan must demonstrate meaningful engagement with a wide range of local stakeholders impacted by the application and shall seek to include one or more legally enforceable workforce or community benefits agreements negotiated between the entity and an inclusive and representative coalition of relevant labor organizations, community-based organizations, public interest groups, local governments, and Tribal governments. Detailed summaries of community benefits plans and associated agreements are required to be published by DOE.

Section 668 (Community Benefits and Job Quality Advisory Group) requires DOE to establish an advisory group that is made up of a wide range of stakeholders to provide recommendations on the development and implementation of community needs assessments, community benefits plans, and associated agreements.

Section 669 (Domestic Manufacturing) builds upon the Bayh-Dole Act's U.S. competitiveness provision to require DOE to promote the domestic manufacture of products embodying research, development, and demonstration (RD&D) supported by DOE. An entity's application for assistance to carry out RD&D activities must commit that any products embodying the subject of, or produced through, such RD&D will, to the best ability of such entity, be manufactured substantially in the United States. If an entity intends to manufacture any product related to its assistance, the entity must submit a domestic manufacturing plan. Preference shall be given to applications that include domestic manufacturing plans with collective bargaining agreements, commitments to utilize registered apprenticeship programs, and other commitments to meet or exceed industry-leading labor standards. Entities are prohibited from offshoring the manufacture of products developed or commercialized using DOE assistance without prior approval by DOE.

Section 670 (Small and Disadvantaged Communities Initiative) codifies the goals of Executive Order 14008 to require DOE to seek to ensure not less than 40% of financial assistance from DOE, provided through a pre-determined list of covered programs, provides specific, measurable, and meaningful benefits to small or disadvantaged communities. An annual report to Congress is required to evaluate DOE's performance in carrying out this section.

Section 671 (Data Collection and Reporting) requires reporting by entities receiving financial assistance from DOE to determine compliance with the requirements of sections 664 through 670 and enable assessment of DOE's efforts to support job creation, job quality, apprenticeship utilization, and community benefits. An annual report to Congress is required to evaluate DOE's performance to promote job quality, job access, and broadly shared prosperity among workers and communities resulting from financial assistance provided by DOE.

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