California 1st, but Kern 89th in Green Economy

California is the leading state of the nation in the number of green jobs. Kern County is ranks 89th among the 100 largest metropolitan areas in terms of the overall size of the green economy, according to the Metropolitan Policy Program at the Brookings Institution. The study looked at the nation’s green economy between 2003 and 2010 to quantify green jobs and establish recommendations on how policymakers can encourage the growth of the green economy.1

“The green economy sector is already an important source of industrial innovation, good-paying manufacturing jobs, and exports for a nation that needs them,” said Mark Muro, the coauthor of the report. “Key segments show great promise for helping us use resources more efficiently, improving our national security, protecting our environment, and remaining competitive in rapidly changing global markets.”

California is the top ranking state with 318,156 green jobs; it is followed by New York with 185,038 green jobs. Among metropolitan areas, Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana is second only to New York City-Long Island-Northern New Jersey.

Kern County’s 3,097 green jobs make up 1.1 percent of all jobs in the county. Between 2003 and 2010, Kern County added 561 green jobs to see the sector grow by 2.9 percent annually. On average, each green economy job in Kern County produces $6,226 in exports. The estimated median wage in Kern County’s green economy is $44,000 compared with $38,900 for all jobs in the county.

The study recommends to the policymakers:

- To help scale-up the market by encouraging green energy standards, promoting energy efficiency, adopting renewable energy, and streamlining the process of permitting green projects;
- To encourage financing for commercialization of green economy products;
- To reform the tax code to boost green economy investment;
- To support innovation through research and development funding; and

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1 For the purposes of the study, the green economy was defined as companies and jobs that produce goods and services with an environmental benefit or adds value using skills or technology designed for those products.
To focus on developing regional industry clusters.

“The United States should be at the vanguard of developing and deploying new, green technologies,” said Bruce Katz, vice president and director of the Metropolitan Policy Program, in a written statement. “The brutal truth is, unlike our global competitors, we have no strategic framework for expanding the green economy. We have too few financing tools, and we provide too little support for necessary innovation.”

Sources:
Excerpt from Los Angeles Business, July 13, 2011

For more details on Kern’s green economy, go to http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Files/Programs/Metro/green_economy/green_economy_profiles/metros/12540.pdf

For the complete report: http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Files/Programs/Metro/green_economy/0713_green_economy.pdf