

Zoe Cykosky

**How can the United States promote economic growth and clean energy at the same time?
How can rural communities like northeast Pennsylvania do the same?**

As the United States is known as an economic powerhouse, it is important to keep up this reputation as the world expands and grows. However, it is also important that the United States does so while promoting clean energy at the same time. In order to do so, new businesses should look towards creating an Eco friendly environment. While this daunting task may seem more time consuming and cost more, the impacts are extremely worthwhile. The United States should emphasize these impacts which include legal and tax advantages, reduced waste, an improved workplace, a positive public response, and sustainability. Ultimately, the United States can promote this economic growth and clean energy at the same time by teaching businesses of the benefits, showing them what steps they can take to go green, and rewarding them for their Eco friendly actions. While this can be a widespread occurrence over the entire country, rural communities such as northeastern Pennsylvania can do the same.

First, the United States need to inform existing businesses as well as new businesses the pros to going green. When a business is aware of these pros, then they may become more motivated to take action. For example, going green may cost more, however it can lead to marketing strategies which may lead to increased consumer interest. Also, in the long run, energy will cost less. According to MSNBC.com, chemical manufacturer DuPont saved over \$3 billion over two decades by reducing carbon emissions. Plus, a healthier workplace would lead to a more productive, happy work environment. According to the Green Business Bureau website, companies that promote a healthier workplace report a 20 percent decrease in the number of sick days used by employees. Tax credits may even be issued to businesses which utilize environmentally friendly business practices.

Another way to promote going green is by convincing businesses to switch to digital business to use less paper and therefore save money and the environment.

The next step which the United States can take is to show the businesses exactly how they can approach going green. Once businesses have a list of tasks to complete, it may be easier for them to approach energy efficiency. This list can include simple tasks such as switching off lights or equipment or replacing normal incandescent light bulbs with energy efficient lights. These simple tasks can be overlooked! Other ways to alter a business include switching to solar panels, as well as setting up different waste bins dedicated to aluminum, plastic, and paper. Formulating a list with these strategies may encourage businesses to take part since it will give them some direction.

Finally, the United States needs to reward those businesses who are going green in order to encourage other businesses to take similar action. In order to do so, the government provides tax deductions for those businesses which go green. According to The Solar Energy Industries Association, a solar investment tax credit is provided to businesses that install, develop, and/or finance solar energy property. Other rewards include increased customer interest. According to the Nielsen Global Survey, 66% of global respondents say they're willing to pay more for products and services that come from companies that are committed to positive social and environmental impact, up from 55% in 2014, and 50% in 2013. In addition, the reward may consist of informing businesses of other business which have successfully gone green. This would act as a goal for a business which is interested in changing its environmental practices to reach.

Not only should this be a nationwide project, it should start within rural communities such as in northeastern Pennsylvania. The procedure which consists of informing businesses of the pros, developing a plan, and rewarding these businesses should take place at a small scale level across the country, such as in northeastern Pennsylvania. If this happens on a small scale level, the nation will see tremendous improvement in the way that the country is economically expanding while

promoting clean energy growth. Once a community starts to implement Eco friendly procedures, others nearby will learn from their strategy and began to apply one which directly correlates with its needs and population. Small changes have already begun to make an impact on the United States in some states. For example, Grays Harbor Paper in Washington shut down due to lack of money in 1992. However, Bill Quigg bought the mill a year later and now, it produces 100 percent recycled paper by biomass fuel derived from logging waste. Now, more than 200 people are employed there and this mill is one of the nation's largest bio diesel plants. Taking an initiative such as this can lead to major impacts on both the environment and the economy. In Benson, Minnesota, there is an ethanol plant and a biomass power plant which burns 500,000 tons of turkey manure per year, producing 55 megawatts of power and providing 100 new jobs. Northeastern Pennsylvania may learn from this idea, as there are many farms in which manure could be turned for fuel.

In conclusion, the possibilities are endless for the United States to keep growing economically while remaining Eco friendly. As a country, we need to develop a three step plan which would inform businesses the benefits of going green, give them a tentative plan which could be adjusted due to their needs, and reward businesses which decide to take action. This plan needs to be dispersed throughout small communities around the country. Once small communities begin to take actions, other will follow. This will lead to a sweeping movement across the United States as we start to see businesses grow both economically and environmentally. Other nations may begin to see the effects which we leave on the environment which may lead them to pick up similar practices. Margaret Mead once said, "never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world." This quote reminded me of this writing prompt; if one community begins to take action, others will follow, leading to a national if not global effect. Therefore, it is important that the United States reminds its communities and towns that each and every one of them can make a difference, and it is never too late to begin picking up environmentally safe practices. One small step in the right direction can lead to a phenomenal impact on the world. With all the patriotism shown throughout the United States, we need to come together, develop a plan, and take on the challenge of expanding economically while promoting clean energy.