

# Growing Evidence Why Florida Doesn't Need Sabal Trail Nor FERC

January 17, 2016



Energy Media Group

[The solar energy industry now employs more workers than the oil and gas extraction sector,](#) reports CNN Money.

Over the past five years, the number of domestic jobs in the solar industry has more than doubled. According to the Solar Foundation, a nonprofit group not funded by the industry, there were 35,000 jobs added to the sector last year, up 20 percent

from 2014.

Meanwhile, the oil and gas industry continues to suffer from stubbornly low oil prices and growing stockpiles. CNN reports that in 2015, nearly 17,000 oil and gas exploration and production jobs were eliminated. Earlier this week the benchmark price for West Texas Intermediate crude dipped to a 12-year low just above \$30 per barrel.

Total, there are approximately 209,000 workers in the solar industry, more than oil and gas extraction, and nearly three times the amount working in the coal industry. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, [there were 184,500 workers employed in the oil and gas extraction sector](#) as of December 2015.

CNN also notes that wages paid to solar employees are rising. Across the U.S. in 2015, wages increased by about 2.5 percent. Wages in the solar industry, however, are up 5 percent from the year prior. Solar installers, on average, earn about \$21 an hour.

A variety of factors, [such as tax credits](#) and technological advances, have been steadily driving up both commercial and consumer demand. According to one solar company owner, the industry is “a good place to go now if you’re looking for a career change.”

According to the Solar Foundation, Colorado is home to a quickly growing solar energy sector and California has the most solar jobs. Other states include Massachusetts (thanks to policy incentives), New York and Arizona.

[In related news, Renewable energy efforts stymied by transmission roadblocks.](#)