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Editorial

## **Job-creation should be bipartisan effort by state lawmakers**

Wisconsin has a long record of progressive thinking, especially on environmental issues. We have taken visionary steps to protect the air we breathe and the water we drink. We have protected thousands of environmentally sensitive acres from development and turned thousands more into recreational areas.

So, it should not surprise anyone that green technology and energy conservation would be the basis of a job-creation program proposed by Gov. Jim Doyle recently.

Whether or not you believe in global climate change, reduced use of fossil fuels and increased use of renewable energy have an economic benefit now and in years to come.

We understand the concerns of groups like Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce and the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute, which contend that Doyle's Clean Energy Jobs Act will result in further job losses brought on by higher costs for electricity.

These are legitimate concerns and the governor and Legislature must not merely push them aside.

We think using the state's vast educational resources to work in concert with business to develop clean energy can translate into good-paying jobs, including the manufacturing sector where the state's job losses have been significant.

We're encouraged to see that a state business association — the Wisconsin Business Council — is calling for a united effort on plans that will allow manufacturers to compete globally while reducing energy consumption.

Last week, the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee unanimously passed a job-creation measure proposed by Democrats called Connecting Opportunity, Research and Entrepreneurship. We were happy to see the Republican members of the committee supported the measure.

We agree with their concern that the state needs to do more, and this would be a great time for Democrats and Republicans to work hand-in-hand at job creation.

We see great potential for using tax credits for businesses that add new jobs. Tax credits for angel investors would also help spark investment in businesses to help new ones get started and existing ones expand.

There should also be provisions for low-interest loans so businesses have the capital needed to expand.

On Sunday, we ran an op-ed from Jim Haney, the head of Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce, outlining the group's jobs agenda.

Haney makes some excellent suggestions on how Wisconsin can lead the way in job growth. One of his main points was that Wisconsin's mess of a state budget affects everyone, including business and

industry. The state, he said, must truly balance the budget, but not by using accounting tricks. Nor can Wisconsin afford to have more taxes and fees heaped on its residents.

State officials must also ensure that proposals for green energy jobs do not end up penalizing businesses or taxpayers with rising electricity costs.

Investments in alternative energy, too, must focus on research and development that lowers costs as well as provides renewable energy sources.

It would be impossible to include every idea or plan for job growth in a legislative proposal, but state lawmakers must find common ground and come up with a truly bipartisan job-creation program.

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