

# **Sustainable Practices & Economic Development**

## **Potential Opportunities for the Eugene-Springfield Metro Partnership**

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Prepared by

ECONorthwest  
99 West Tenth Ave., Suite 400  
Eugene, Oregon 97401  
541-687-0051  
niemi@eugene.econw.com

For

The Center for Watershed and Community Health  
Institute for a Sustainable Environment  
University of Oregon  
5729 Main St. #248  
Springfield, Oregon 97478  
541-744-7072  
bdoppelt@darkwing.uoregon.edu

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This report briefly summarizes information from readily available sources about opportunities for economic development associated with the implementation of sustainable practices by private firms and public agencies in the Pacific Northwest. The report separately presents information regarding sustainable practices in eight areas:

- Renewable Energy Generation
- Energy Efficiency
- Energy Efficient Public Buildings
- Green Building
- Nurseries
- Waste Based Economic Development
- Organic Retail Trade
- Sustainable Agriculture

The information in the report strongly supports these conclusions:

- A. Many firms and agencies in the Pacific Northwest already have implemented sustainable practices that curtail wasteful uses of natural resources.
- B. The implementation of sustainable practices has generated jobs in the Pacific Northwest via five pathways:
  1. Sustainable practices create directly jobs, e.g., in the construction of renewable-energy energy generators.
  2. The cost savings from adopting sustainable practices can be used to protect jobs that otherwise would be lost or to create new jobs.
  3. When sustainable practices, such as reduced use of toxic materials in a production process, create better working conditions, workers can remain healthier, become more productive, and incur fewer health-related absences from work.
  4. Existing jobs can become more secure and new jobs can be created as firms implement sustainable practices to retain and increase their competitiveness in regional, national, and global markets that are tightening sustainability standards.
  5. Adoption of sustainable practices can enhance economic security by reducing vulnerability to disruptions from market instability and terrorism.
- C. Several studies indicate that considerable future growth can reasonably be expected for activities associated with the design, construction, and implementation of sustainable practices. The Pacific Northwest is generally well-positioned to ride the leading edge of this growth.

This report was prepared for the Center for Watershed and Community Health (CWCH) by Ernie Niemi and Scott Reed, the Eugene office of ECONorthwest, the oldest and largest economics consulting firm in the Pacific Northwest. The CWCH is affiliated with the Institute for Sustainable Resources at the University of Oregon and assists businesses, governments, communities, and groups representing workers in developing new approaches to environmental governance to achieve sustainable development.

For more information, please contact:

Ernie Niemi  
ECONorthwest  
99 West 10th Avenue Ste. 400  
Eugene, Oregon 97401  
Phone: 541-687-0051  
Email: [niemi@eugene.econw.com](mailto:niemi@eugene.econw.com)

Bob Doppelt  
The Center for Watershed and Community Health  
5729 Main St. #248  
Springfield, Oregon 97478  
Phone: 541-744-7072  
Email: [bdoppelt@darkwing.uoregon.edu](mailto:bdoppelt@darkwing.uoregon.edu)  
Website: <http://cwch.uoregon.edu>