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## Renewable energy biz forms trade association for advocacy

By [Nancy Kaffer](#)



Clemente

Renewable energy companies and component makers could have a \$6 billion impact on Michigan's economy, says a new trade association devoted to advocating for accelerating the growth of that sector within the state.

The **Energy Innovation Business Council** formally launches Wednesday at an event in Lansing. Former state lawmaker Ed Clemente is its president. A study commissioned by the group found that even if the sector grows more slowly than expected, Michigan can still see a \$3 billion impact, with about 15,585 jobs created.

"We're going to give them the voice," Clemente said. "We'll help with policy and advocacy."

Before taking the paid position through the new nonprofit, Clemente served in the Michigan House for six years. Before being elected to the Legislature, he was president of the **Southern Wayne County Chamber of Commerce**.

Because of the state's manufacturing capabilities, Michigan has a chance to position itself as "the region of choice" for makers of clean energy devices and components, the study found, with the potential to make Michigan "the hub of new energy manufacturing."

The clean, renewable energy sector includes solar, wind, advanced energy storage (batteries), biomass and energy efficiency.

The council will release the full study, done by Carnegie, Pa.-based **Hill Group Inc.**, as part of its Wednesday launch.

Clean, renewable energy also will see a boost as the auto industry moves toward the newest Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards, set to take effect in 2016.

"That will be an innovative boom for the region," Clemente said, noting that companies that make LED lights will see greater use because they put less strain on batteries.

Clean energy made in Michigan has the potential to reach a global market, he said, especially in countries like Brazil, Russia, India and China, which have rapidly growing middle classes.

Other industry associations are focused on building awareness of the sector. The energy council, Clemente said, will concentrate on advocacy but also on building relationships between energy companies, potential customers and outside entities that can help spread the word, like media companies.

The council, which is a 501(c)(6), has 15 members, including Midland-based **Dow Corning**, Canton Township-based **Danotek Motion Technologies**, Eaton Rapids-based **Astraeus Wind**, Traverse City-based **Heritage Sustainable Energy LLC** and Ann Arbor-based **FlexSys**.

Clemente said he expects the organization to be funded by a mix of grants and dues. Dues will be structured based on company size, and range from the hundreds to the thousands of dollars per year.

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