

# The Virginian-Pilot

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## AGREEMENT ON GREEN-JOB OUTLOOK, NOT ON ENERGY-SOURCE MANDATE

By Philip Walzer  
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### PORTSMOUTH

They reached an easy consensus on the outlook for green jobs: promising and plentiful.

But state and federal officials gently disagreed on green policy at a panel discussion Tuesday. The question: Should Virginia set a requirement that a certain share of its energy come from renewable sources, such as wind power?

The General Assembly has rejected mandates, opting instead for a voluntary goal of 15 percent by 2025. Twenty-five states and the District of Columbia have required percentages, said Linda Silverman, senior adviser for renewable energy with the U.S. Department of Energy.

"Virginia is behind the eight ball," Silverman said. "I think the states that do this have ended up finding that there's good economic reason to do it."

### business news

Stephen Walz, director of the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy, said, however, that the state should easily meet its target without mandates. "It's important to note that a lot of states have found they have problems meeting ... the standards" they have imposed on themselves, he said.

Both agreed, along with other panelists, that the future is bright for new job opportunities involving renewable energy and energy efficiency.

No one hazarded a guess on the number of jobs or funding that could emerge in Hampton Roads, but they pointed to an array of legislation, including the federal stimulus act, that has generated activity.

On the state level, Walz said, the General Assembly will probably pass a measure

promoted by Gov. Bob McDonnell to provide businesses an annual \$500 tax credit for five years for each new "green job" that pays at least \$50,000 a year.

"This is a crazy time to be in the energy-efficiency business," said Chandler von Schrader, a manager with the Environmental Protection Agency. "I encourage everyone here to join in our madness."

More than 100 people attended the conference, at Tidewater Community College. It was sponsored by the Green Jobs Alliance and the Green Economic Alliance, nonprofit groups based in Hampton.

"Forget all the climate science," said Randy Gilliland, the chairman of the Green Jobs Alliance, who also is a Hampton City councilman. "What this is really all about is jobs."

Gilliland said he will not seek re-election this year so he can devote his time to cultivating green jobs. "We are in a generational, transformational economic moment," he said. "We will either seize it or look back in 20 years and say, 'This is where we missed it.'"