

I'm Pat Coon from RE, the state's leading renewable energy contractor. We install solar hot water systems, solar electric systems, wood and pellet boilers in Maine's homes and businesses. Over the last four years, we've seen our business grow from 5 to 35 employees. That's 35 jobs paying between \$15 and \$30 an hour with health and other benefits, offsetting imported energy.

The average solar hot water system costs about \$11,000, installed. Of that, roughly half is labor. We expect that each house we visit will reduce its consumption of oil by between 2 and 300 gallons of oil through a combination of solar energy, keeping the oil boiler off for the non heating season and boiler control upgrades. That's 200 gallons of imported oil each house will not need to consume for the next 20 years.

What's that worth? For the homeowner, it's straightforward math, 200 gallons a year vs. \$11,000 up front. But what's it worth to the rest of us when one of our neighbors decides to reduce their dependence on imported fuel? Each one of our clients now has an extra \$1,000 a year or more to spend on things other than oil. Roughly 90% of every dollar spent on energy leaves the state of Maine. Our neighbors without oil bills are spending their money locally in ways that have a much higher multiplier effect on the state's economy. They've not only created jobs and tax revenue when they wrote the check to their solar contractor, they're doing it for the next twenty years by keeping oil money in the state.

This industry is ready to go. We've got piles of resumes from unemployed carpenters looking for work offsetting imported energy. The technology is here, the will is there, and people are looking for work. All we need is a little commitment from the state and federal government to create thousands of jobs in the state offsetting imported oil.