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Bridging the Gap: Building a Stronger Energy Workforce for the Inland Empire

Riverside, CA - The Inland Empire is on the brink of a major energy workforce shift, and the Inland Regional Energy Network (I-REN) is stepping up to ensure the region is ready. A newly released Energy Workforce Gaps Assessment highlights an urgent need for skilled workers as the energy sector continues to expand. The study, conducted by The Energy Coalition, projects that energy jobs will grow by 20% by 2030. However, with over 75% of current workers expected to retire or transfer within the next five years, the region must act now to secure its energy future.

The Inland Empire, home to more than 4.6 million residents, has a diverse and growing workforce, with over half of workers identifying as Hispanic/Latino and 83.3% holding at least a high school diploma—the minimum requirement for many energy jobs. However, access to training programs remains a challenge due to the region's vast geography. While 100 institutions offer 363 training pathways, gaps in education and workforce alignment continue to persist.

To address these challenges, I-REN's assessment outlines key strategies to connect job seekers with training opportunities, expand employer partnerships, and strengthen the pipeline between education and employment. By enhancing collaboration between workforce development organizations, schools, and local businesses, I-REN aims to ensure that Inland Empire residents—whether recent graduates or career changers—can access high-quality training and enter the energy workforce with confidence.

"This is a pivotal moment for our region," said Oscar Ortiz, I-REN Chairperson. "The demand for energy workers is growing, and we must ensure our local workforce is prepared to fill these high-quality jobs. By investing in training and strengthening employer partnerships, we can build a more resilient, skilled workforce that powers the Inland Empire for years to come."

With the right investments and partnerships, the Inland Empire can become a leader in energy innovation while creating stable, well-paying jobs for its residents.

For more information about I-REN, visit <https://iren.gov>.

Photo: I-REN Staff attend local college career fairs to recruit for internships and share local job opportunities in the energy sector.

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About I-REN

The Inland Regional Energy Network (I-REN) is a partnership between the Coachella Valley Association of Governments, San Bernardino Council of Governments, and Western Riverside Council of Governments. This collaboration provides critical energy efficiency resources, education, and funding to communities across the region. I-REN focuses on delivering services to the public sector, advancing codes and standards, and offering workforce education and training, all while promoting a sustainable,

climate-resilient future. Funded by utility ratepayer funds through the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), I-REN offers no-cost resources to local residents, businesses, and public agencies, supporting the development of energy-efficient and environmentally responsible communities. For more information about I-REN please visit <https://iren.gov>.