

Julia Griffin is the former town manager of Hanover. April Salas is the executive director of the Irving Institute of Energy and Society at Dartmouth. Chris Stewart is a stay-at-home dad. Sherrie Trefry is the energy market leader at VanesseHangen Brustlin. David Worthen is the president of Worthen Industries. All of the authors are on the board of Clean Energy NH.

In 2019, author and investor Ramez Naam opined that the world had entered the “[Third Phase of Clean Energy](#).” He concluded, based on large volumes of data, that a threshold had been crossed and it was now cheaper to build new renewable energy resources than to operate existing fossil fuel resources. Today, that declaration seems prescient: the latest word from the operator of New England’s electric grid is that 95 percent of new proposed electricity generation in the region is either wind, solar, or battery storage.

However, while it is certainly the case that many clean energy technologies are dramatically less expensive to operate, some of them have high up-front capital costs. And while creative financing options have helped some consumers leap this initial hurdle, it has remained a stubborn barrier to a complete and dramatic transformation of the energy markets.

And now comes Congressional passage of the Inflation Reduction Act, which includes provisions that for the first time ever create a national energy policy focused on transitioning the United States to a clean energy economy. The bill, with \$369 billion in tax credits, rebates, grants, and loans will transform energy markets by incentivizing both the demand for, and the supply of, clean energy and clean energy technologies. To spur demand, there are tax rebates for electric vehicles, high efficiency heat pumps and water heaters, induction range cook stoves, heat-pump clothes driers, and even for electrical panel upgrades. Essentially, all the technologies that a consumer needs to eliminate the lion’s share of their personal greenhouse gas emissions just got cheaper.

On the electricity supply side, the bill provides the clean energy markets with certainty and predictability by reinstating a 30 percent tax credit on wind and solar technologies and, for the first time ever, enshrining that credit for an entire decade. For the first twenty years of the effort to expand renewable energy, Congress intermittently allowed these tax credits to expire, leading to [boom bust cycles in wind](#) and a similar effect on photovoltaic solar energy, the so-called “[solar coaster](#).” Those uncertainties are now a thing of the past.

The combination of these new policies and the plummeting costs of renewables means that the crossing of the threshold to a new phase is now undeniable. The benefits to our economy will be manifest, and it couldn’t come soon enough. At a time when New Hampshire residents are paying the highest electricity rates in the nation, the [Rhodium Group’s analysis](#) forecast that the new law will lower household energy costs between \$730 and \$1,135 dollars per year is welcome news. As is the forecast by [BW Research](#) which predicts the act will permanently add 4,400 new jobs to New Hampshire and add nearly \$350 million to our economy.

For all its incentives, this bill also comes with an important caveat: it sets the stage, but now the actors – all of us – must play our parts. New Hampshire is the only state in New England that does not have any greenhouse gas emissions reductions goals – either binding or non-binding – established in law. Thanks to the new federal financial incentives, clean energy businesses, investors, and entrepreneurs are going to have a very attractive value proposition and will be investing in scaling up. And they’ll have a choice

about where to do that. Their dollars and job creation efforts will go to the states that send the clearest signal that they are ready to seize the moment and take the lead in creating the industries of tomorrow.

Lacking decisive policy in this arena, New Hampshire is at serious risk of being left behind. Fortunately, there's a long and strong tradition in New Hampshire of government, businesses, and nonprofits coming together, finding common ground, and developing approaches that are uniquely suited to the Granite State.

We can do this, as now is our opportunity to build a zero emissions, clean energy economy.