

Vermont and seven other states will share nearly \$4 million in economic stimulus funding announced today under a green jobs program that was authored by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.).

“If we get our act together as a nation and start addressing the major environmental problems of our time – global warming and our dependence on fossil fuels – we can create millions of good paying jobs,” said Sanders, chairman of the Senate’s Green Jobs and the New Economy Subcommittee. “In other words,” he added, “good environmental policy is good economic policy.”

Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) said, “I applaud the Obama administration’s ongoing commitment to help families and businesses during these difficult economic times and to aggressively accelerate investments in green jobs. This project will put a much needed framework around the larger discussion of a green economy in Vermont.”

“This investment in our green energy economy is a wise use of recovery funds. It will spur the creation of much-needed jobs in Vermont, and it will help our state continue to take the lead in charting our nation’s energy future,” said Rep. Peter Welch (D-Vt.), a member of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Vermont led an eight-state Northeast Research Consortium that applied for a research grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. Vermont’s share of the grant is Vermont \$530,500. As part of an effort to create a national green jobs bank, the states will scour job listings in the region to produce data on the demand for green jobs. They also will work with job banks and career centers to provide green job listings and career training information.

Nationwide, U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis announced \$55 million in green jobs grants to support job training and labor market information programs to help workers find jobs in expanding green industries and related occupations. “Today’s announcement is part of the administration’s long-term commitment to fostering both immediate economic growth and a clean energy future. It’s an investment that will help American workers do well while doing good,” Solis said.

The funding was authorized by a program that Congress created in 2007, when legislation by Sanders paved the way to help train workers in jobs that involve clean, efficient energy technologies. Studies showed that a lack of skilled workers in the field was a major barrier to making America more energy efficient.