

This week's Santa Fe Reporter featured an in depth story about green jobs in New Mexico with a focus on the efforts of YouthWorks, an organization based out of Santa Fe dedicated to providing training for at risk youth in a variety of fields including green jobs.

[Read the full story.](#)

The article talked about the recent visit of two YouthWorks participants to Washington.

Luján also recently invited YouthWorks educational coordinator Bott-Lyons and Executive Director Melynn Schuyler, as well as two program graduates, Dominic Cantu and Douglas Rael, to speak before the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute's annual policy conference.

"Those two guys stole the show, telling people not to give up, telling us to make sure we're including everyone and not just a select few," he says. "And I'm looking to them to be a part of those solutions," Luján says.

The article also discussed Ben's work in Washington on green jobs and the potential to create green jobs in New Mexico.

Since heading to Washington DC earlier this year, freshman congressman Ben Ray Luján, D-NM, has been focusing on green jobs and strengthening New Mexico's connection to green industries. His interest in the issue was cultivated, he says, during his time on the state's Public Regulation Commission, on which he advocated for an increase in the state's reliance upon renewable energy.

New Mexico can lead the nation in green energy and jobs, he says, thanks to the presence of solar and wind resources. The state must take full advantage, he says, of the expertise present within its national laboratories and universities. "This is something that is all-encompassing, and we need to do all we can be doing with small businesses and technology transfer around Sandia and Los Alamos," Luján says. "The job opportunities that are being created—that have already been created and that are alive and well today—are about being smarter about the way we do things."

Ben discussed the unique history of sustainability in New Mexico.

New Mexico also is a proven leader in sustainability, he says.

Looking around northern New Mexico, where he grew up, families have lived sustainably for generations: They are smart about cultivating local foods, using water and energy wisely, and building practical homes.

“The way we built our homes for many, many years around New Mexico, we did it so they were cool in the summer and hot in the winter,” he says. “It’s important how much sustainability was a part of our daily life.”

The article went on to mention Ben's work on the American Clean Energy and Security Act that resulted in funding for clean-energy job training and improved opportunities for Hispanic Serving Institutions to benefit from innovative training programs.

As chairman of the House of Representative’s Congressional Hispanic Caucus’ Green Economy and Renewable Energy Task Force, Luján offered an amendment to the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 that would provide funding for clean-energy job training and education programs at Hispanic-serving institutions and tribal colleges. (Having passed the House, that bill still awaits a vote in the Senate.)