

Climate Changed

Solar Jobs Shrink Again as Trump's Tariffs Bite Industry

By [Brian Eckhouse](#)

February 12, 2019, 5:00 AM EST

Updated on February 12, 2019, 10:24 AM EST

-
- ▶ Sector lost about 8,000 jobs in 2018 as uncertainty took toll
 - ▶ Employment is forecast to resume growing in 2019, report says
-



A worker carries a solar panel during an installation in Los Angeles, California. *Photographer: Patrick T. Fallon/Bloomberg*

U.S. solar jobs fell for a second straight year as companies delayed projects in anticipation of President Donald Trump's import tariffs. The good news: Employment is set to bounce back in 2019.

The sector lost about 8,000 jobs in 2018, a 3.2 percent drop, as uncertainty over the tariffs announced early that year slowed large-scale projects, according to a report Tuesday from the Solar Foundation. The industry, which more than doubled its workforce since 2010, now employs about 242,000 people.

[Learn More](#)

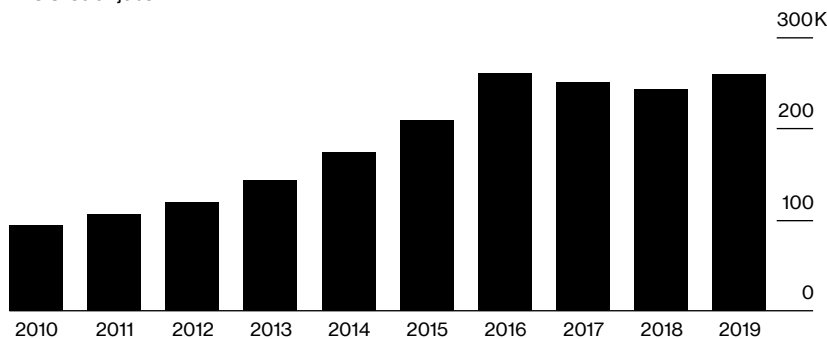
“We saw it coming,” Ed Gilliland, senior director at the Solar Foundation, said in an interview. “The uncertainty was a constraint.”

There is, however, a turnaround ahead: Job growth will resume in 2019, jumping by 7 percent, according to the foundation. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, meanwhile, forecasts that solar-panel installer will be the fastest-growing occupation through 2026.

Duties Hurt

The prospect of tariffs slowed solar development, crimping U.S. jobs

U.S. solar jobs



Source: The Solar Foundation
Note: 2019 is a forecast

The U.S. solar industry warned tariffs would slow growth and impact employment. When Trump announced the duties in January 2018, the Solar Energy Industries Association projected 23,000 job losses.

In the end, the duties on imported solar equipment were lower than developers feared. But delays that began in the run-up to the White House’s final decision cascaded for months, slowing jobs growth for the first three quarters of 2018, according to the Solar Foundation, which has been tracking solar employment since 2010.

Policy changes or uncertainty in some leading solar states also curbed employment. California, the largest solar state, shed almost 9,600 solar jobs in 2018 as utilities were under less pressure to meet clean-energy goals after several years of aggressive development, according to the report.

(Updates with industry-group forecast in fifth paragraph.)

[Terms of Service](#) [Trademarks](#) [Privacy Policy](#)
©2019 Bloomberg L.P. All Rights Reserved
[Careers](#) [Made in NYC](#) [Advertise](#) [Ad Choices](#) [Contact Us](#) [Help](#)