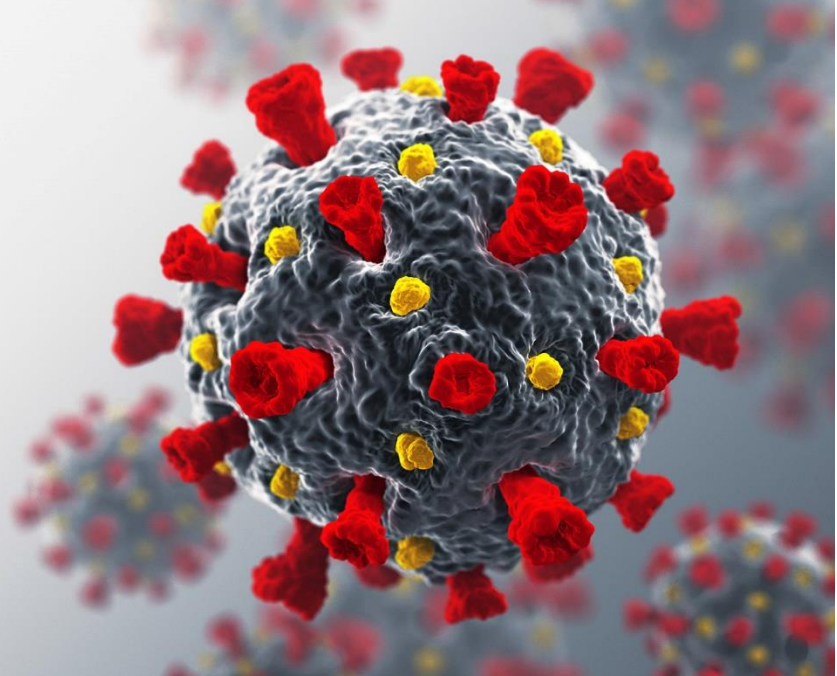


To: Clients
From: Philip Jordan
Vice-President, BW Research Partnership
Date: September 11, 2020

MEMORANDUM

Fossil Fuel Employment Initial Impacts from the
COVID-19 Economic Crisis, March-July 2020,
Revised



INTRODUCTION

Over the past few months, the COVID-19 pandemic has fueled historic job losses in the United States. These losses peaked in April, the first week of April nearly matched the historic weekly high with 6.62 million additional initial unemployment claims. Initial unemployment claims for April totaled 23.1 million, while the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the US workforce from March through May totaled about 35 million before experiencing a slight rebound in June and July. The insured unemployment rate rose more than 11 percentage points from March through May, reaching 15.6 percent, which is the highest recorded rate since BLS began tracking this data in 1948.

At the same time, oil markets continued a decline that started with an early 2020 demand drop, followed by disagreements over production cuts among OPEC+ nations. COVID-19 related reductions to economic activity have further exacerbated oil's price decline, however historically large production cuts of 9.7 million barrels per day have appeared to help oil prices recover, potentially staving off further turmoil in U.S. oil production.¹

While workers in industries like food services and hospitality were hit first and hardest, negative impacts are now being felt throughout the economy. Energy-related workers – defined in the U.S. Energy and Employment Report² (an effort led by the National Association of State Energy Officials, the Energy Futures Initiative, and BW Research Partnership) as those working in electricity generation, fuels, transmission, distribution, storage, energy efficiency, and motor vehicles – were also significantly impacted, as the industry shed an estimated 1.36 million jobs at the peak of the pandemic; this total surpasses nearly all industry-wide growth measured since the first US Energy and Employment Report five years ago.

A closer examination of fossil fuel workers finds that the industry **shed an estimated 120,800 jobs through March, April, May, June, and July**, representing a 16 percent drop in employment. Unfortunately, this only captures the initial impacts of the COVID-19 crisis and does not include many temporarily furloughed or underemployed workers.

¹ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-05-16/opec-dazzles-oil-market-with-swift-delivery-of-new-supply-cuts>

² <http://usenergyjobs.org>

IMPACTS

Fossil fuels employment was on a steady decline through the first two months of the COVID-induced economic downturn, losing about 7 percent of total employment in each of March and April before briefly leveling out in May, dropping only a half percent. Despite energy job growth in June, fossil fuel employment continued to decrease, dropping more than 1 percent. While energy job growth stagnated in July, fossil fuels dropped an additional 4,100 jobs or 0.6 percent. Demand for energy has fallen sharply and petroleum and other fuel storage is near capacity as Americans stay home and out of their cars, and factories close due to physical isolation and decreased demand.³ As a result, energy companies continued furloughs and layoffs, which has increased unemployment filings among fossil fuel workers.

The unemployment data shows that economic impacts have affected all fossil fuel sectors but have not been evenly distributed across industries.

- Fuels, the largest fossil fuel sector, had the most job losses through July, shedding about 114,600 jobs or 19 percent. This represents 95 percent of all fossil fuel job losses over the last five months.
- Transmission, distribution, and storage employment dropped 10 percent of their workforce through July, representing 5,300 jobs.
- Electric power generation employment, meanwhile, is mostly flat, losing about 1,000 jobs, or only 1 percent of its workforce, through July. This is primarily due to the more stable employment in the utility sector.
- Oil lost the most workers of the fossil fuels, shedding 71,100 jobs or 18 percent of pre-COVID-19 employment. Most job losses were in extraction activities.
- Gas and coal employment declined 14 and 13 percent, respectively, since March – representing 37,300 jobs and 12,500 jobs, respectively.

These estimates are all quite conservative and do not reflect underemployment or temporary unemployment. In addition, based on continued oil and gas production declines through July, it is expected that fossil fuel employment will continue to decline through August and will continue to decline through the near future, though at the lower rate of decline seen over the last two months.

Texas had the largest number of layoffs, losing 41,100 jobs or about 14 percent of its fossil fuel workforce to this initial employment drop. Louisiana lost 12,400 jobs, or 25 percent of its fossil fuel employment while Oklahoma dropped 19 percent, or 10,900 fossil jobs. Kentucky and Pennsylvania also both lost more than a quarter of their fossil fuel workforce, shedding 3,000 jobs and 9,100 jobs, respectively. For more information about fossil fuel job losses by each state, see Appendix A: State Fossil Fuel Job Losses, March-July 2020 (Revised).

The BLS Employment Situation report shows us that in the overall economy, racial and ethnic minorities, women, young workers, and those with less educational attainment are currently suffering higher unemployment rates.⁴ While oil, gas, and coal jobs continued to shed during June's job bump, Hispanic and Latino energy workers were hit the hardest, as 34 percent of derrick operators, rotary drill operators,

³ <https://www.cfr.org/blog/oil-ground-zero-running-out-storage>; <https://www.eia.gov/outlooks/steo/>

⁴ <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm>

and roustabouts in the US are Hispanic/Latino, compared to the energy industry as a whole being about 14 percent Hispanic/Latino.^{5,6} A stimulus program built to provide job security to these displaced fossil workers across the energy industry is necessary to promote a rapid and more equitable economic recovery.

METHODOLOGY

Employment change by industry monthly from February to July 2020 allows us to evaluate differences in COVID-19 related employment impacts between industries. The Bureau of Labor Statistics provides this data in Table B-1 “Employees on nonfarm payrolls by industry sector and selected industry detail,” from its Employment Situation news release. Since this data is based on surveys conducted in the second week of each month, it does not capture accurate total job losses for the whole month. For that information, we look to the Department of Labor’s Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims data. By totaling initial claims for all weeks in each month, we get a better picture of how many Americans are jobless. While this is not a perfect count, it allows for a more accurate, up-to-date estimate and illustrates the difference in impacts among states. This month’s data was updated due to revisions in the underlying BLS Employment Situation report and DOL weekly unemployment insurance claims source data.

Industry employment change premiums are created by taking the percent change in employment of each industry over the national percent change in employment, then subtracting one (1). State employment change premiums are made the same way. These state and industry premiums are combined evenly and applied to the national percent change in employment. BLS Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) also provides monthly employment data by high level industry and state in Table 4 “Employees on nonfarm payrolls by state and selected industry sector,” which is then weighted and applied to the industry-state job loss rates. These final industry-state job loss rates are applied to the industry breakdown within each energy sector (electric power generation, fuels, transmission, distribution, and storage, energy efficiency, and motor vehicles) for each state to produce final energy employment loss estimates. Energy employment data broken out by sector, industry, and state is derived from the 2020 US Energy and Employment Report (USEER). For more information on the 2020 USEER methodology, please visit <http://usenergyjobs.org>.

The fossil fuel industry comprises three of the five previously listed sectors: electric power generation, fuels, and transmission, distribution, and storage – not including energy efficiency and motor vehicles. Electric power generation includes detailed technologies such as natural gas, oil, and coal. Fuels include natural gas, oil, and coal. Transmission, distribution, and storage includes traditional transmission and distribution of electricity, natural gas, oil, and coal. For a more detailed explanation of all five energy sectors, please visit <http://usenergyjobs.org>.

ABOUT BW RESEARCH

BW Research is a full-service applied research firm that is focused on supporting our clients with economic & workforce research, customer & community research, as well as strategic planning and evaluation services. For more information and analysis on economic impacts related to COVID-19, please visit: <http://bwresearch.com/covid>

⁵ Emsi, Occupation Table with SOCs 47-5011, 47-5012, and 47-5071. Datarun 2020.2 – Employees.

⁶ <https://www.usenergyjobs.org>

APPENDIX A: STATE FOSSIL FUEL JOB LOSSES, MARCH-JULY 2020 (REVISED)

State	Total FF Jobs Lost	Percent Decline	State	Total FF Jobs Lost	Percent Decline
Alabama	1,047	12.1%	Montana	910	17.9%
Alaska	2,819	25.5%	Nebraska	63	8.9%
Arizona	166	3.8%	Nevada	34	2.2%
Arkansas	448	10.0%	New Hampshire	5	1.0%
California	5,436	15.0%	New Jersey	306	7.0%
Colorado	3,742	13.0%	New Mexico	6,092	25.4%
Connecticut	29	1.9%	New York	152	2.3%
Delaware	70	6.3%	North Carolina	173	6.8%
District of Columbia	0	0.0%	North Dakota	4,826	21.5%
Florida	257	2.9%	Ohio	2,695	17.9%
Georgia	274	8.6%	Oklahoma	10,917	18.9%
Hawaii	83	16.9%	Oregon	26	1.9%
Idaho	19	6.1%	Pennsylvania	9,079	27.0%
Illinois	1,234	10.5%	Rhode Island	5	1.4%
Indiana	984	13.9%	South Carolina	65	2.5%
Iowa	60	4.0%	South Dakota	12	4.3%
Kansas	1,253	14.3%	Tennessee	137	4.2%
Kentucky	3,039	29.5%	Texas	41,126	14.1%
Louisiana	12,444	25.0%	Utah	713	9.5%
Maine	16	3.3%	Vermont	4	11.6%
Maryland	96	4.5%	Virginia	609	9.7%
Massachusetts	41	2.9%	Washington	477	12.4%
Michigan	940	13.5%	West Virginia	3,706	16.6%
Minnesota	270	7.0%	Wisconsin	58	3.1%
Mississippi	1,007	12.0%	Wyoming	2,768	13.8%
Missouri	102	5.6%	US TOTAL	120,822	15.9%