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Energy and Environmental



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As Georgia industry continues to grow rapidly, innovation in the state's environmental and energy sectors is integral to maximizing economic efficiency and maintaining a high quality of life in communities. With its natural resources, pro-business atmosphere and state-supported research, Georgia has fostered a strong balance between environmental consciousness and economic development.

There are more than 1,000 energy and environmental sector companies in Georgia, many of which are expanding their capacity to serve a global market. For these companies, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has lowered the cost of environmental protection across North America, enabling purchasing nations to help clean the environment and promote health and human safety. Georgia and U.S. firms also benefit from NAFTA-driven increased government transparency in environmental laws and regulations in Mexico. The demand for water and wastewater treatment

technologies has escalated in the last decade, and Georgia has risen to meet it. State companies in the water and air purification sectors exported more than \$31.6 million in products and equipment in 2006. The top destinations for these products were Canada, Taiwan, Germany, Turkey and Mexico, in that order. Also, in the realm of nuclear power, Georgia's four nuclear reactors rank ninth in the country in terms of net capacity.





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Alternative fuel sources have become vital components of environmental and energy technology, and Georgia has taken a lead role in this sector. Utilizing the state's abundant timber resources, Georgia has started marketing wood products as alternative fuel sources to several European countries. Exports including wood pellets and chips doubled from \$3.1 million in 2005 to more than \$6.2 million in 2006. The state's top trading partners in this sector include Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, China, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

Significant expansion in this area is expected in the coming years as Georgia constructs several alternative fuel plants in the state's southern region. Companies such as C2 Biofuels are converting the state's pine trees - one of Georgia's most sustainable resources that has seen a 15 percent increase since 1997 - to ethanol.

State research institutions are making significant breakthroughs in the alternative energy fields as well. The Georgia Institute of Technology's Strategic Energy Initiative has collaborated with researchers at the University of Georgia to optimize the conversion of timber to ethanol. The University of Georgia's Engineering Outreach Services also supports the biofuel industry in the state, particularly in work to convert biomass from products including peanuts, chicken fat and wood into alternative fuels.

Government partnerships also enable Georgia companies to increase productivity through resource conservation. The Agriculture Pollution Prevention Program (AgP2 Program) and the Pollution Prevention Assistance Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources offer businesses of all sizes free, confidential technical assistance on cost-effective ways to conserve resources and maintain compliance levels while streamlining their production.



State initiatives and legislation also foster environmental and energy-conscious measures. In 2006, Georgia adopted an initiative to craft a statewide strategy for energy efficiency and conservation. The Agricultural Innovation Center in Tifton, one of the Governor's Centers of Innovation, bridges industry, academic, federal and state authorities to bolster the state's natural resource technology capabilities. In 2002, the dormant Elba Island facility off the coast of Savannah was opened for use as one of four LNG terminals in the nation,



showcasing Georgia's pioneering spirit and innovative thinking toward power needs. Finally, in 2000, the state enacted the Georgia Community GreenSpace Program that promotes the adoption of policies and regulations to preserve 20 percent of land in rapidly growing counties. This enhances Georgia's exceptional quality of life by creating recreational areas while protecting natural resources. ■