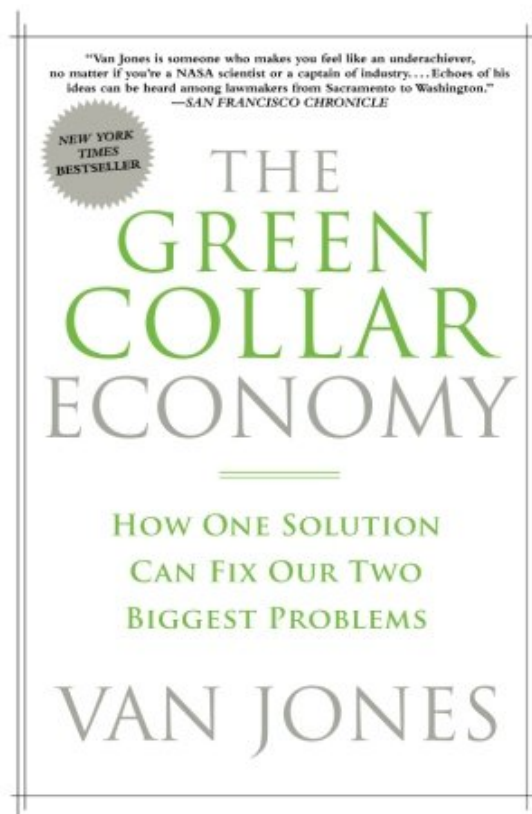


THE GREEN COLLAR ECONOMY: HOW ONE SOLUTION CAN FIX OUR TWO BIGGEST PROBLEMS BY VAN JONES



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A New York Times bestseller, *The Green Collar Economy* by award-winning human rights activist and environmental leader Van Jones delivers a much-needed economic and environmental solution to today's two most critical problems. With a revised introduction and new afterword by the author—a man who counsels President Barack Obama on environmental policy—*The Green Collar Economy* and Jones have been highly praised by a multitude of leaders and legislators, including Al Gore, Senator Tom Daschle, and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi. Van Jones was named one of “The World's 100 Most Influential People of 2009” by Time magazine, and with *The Green Collar Economy* he offers a wise, necessary, and eminently achievable plan for saving the earth and rescuing working class Americans.

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- Brand: Jones, Van/ Conrad, Ariane (CON)
- Published on: 2009-09-29
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economy and the environment.

Most helpful customer reviews

89 of 109 people found the following review helpful.

Leaves much to be desired

By JP

The Green Collar Economy covers a very important issue, at a very important moment in history, so I wish Van Jones had done a better job.

My largest complaint is that so much of this book (the first 65 pages) covers nothing but Hurricane Katrina and race relations. You would never tell from the cover descriptions or introduction that this really is a book about race and class. Van Jones comes across as obsessed with this issue, yet fails to convince me of a real connection between race and the environment.

Van Jones is also very non-specific throughout most of the book. He desperately needs more evidence, comparisons, and statistics to back up his claims. Not until the second to last chapter do we learn of specific policy solutions.

The Green Collar Economy also neglects some of the most important green issues. He dedicates less than one page to suburban sprawl vs. transit oriented development, which is really a paramount topic. Intercity rail is barely mentioned. He rarely brings up Europe, even though the US has so much to learn from them (How can you write book on anything green without drawing comparisons to Europe?).

Bottom line is I'm not sure who this book is for. Environmentalists will be unsatisfied with the lack of new information, and conservatives will remain unconvinced that Van Jones' proposals will actually work.

9 of 10 people found the following review helpful.

Not what you might expect

By kdj

This book is clearly not what many readers expected. It is not a data-driven how-to book to solve the energy, environmental, and economic ills of the U.S. It is a position piece on the role of environmental causes as a basis for adding basic skills jobs in the U.S. These jobs are generally non-exportable (though imported laborers will compete for these jobs), but the materials used are generally imported (wind generators come from China and other places, as do solar cells and panels, even his humble caulk-gun and caulk is likely from China). This is a significant error in Jones' analysis - the assumption that things currently made in the U.S. will continue to be made in the U.S. Since the writing of his book, we now import alternative energy production materials. These jobs have been exported as well.

This error should not detract too badly from Jones' basic message; there is a lot of work to be done in the U.S. to improve the energy efficiency of existing buildings, retrofitting buildings with solar, wind, and/or geothermal systems, assessing existing buildings for cost-effective improvements, and the list goes on.

Jones' does take up the mantle of the "new" environmental movement, one which focuses on the relationship between race and being green. In this movement it is no coincidence that the Katrina response was nearly nonexistent while flooding in Iowa and elsewhere along the Mississippi River a few years earlier immediately brought out thousands of state-funded and federally-funded efforts to "save" the unfortunate residents along the banks of the river. When the victims of catastrophe were shades of brown less effort was made than when the faces of the victims were white.

This "new" movement focuses on the role of employment and middle-class attainment by labor-intensive projects to retrofit and upgrade the U.S. energy system. Since the majority of these retrofits are in urban settings, this is an opportunity for the U.S. to lift tens of millions of urban poor into low-middle-income careers. Poor people cannot afford a Prius, solar panels, organic groceries or even post-consumer recycled content toilet paper if they cannot afford rent and food.

Jones makes several useful points. U.S. Policy regarding alternative energy sources has been temporary and haphazard (at best) which leaves decision-making for ten and twenty year payback projects virtually impossible. The current green movement pays more attention to idyllic pastoral themes than the reality that NYC residents produce radically small carbon footprints because they live without cars, in highly efficient apartments (nearly always more efficient than stand-alone houses), and pay exorbitant refuse and disposal fees so they tend to reduce, reuse and recycle at higher than average rates. This pastoral idealism has left millions of city dwellers, especially the poorest, without a voice in the green movement.

Three stars - the assumption that overlooks the possibility of outsourcing production cost this book one star, and the second deduction is for the overkill on faults of the green movement as it was when he started writing. The book jacket and description are accurate. This is a book about the modern green movement, the role of economic growth/development in solving environmental problems, and social justice (race included). Anyone pretending to be blind-sided by a discussion of race within the context of the green movement either did not read the book description, jacket, or reviews, or is being disingenuous.

32 of 45 people found the following review helpful.

Muddled and Simplistic

By Loyd Eskildson

"The Green-Collar Economy" muddles this important issue with too many irrelevant side discussions of racial, gender, and economic equality, suffers from poor timing (the current economic downturn and steep fall in energy costs), fails to document key assertions (eg. "cutting emissions to California's per capita level would allow the U.S. to surpass Kyoto targets;" lay out the amount of energy savings available through retro-fitting buildings), is biased against the role of coal (no consideration of the impact of clean coal and new experiments on pollution), and fails to address key underlying impacts of population growth, Free Trade (on our ability to fund new energy initiatives), pays little attention to fuel economy, and is oblivious to the sometimes idiotic transportation of urban garbage hundreds of miles in the name of ecology.

Some important points are raised - eg. the need for more electric transmission lines to take advantage of solar and wind sources, but even that discussion lacks depth. ("How much energy would be lost through transmission?" and its cost is simply referenced vs. the Iraq War - something undefined as well.)

Finally, the book lacks delineation of eg. how buildings would be retrofitted, thereby supposedly benefiting our economy. If, for example, the major benefit is obtained through more efficient electric motors, the bulk of the economic benefit of constructing them would probably end up in China - not the U.S.

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“In looking at the bigger picture, Jones provides ideas for rebuilding infrastructure and creating alternative energy sources, which would have the double bonus of boosting the economy through increased employment and higher wages while decreasing our dependence on fossil fuels . . . recommended for all libraries.” (Library Journal)

“Van Jones is someone who makes you feel like an underachiever, no matter if you’re a NASA scientist or a captain of industry. . . . Echoes of his ideas can be heard among lawmakers from Sacramento to Washington...” (San Francisco Chronicle)

“Van Jones has made a national name for himself by finding one solution to three persistent problems: poverty, racial inequality, and the environmental crisis. He wants to solve these problems by creating green jobs filled by the poor and people of color—the groups often left behind during technological advances.” (Boston Globe)

“In less than two years, Jones has risen from local grass-roots organizer to shepherd of a national movement to build an inclusive green economy... Jones is making sure that our planet and our people will not just survive but also thrive in a clean-energy economy.” (Leonardo DiCaprio in Time magazine)

From the Back Cover

Now revised and updated, Van Jones's provocative and cutting edge New York Times bestseller *The Green Collar Economy* delivers a viable plan for solving the two biggest issues facing the country today—the economy and the environment.

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