

The Federal THRIVE Act for Arizona's 3rd Congressional District: How THRIVE Strengthens the Economy, Protects the Environment, and Creates Jobs

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This report describes the economic impacts that would result in Arizona's 3rd congressional district if the U.S. Congress were to pass the national THRIVE Act. The 3rd district covers the southwestern portion of the state, and includes parts of Tucson and the Sonoran desert, as well as the state's border with Mexico.

The THRIVE Act was introduced in Congress in April 2021, aiming to “Transform, Heal and Renew by Investing in a Vibrant Economy”—i.e. THRIVE—through a range of investments to rebuild the U.S. economy. For the U.S. economy overall, the THRIVE Act would finance over \$1 trillion in investments per year for 10 years in four major areas: clean renewable energy and energy efficiency; infrastructure; agriculture and land restoration; and the care economy, public health and the postal system.

We estimate that Arizona's 3rd district would receive about \$2.5 billion per year in THRIVE Act support in these four investment areas. This level of investment will generate roughly 23,000 jobs within the district itself, equal to about 6.5 percent of the district's current employment level. The newly created jobs will be in a wide range of occupations, including electricians, roofers, bus drivers, mechanical and environmental engineers, environmental technicians, home-care nurses, truck drivers, accountants, bookkeepers, and lawyers. This higher level of employment in the 3rd district would be sustained throughout the 10 years of the investment program (assuming no other major changes in the district's economy were to occur). These 3rd district THRIVE investments will also generate about another 2,000 jobs throughout the rest of Arizona, and 1,500 jobs in other U.S. states,

for an overall increase of about 26,000 jobs. The table on page 3 provides details on the breakdown in job creation within the district, within Arizona, and for the overall U.S. economy.

Some of the major projects that the THRIVE Act could support in the district would include:

Small-scale solar installations. Installing solar panels on rooftops and other artificial surfaces, such as parking lots, will provide affordable clean energy to 3rd district residents and businesses. Among other factors, installing large numbers of solar panels on artificial surfaces will mean that significantly less land would need to be devoted to utility-scale solar and wind farms in the area. Investing, for example, \$250 million to help finance small-scale solar installations throughout the 3rd district will could create enough electricity to meet roughly 18 percent of the district's overall electricity demand. This district-wide installation project will also generate about 800 jobs within the district and 1,100 jobs overall.

Energy efficiency building retrofits. To date, Arizona does not have comprehensive state-wide policies or mandates to improve energy efficiency in existing public buildings. However, some municipalities in the state, including those in Phoenix, Tempe, and Avondale, have taken steps to institute efficiency measures at the municipal level. Within the 3rd district, implementing similar energy efficiency mandates will cut energy costs for the state and municipalities while also driving down CO₂ emissions. Retrofitting all of the low-efficiency

public buildings in the district will entail replacing aging furnaces and air conditioners with electric heat pumps, tightening building shells through improving insulation and replacing leaky windows, and installing LED lighting fixtures throughout every building. Investing \$50 million per year in these projects will also generate about 300 jobs within the district and 450 jobs overall.

Expanding paid client-employed home-based care for elderly. There are approximately 7,200 residents of Arizona's 3rd district ages 65 and over who require personal care. The State of Arizona presently lacks a statewide program, such as Oregon's highly innovative Client-Employed Provider Program, through which elderly people in need of care hire the provider of their choice. Adult children, spouses, other family members, neighbors, and friends would be eligible to be hired under this type of program. At the same time, most hours of elder care support are still provided by family and friends on a voluntary basis. Providing financial support for a Client-Employed Provider Program through the THRIVE Act would enable these providers to be paid for at least some of the hours of work they now provide voluntarily. These family members and friends would then be better able to concentrate their paid working hours on care provision, rather than having to also be employed at separate paid jobs in order to earn sufficient income. For example, \$100 million per year in support through THRIVE would enable all 7,200 elderly residents of the 3rd district requiring care to pay family members or friends \$20 dollars per hour for an average of an additional two hours per day.

Border wall removal/land restoration. The construction of the U.S./Mexico border wall along Arizona's southern border has produced severe ecological damage. In February 2021, a letter to President Biden signed by a former Interior Secretary and Arizona Governor Bruce Babbitt, along with another former Interior Secretary Sally Jewell as well as 26 environmental and tribal leaders in the state, argues for a new approach for the border area "that restores degraded lands and waters, respects the rights of indigenous people, protects the region's unique wildlife and cultural heritage, and builds a sustainable economy on the foundation of a healthy natural environment." The letter proposes a three-part restoration program for the region, including 1) removing strategic segments of the border wall from sacred sites and critical wildlife crossing areas; 2) restoring riparian, riverine and

wetlands habitats to protect and increase the resilience of water sources in the desert; and 3) fostering restorative economic development through a Borderlands Restoration unit within a revived Civilian Conservation Corps. Devoting \$100 million per year to this restoration project would generate about 1,600 jobs within the 3rd district and about 1,900 jobs overall.

Abandoned mine reclamation. There are approximately 100,000 abandoned mines in Arizona, according to the state's Mine Inspector's Office. However, the office has identified only about 19,000 abandoned mines out of this total and has secured only a small percentage of these identified mines. At present, the work for this project is directed by only two supervisors, tasked with searching the state's entire 9.3 million acres for mines and then securing them. Unlike other states, Arizona has not established a dedicated revenue stream to support such a project. Providing \$20 million per year through THRIVE for mine identification and reclamation in the 3rd district would greatly increase public safety, protect the regional environment, and restore areas that can then be devoted to a range of productive purposes. It would also generate about 300 jobs within the district and nearly 400 jobs overall.

**THRIVE ACT Investments in ARIZONA'S 3RD DISTRICT:
Annual Investment Spending and Job Creation through U.S. THRIVE Act**

	THRIVE Investments in Arizona 3 rd District	Job Creation through THRIVE Investments			
		Jobs in 3 RD District	Jobs in Rest of Arizona	Jobs in Rest of U.S.	Overall Job Creation
Clean Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency	\$925 million	3,814	556	523	4,892
Infrastructure	\$825 million	7,794	649	587	9,031
Agriculture and Land Restoration	\$500 million	5,699	482	302	6,483
Care Economy, Public Health, and Postal Service	\$250 million	5,378	376	130	5,884
TOTALS	\$2.5 billion	22,684	2,063	1,542	26,290

Sources: See: <https://peri.umass.edu/component/k2/item/1397-employment-impacts-of-proposed-u-s-economic-stimulus-programs>; and <https://peri.umass.edu/component/k2/item/1474-methodology-and-calculations-for-clean-energy-cost-estimates-in-proposed-u-s-thrive-agenda-and-related-policy-proposals>.

Further References

PERI THRIVE Report for U.S. Economy:

<https://peri.umass.edu/component/k2/item/1397-employment-impacts-of-proposed-u-s-economic-stimulus-programs>

PERI THRIVE Reports for individual U.S. States:

<https://peri.umass.edu/component/k2/item/1415-state-level-employment-impacts-of-proposed-national-thrive-agenda>