

# Growth matters

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**OUR CURRENT ENERGY** economy, based primarily on fossil fuels, is fundamentally flawed and unsustainable.

As the current disaster in the Gulf of Mexico makes clear, the real costs of our addiction to oil are staggering – on business, tourism, health, and the environment. According to the International Center for Technology Assessment, if these impacts were truly reflected in the cost of gasoline, we would be paying as much as \$15 per gallon. Thomas Friedman is correct: "Fossil fuels are exhaustible, increasingly expensive, and politically, ecologically and climatically toxic."

But finally and thankfully, we are beginning to change our economic system and practice a new form of capitalism, described as Natural Capitalism by Paul Hawken, Amory Lovins and Hunter Lovins in their groundbreaking book, "Natural Capitalism: The Next Industrial Revolution." Their title doesn't overstate what is happening. A new industrial revolution is underway – a revolution that is both good for the planet and good for business.

The question now is, "Who will lead it?"

Here's my proposal: The United States should lead the world, South Carolina should lead the United States, and the Upstate should lead South Carolina.

I wholeheartedly agree with Sen. Lindsey Graham, who recently said, "There is no state in the Union better positioned to help lead this nation to energy independence and a green economy than South Carolina."

And there's no area better positioned to lead South Carolina than the Upstate. We have it all:

More engineers per capita than any place in the country.

A phenomenal array of corporations that are now global leaders of the Natural Capitalism revolution, including GE, Milliken, BMW, Michelin, Fujifilm, and Fluor.

The amazing success story of CU-ICAR, conducting innovative research on automotive technologies.

Proterra, the electric bus manufacturer, building a facility at CU-ICAR and bringing 1,300 green jobs to the Upstate.

Outstanding universities doing great work on environmental and sustainability issues: Clemson, Furman, USC Upstate, and Wofford.

## IN MY OWN WORDS

BY BRAD WYCHE

Connect all the dots, and look at what we have in the Upstate – the potential hub of the green economy in the United States. I believe it's the greatest economic opportunity in the history of our region.

How do we make it happen?

First, it must be a top priority, high profile and well-coordinated effort, strongly supported by leaders in the private and public sectors across the Upstate and with zero tolerance for petty jealousies and conflicts.

Second, someone or some organization needs to be given the responsibility and authority to manage the coordinated effort – someone who wakes up every day with only one thought on his or her mind – making the Upstate the green hub.

Third, we need help and support from Columbia. While the General Assembly has recently passed some good laws and incentives in the clean energy area, it must do more. Most urgently needed is a renewable portfolio standard for South Carolina in order to jump-start and expand the renewable energy industry in our state. I don't think it's possible to have the hub of the green economy in a state that doesn't have a renewable portfolio standard.

Fourth, we must protect our region's outstanding quality of life, which is essential to continue attracting clean energy companies to the Upstate.

The American Revolution was won in South Carolina – more battles were fought here than in any other colony, and the Patriot victories at Cowpens, Kings Mountain and other crucial engagements in the Upstate were turning points in the war.

The Natural Capitalism revolution has begun. It's time for the Upstate to lead once again.

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condensed version of his keynote speech at the Business in Action conference in Greenville on May 24, 2010. The entire speech is posted on the Upstate Forever website, [www.upstateforever.org](http://www.upstateforever.org).

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