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## Venture Capital Plugs Back In To Cleantech

With the price of oil rebounding above the \$80 level, investors are once again are thinking about alternative [energy](#) and efficiency methods. Cost is the No.1 factor in alternative energy, and because oil, coal and natural gas prices have remained low, this has made the past year painful for renewable energy investors. The broad-based [ETF](#) proxy for the **PowerShares WilderHill Clean Energy** (NYSE:[PBW](#)) [ETF](#) has been pretty much flat over the past 52 weeks. The Obama administration has been a supportive entity in promoting green technologies, but more recently, alternative energy and efficiency has taken a back seat to healthcare and the general economy.

With the economy frozen in the muck, green [venture capital](#) investing has stalled as well. The number of [deals](#) has continued to rise throughout the decade, but in 2009 only \$5.7 billion was invested, down from the \$8.5 billion in 2008. Luckily, 2010 is showing some signs of improvement.

**New Record Deals** Investment in the sector jumped nearly 29% from the fourth quarter 2009 to the first in 2010. Globally, in the first months of 2010, cleantech firms raised more than \$1.9 billion in venture capital, an increase of 83% over the same period a year ago. [Funding](#) is coming, not only from private investors but from some unlikely sources such as major [multinational corporations](#).

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In February, Tesla Motors filed its IPO documents and 27 other transportation deals and received \$704 million in venture capital. Fuel efficient cars and trains seems to be one area where consumers can really get behind and the **PowerShares Global Progressive Transport** (Nasdaq:[PTRP](#)) is the way to play it. Focusing on companies that engage in businesses that stand to benefit from a societal transition toward using cleaner and more efficient means of transportation, the ETF holds a wide variety of companies including [Buffett](#) favorite BYD and natural gas play **Clean Energy Fuels** (Nasdaq:[CLNE](#)). The fund is [thinly traded](#) and should be considered a long-term hold.

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