



Your Fall Report

Time to turn the tide on plastics

More than 40 percent: Used once, thrown away

It's clear we have a plastic problem. Over the past six decades, we've produced more than 9 billion tons of the stuff, most of which now clogs our landfills—or worse.

Too often, this plastic pollution ends up in our rivers, lakes and, ultimately, our oceans. Experts estimate that millions of tons of plastic enter the ocean every year, where it forms enormous garbage patches and harms and even kills wildlife.

What a waste

With millions of pieces of plastic floating in the water, it's easy for a bird, turtle or whale to mistake it for food.

It's a costly mistake. When animals eat plastic, it can block their digestive tracts—and they starve as a result.

This was the sad case of a pilot whale that died in June after swallowing more than 80 plastic bags. In all, experts found 17 pounds of plastic lodged in his stomach.

Wildlife over waste

Nothing we use for a few minutes should be allowed to pollute our rivers and oceans for hundreds of years. Environment Texas is calling for a statewide ban on one of the worst forms of plastic: polystyrene foam cups and containers, like the kind you get from restaurants and coffee shops.

This summer, we worked to educate business owners, decision-makers and all all Texans about the costs of plastic pollution.

We're already seeing progress. After we petitioned ThunderCloud Subs to stop using



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▲ This is just the plastic pollution we can see. Scientists estimate that millions of pounds of plastic wash into our oceans every year.

polystyrene cups, the company announced they would phase them out completely by the end of the year. When Whataburger failed to respond to a similar petition, we headed to their headquarters in San Antonio. Environment Texas Executive Director Luke Metzger met with a representative from the company, who agreed to further discussion on the issue.

We're also working to overturn a 1993 state law that prohibits cities from banning polystyrene. This law prevents Texas cities from joining the growing list of towns, cities and communities around the country that have instituted such bans. With your support, we'll build on this momentum and convince more cities, more companies and our state to choose ban single-use plastics.



San Antonio Current

Take action

We need your help to protect wildlife in our rivers, lakes and oceans from plastic pollution. Take action online to urge our leaders to ban foam cups and containers in Texas.

www.EnvironmentTexas.org

◀ Environment Texas staff visited Whataburger's corporate headquarters in San Antonio to urge the company to phase out polystyrene cups.



Staff

You make it possible

You care about clean air and water, a healthy climate, and all the places that make Texas beautiful—and so do I. That’s why I’m proud to share with you the work we accomplished over the summer.

Environment Texas launched our new Wildlife Over Waste campaign to tackle the mountains of plastic trash produced each year by building public support for bans on items like plastic foam cups and containers.

At the same time, we celebrated a decade of clean energy progress with the release of our sister organization Environment Texas Research & Policy Center’s new report showing the incredible advances states like Texas have made on solar and wind power since 2008.

Thank you for making all this work possible with your action and support.

Luke Metzger
Executive Director

Action for our environment

How can you protect the jaguar’s home?

Picture your high school’s football field. Now picture 40 of them. That’s how much tropical forest the world lost every minute during the past two years. It’s a terrible blow to wildlife, as deforestation drives out rare and endangered species like jaguars and orangutans. But what can we do about it here in Texas?

Many of these forests are being clear-cut or burned down to make way for palm oil and soybeans to be used in our everyday products and in farm animal feed. It’s a terrible and tragic trade-off. What’s more, as the preservation of tropical forests remains critical to slowing global warming, we know the stakes are even higher—for people as well as wildlife.

Environment Texas is calling on U.S.-based agribusinesses like Cargill and Bunge to end their role in tropical deforestation. With your support, we can slow the loss of endangered species and the pace of climate change by saving the world’s tropical forests.

A \$3.5 million victory for clean air

In July, Environment Texas announced a major settlement in our Clean Air Act lawsuit against Pasadena Refining System Inc. (PRSI), a subsidiary of Brazilian state-owned oil company Petrobras.

The settlement mandates pollution reduction upgrades and \$3.5 million in civil penalties, most of which will fund clean vehicles projects in nearby communities.

Coming on the heels of our prior lawsuits against Shell, Chevron Phillips and ExxonMobil, this is the fourth suit brought by Environment Texas and Sierra Club since 2008 to successfully address illegal air emissions along the Houston Ship Channel. Our settlements and judgments in these four suits have assessed more than \$30 million in penalties—more than double the cumulative total of \$13.5 million in penalties assessed by Texas’s environmental agency for all air pollution violations in the state from 2011 through 2016.

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Heather Carroll Photography

▲ Environment Texas Clean Water Advocate Brian Zabcik (center) announces the settlement, flanked by Houston attorney Philip Hilder (left) and Neil Carman (right) of Sierra Club’s Lone Star Chapter.

Renewables are rising in Texas

How quickly are renewable technologies taking hold in Texas? Faster than most experts predicted just a few years ago.

Technologies that were once considered novelties, like wind turbines, solar panels, energy-saving LED light bulbs and electric cars, are now commonplace in America's energy landscape. Virtually every day, we see new developments that make renewable energy more abundant and more affordable than ever.

"Renewables on the Rise," a report released in July by Environment Texas Research & Policy Center and Frontier Group, explores just how far we've come—and what steps we can take today to build a cleaner, greener future.

600 percent increase

The last decade has seen explosive growth in the key technologies needed to power America with clean, renewable energy.

Today, our nation produces nearly six times as much renewable electricity from the sun and the wind as we did in 2008. That's enough renewable energy to power more than 34 million homes, or roughly 1 in 4 homes across the country.

At the same time, the average American uses nearly 8 percent less energy than a decade ago, due largely to more energy efficient lighting, appliances and cars—even as our population grew by 20 million.

Of course, building an economy that relies on clean, renewable energy means ending the use of fossil fuels for all activities, including transportation.

395,000 electric cars

More than 395,000 electric vehicles have been sold over the last decade. We saw sales surge by 24 percent in 2017 alone, fueled by lower prices, better performance, and a range of attractive and affordable new car models.

We know that repowering America with clean, renewable energy is essential to phasing out carbon pollution by 2050—a necessary step to prevent the worst impacts of global warming.

It will also improve our health by preventing harmful air pollution and eliminating the dangers of extracting, transporting, processing and burning fossil fuels.

Fortunately, our country has renewable energy resources vast enough to power the nation several times over. Businesses, universities and colleges, local governments, and our state can lead the way by setting their sights on meeting all of our energy needs with renewable energy, and by adopting bold targets to move us in that direction.

We've already made incredible progress toward getting all our energy from clean, renewable sources. Now, Environment Texas is calling on decision-makers at all levels to adopt policies aimed at reducing the amount of energy we waste and repowering America with clean, renewable energy.



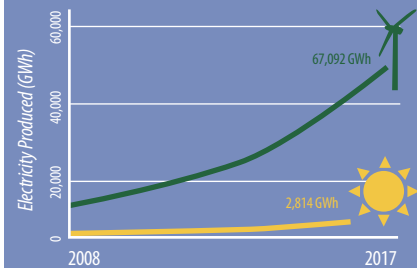
Explore more online

▲ Austin Mayor Steve Adler spoke at Environment Texas Research & Policy Center's "Renewables on the Rise" press conference, held at a community solar farm in east Austin.

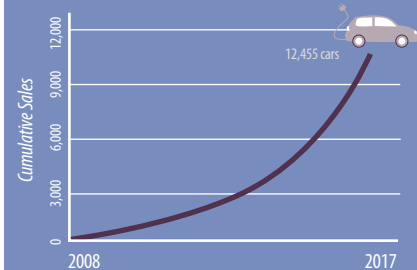
Read the full report at:
www.EnvironmentTexasCenter.org

PROGRESS ON CLEAN ENERGY IN TEXAS

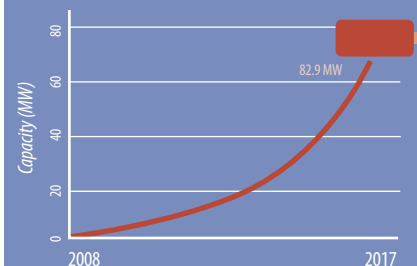
Growth of solar & wind energy



Growth in electric vehicle sales



Growth in battery storage



FROM 2008-2017

Solar growth: 385-fold
Wind growth: fourfold
Electric vehicles: 12,455 sold
Utility battery storage: 83 MW

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VOLUME 12 | NO. 2 | 2018

Environment Texas

Our mission

We all want clean air, clean water and open spaces. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind Environment Texas Citizen Lobby, Inc., a project of Environment America, Inc. We focus on protecting Texas' air, water and open spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

Why 200,000 said no to bee-killing 'neonics'

Every year, bee-killing neonicotinoid pesticides are used on millions of acres of farmland across the U.S.—but they don't stay there. Whether sprayed on crops or applied to seeds as a coating, recent studies show that neonics are drifting far beyond the field, even showing up in our rivers and lakes.

This is bad news for bees—and us, as we rely on bees to pollinate many of the world's most common crops. And as the pace of bee die-offs continues to accelerate, it's clear that urgent action is needed.

In June, Environment Texas was part of a successful effort to pass a ban on neonics in Austin, and we're working to persuade other Texas cities to follow suit. Earlier this year, our members and supporters joined a coalition of food safety and environmental groups to deliver 219,000 public comments to the Environmental Protection Agency, calling for a nationwide ban on all bee-killing pesticides.

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Support our efforts

Support efforts to ban bee-killing pesticides.

Donate online at:
www.EnvironmentTexas.org

◀ *Environment Texas members and supporters were among the 219,000 public comments our coalition delivered calling for a ban on bee-killing neonicotinoid pesticides.*