

Support HB 2692 (Gallego): Investing in the Promise of Clean Energy



Texas: The Saudi Arabia of Renewable Energy

According to West Texas A&M University, Texas could generate all of its electricity from renewable energy – eight times over. Our homegrown resources of wind, sun and agricultural waste, combined with our technological know-how, gives Texas the opportunity to be a world energy leader in the renewable energy industry.

Texas An Early Leader

In 1999, the Legislature adopted and then-Governor Bush signed into law SB7, deregulating Texas' electric utility industry. The law included one of the nation's first Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS), requiring utilities to purchase approximately 2.7% of their energy from renewable sources by 2009. The law has been a tremendous success, kick-starting the wind industry, creating thousands of jobs and adding millions of dollars in tax revenues for rural counties. In 2001, more wind generation capacity was added in Texas than the rest of the nation combined. And, wind power is now cheaper to produce than power from natural gas-fired power plants.

Next Steps for Clean Energy: 20% by 2020

Despite our early success, we can't afford to leave the industry's development to chance. Sixteen states have passed stronger renewable standards, creating stiff competition for attracting renewable energy businesses. Nearly two-thirds of Texans continue to live in areas where, on certain days of the year, it's just not safe to breathe outside. And uncertainty about the industry's development is slowing down transmission planning.

HB 2692 sets an ambitious but attainable goal of producing 20% of our electricity from renewable sources by 2020. As a way to promote energy diversity, the bill designates that 500 megawatts of this energy come distributed renewable technologies like solar and biomass energy, benefiting Texas' urban and agricultural areas. Finally, the bill provides direction to the PUC to move forward with planning and constructing electric transmission lines to promote the development of renewable energy in Texas.

According to the Union of Concerned Scientists, a 20% by 2020 standard would boost state's economy with benefits such as:

- 38,290 new highly skilled jobs in manufacturing, construction, operation, maintenance, and other industries
- \$9.4 billion in new capital investment for renewable energy facilities
- \$1.1 billion in new property tax revenues for local school districts
- \$696 million in revenue to farmers, ranchers, and rural landowners for producing biomass energy and from wind power land leases
- \$5.6 billion in savings on consumer electricity and natural gas bills

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