



Our 81st Legislative Agenda

Who is Public Citizen?

Public Citizen is one of the state's best known environmental and consumer advocacy organizations. We promote clean energy, clean government, clean cars, clean air, and safe products for all Texans. We've won over a dozen awards for advocacy since 1983.



Our Goals:

- Meet Texas' energy needs
- Reduce costs for businesses and consumers across the state
- Reduce our energy use by 20% by 2020
- Reduce smog and carbon dioxide emissions by 80% by 2050
- Create over 123,000 new "green" jobs
- Promote good ethics in government for the Texas Legislature
- Create a global warming emissions registry

20% Reduction in Energy Consumption by 2020

We recommend setting a statewide goal to reduce peak energy use in Texas by 20% by 2020 through:

- 5% reduction in overall energy use by using the PUC retrofit programs
- 5% through distributed solar
- 5% through demand side management
- 5% through energy storage
- Building energy codes that are at least 15% more efficient than current codes

World Class Efficiency Programs

The legislature asked the Public Utility Commission to study if a goal of meeting 50% growth in demand through efficiency and renewables is reasonable. ITRON found that the state could not only meet that goal, but could exceed it. The 2008 study on “Energy Efficiency Potential in Texas” found:

- Texas can save as much as 23% of the state’s peak energy demand through efficiency
- Efficiency investments in Texas have a 2 to 1 payback and could save the state’s consumers **between \$4.2 and \$11.9 billion**

They recommend that Texas:

- Change the savings goal from a reduction of the percentage of growth to a reduction in overall peak demand
- Include industrial customers in the efficiency goal
- Develop separate goals for large utilities and smaller rural utilities
- Develop new building standards to save more energy
- Decouple utility sales from revenue
- Pursue concerted, targeted marketing efforts to raise general awareness

We agree that the state can meet this objective and should set a further goal of reducing energy use by 2% per year. In order to achieve this goal, Texas needs to upgrade its efficiency programs.

Here’s how to do it:



HOME UPGRADES

We can cut 30-50% of the energy used in the average home by tightening up leaking buildings and ductwork, adding shade, using electronic controls, and replacing appliances. The state should set a goal of reducing energy use in the average home by 20% by 2020 through an incentive program. Additionally, *special incentive programs will have to be developed for tenants and landlords.*



BUSINESS CLASS

Create special business class incentives and loan programs for upgrades to lighting, equipment, building shells, combined heat and power, solar, or other types of on-site generation. *Since most businesses lease their space, special programs for tenants and landlords should be developed.*



MORE EFFICIENT BUILDING CODES

Adopt new energy codes statewide that could cut energy use in new buildings by 15% or more. The state should establish a goal of having all new buildings be capable of generating more power than they use by 2020.

DEMAND SIDE MANAGEMENT

The price of electricity is driven by peak energy demand, but this peak could be reduced with electronic controls or through the shifting of time use. Smart meters will allow the utilities to send signals to reduce the use of non-essential equipment. Texas should set a goal of being able to control 5% of the peak demand for energy by 2020.



EXEMPT EFFICIENCY PROJECTS FROM SALES AND PROPERTY TAX

A New Generation of Renewable Energy

Texas should set a goal to have 5% (about 4,000 MW) of the state's energy demands come from solar by 2020.

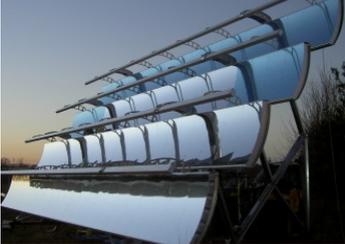
To integrate renewables into our energy plan, the issue of intermittency must be addressed. Texas can either build expensive back up plants, or invest in newer, cheaper energy storage technologies.

Texas should develop an energy storage portfolio with the capacity to store 5% of the state's demand for energy by 2020. This would cut peak power costs by 16% and allow for a renewable grid.

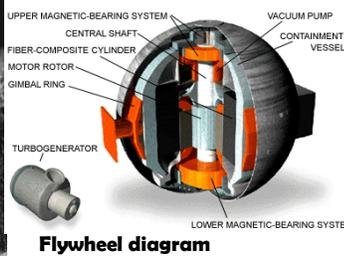
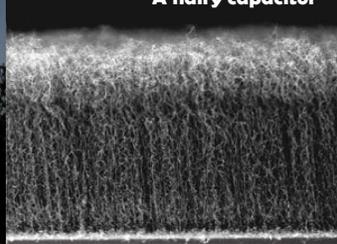
5 promising new technologies exist for storing peak energy, and more are being developed:

- Compressed air energy storage
- Thermal storage
- Capacitors
- Large capacity batteries
- Flywheels

Thermal storage at a solar plant

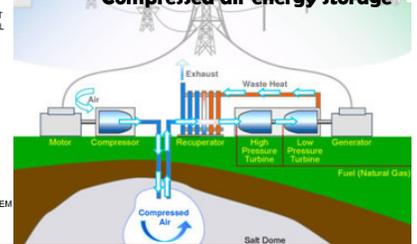


A hairy capacitor



Flywheel diagram

Compressed air energy storage



To do this we suggest:



For Solar:

- Create incentives for 2,000 MW of on-site solar installations
- Create a non-wind renewable portfolio standard of 4,000 MW or 5% of peak demand by 2020 for utility scale solar
- Upgrade building codes to require that all buildings are "solar ready" or can produce more energy than they use by 2030
- Pay market-based rates for solar and other "on peak" generating resources
- Exempt solar from property and sales tax

Stopping New Coal:

- In consideration of impending new regulations for NO_x, mercury, and CO₂, halt permitting for new coal plants



What else we're working on this session:

Campaign Finance Reform:

Candidates should stay within reasonable campaign spending and fundraising limits. No single person should be able to give more than \$100,000 in a single year to all candidates.

Redistricting:

Public Citizen supports an independent redistricting commission so that politicians won't gerrymander their own Legislative or Congressional districts.

Lobbyist Disclosure:

Current lobbyist disclosure is vague. Lobbyists should itemize their what they are spending, and on whom. They should also report what issue they were lobbying on at the time of the expense. This data should also be online, indexed and easily searchable.

Contact us!

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