



## **Public Citizen's Texas Office Award Winning Advocacy**

Air Quality 2006 Conference "Outstanding Non-Profit Organization Award"

**Tom "Smitty" Smith, State Director:**

Campaign for People's "Thomas Paine Award"

U.S. EPA's "Award of Excellence"

2001 Austin Chronicle Best of Austin "Best People's Lobbyist"

Achievement in Advocacy Award American Wind Energy Association 2008

**Public Citizen's Solar Austin Campaign:**

Livable City "Vision Award"

Intestate Renewable Energy Council "Innovation Award"

2004 Austin Chronicle Best of Austin "Best Grassroots Effort"

Texas Renewable Energy Industries Association "Special Recognition Award"

Statement of Tom "Smitty" Smith  
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### **"Wildcatting the Sun"**

A generation ago, state legislators passed a package of incentives to lure silicon chip manufacturers to Texas. This created the high tech boom that has enriched Texans for over 20 years. As a result of technical innovation and economics of scale during this period, cell phones have now become a ubiquitous part of our lives.

Twenty years ago when this legislation was passed, almost no one could foresee a time when cell phones would be universal. Now our land lines are used so little that you sometimes wonder why you still have one. Twenty years from now, new homes will have solar built into the roofs and walls and we'll wonder why we are still connected to the old power grid. If Texans act now to create a large enough market with short term incentives that decline over 10 years, we can capture opportunities to manufacture new building integrated solar installations at the dawn of their development.

For over a year the solar team has been studying how to make this transition. Last April we held a "Texas Solar Forum" conference, attended by over 350 Texans and 40 presenters, which outlined how Texas could become the nation's leader in solar development. The message there was loud and clear: the solar boom is beginning now. Those states that create the right incentives packages will benefit the most in terms of new jobs, cleaner air, and lower energy prices.

Our recommendations can be boiled down to five key ideas:

1. Repurpose Texas' successful Renewable Portfolio Standard to incentivize the use of utility scale solar.
2. Create a solar rebate program at the Public Utility Commission with declining rebates to help pay a portion of the cost to install solar on existing and new buildings.
3. Pay owners of small scale renewable energy a fair price for the excess energy they produce.
4. Create a Renewable Energy Storage Portfolio.
5. Stop Home Owners Associations from banning residential solar installations.

Texas is running out of its energy resources. Now is the time for Texas legislators to take steps to re-energize Texas and create a new economic boom. Now is the time to begin to wildcatting the sun.

The full report may be found at [cleanenergyfortexas.org](http://cleanenergyfortexas.org) or [environmenttexas.org](http://environmenttexas.org)