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Advocates and Business Leaders Forecast Sunny Session for Solar Power

New Study Shows Proposed Legislation Would Create 22,000 Jobs, Reduce CO2 emissions by 29 million tons

Fort Worth – New analysis of solar energy's economic development potential finds that a robust solar program would put Texans back to work and position the state as a world leader for solar production. Environmental advocates and business leaders announced today that legislative incentives to support solar development in Texas could create 22,000 manufacturing and installation jobs, stabilize energy prices, and avoid 29 million tons of climate change inducing pollution.

"This is the session to take aggressive action to support solar power," said Tom "Smitty" Smith, Director of Public Citizen's Texas office and an author of the solar report. "If Texas doesn't take the lead now, we will lose manufacturing and economic opportunities to other states. With the economic stimulus package pending in Congress and federal global warming legislation down the pipe, Texas now more than ever needs to take the lead on renewable energy projects."

The report released today, *Texas Solar Roadmap*, recommends policies to encourage a utility scale solar program and incentives for a small-scale distributed program to put solar panels on homes and businesses across the state.

"A solar rebate program would make solar cost competitive, and affordable to a much greater percentage of population," said Jim Duncan, with North Texas Renewable Inc. "Increased demand would cause a boom in the solar installation business, and put thousands of newly employed boots on green roofs across the state."

At least eighteen bills have already been filed to support the deployment of solar technologies, by legislators in both chambers and across the ideological spectrum.

HB 278 (Anchia, D-Dallas) and SB 427 (Shapiro, R-Plano) would require the state's electric utilities to support the development of 2000 megawatts of distributed solar and other on-site renewable technologies by offering direct incentives to consumers and businesses. According to the report by Environment Texas, Public Citizen and Vote Solar, such a standard could lead to installations on as many as 500,000 roofs in Texas by 2020 at a cost of about 98 cents per month per Texan.

Other states that have adopted proactive policies to encourage solar have seen major gains in increased power generation, job creation, and economic development. Almost 4,800 MW of large-scale solar projects have been announced in California and Arizona alone, which will create 154,000 jobs, \$10.1 billion in earnings and \$25.4 billion in economic output over the 20 year lives of those plants.

“Experience in Germany, Japan, California and elsewhere has shown that solar incentives will lead to increased demand and lower prices,” said Tom “Smitty” Smith, Director of Public Citizen’s Texas office and an author of the solar report. “These are the first steps on the road to a robust, self-sufficient solar market in which government incentives are no longer necessary.”

The report recommends that Texas duplicate the success it has had encouraging wind power by setting a goal to add an additional 4,000 MW of diversified clean energy to the grid over the next ten years. This could lead to an increase in utility scale solar generation of 2,000 MW or more. Texas is already home to many facilities capable of manufacturing utility scale solar installations.

“Entech Solar is a leading provider of concentrating solar energy systems. Entech has developed its state of the art concentrating photovoltaic systems here in Texas and is now establishing 50 MW per manufacturing capability at its new facility in Fort Worth. We have sufficient space at our new facility to later expand to 200 MW, creating a substantial number of new jobs. If Texas adopts the right policies, incentives to create a pro solar business environment would significantly develop the solar market in Texas. New legislation being proposed in Austin could lead to solar generation at a scale where the price would actually be cheaper than traditional types of generation,” said Bob Walters, Vice President of Marketing at Entech Solar.

Today’s event is one seven across the state being held by legislative leaders, the Austin Chamber of Commerce, and environmental organizations such as North Texas Renewable Energy Society, Environment Texas, and the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club.

To download the brochure *Wildcatting the Sun* or to download the full *Texas Solar Roadmap* report, visit www.cleanenergyfortexas.org or www.environmenttexas.org