

For Immediate Release:

Contact: Tom 'Smitty' Smith (512) 797-8468

David Power (830) 660-7557

## **Advocates and Business Leaders Forecast Sunny Session for Solar Power**

*New Study Shows Proposed Legislation Would Create 22,000 Jobs, Reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 29 million tons*

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

“Today we are announcing a massive push to develop solar energy in the state of Texas,” said David Power, Deputy Director of Public Citizen's Texas office and an author of the solar report. “We are proud to be here in San Antonio, where Mayor Hardberger and CPS Energy are already taking steps to place San Antonio at the lead of the transition to a new, distributed energy economy.”

The report released today by Public Citizen, Environment Texas and Vote Solar, entitled *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.

“The solar rebate program and other incentives recommended in this report would do much to make solar installations affordable for San Antonio homeowners and businesses. Legislation being proposed in Austin could even lead to solar at a scale where the price would be cheaper than traditional types of distributed generation,” said Anita Ledbetter, executive director of the Metropolitan Partnership for Energy and Build San Antonio Green.

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 life of those plants.

On January 20, 2009, CPS Energy adopted a Sustainable Energy Policy Statement announcing that the company intended to switch from a centralized power model to a distributed, sustainable energy model. Under the new model energy would be created through renewable energy sources such as solar, originating from thousands of businesses and homes, and connected to a smart, multidirectional grid.

Last Thursday, Mayor Hardberger announced his ambitious “Mission Verde” plan to make San Antonio a flagship energy city for the United States through this transition to a distributed energy system. The Mayor’s Office predicts that by installing 250 MW of distributed solar, the equivalent of photovoltaic panels on 50,000 homes and 6,000 businesses, San Antonio could create 1,000 permanent local jobs, save rate-payers \$30 million on their energy bills, and avoid 250,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions.

“As county commissioner and as a former legislator, I can tell you that cities and counties can only do so much. Sometimes it takes legislative action to encourage serious institutional changes. I am proud of CPS Energy’s initiative, but alone it will not be enough to push the kind of job creation that Texas could ultimately see from aggressive statewide solar policies,” said Bexar County Commissioner Tommy Adkisson.

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 2,000 MWs of distributed solar and other on-site renewable technologies by offering direct incentives to consumers and businesses. According to the new report, 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.

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.

“I am glad to see San Antonio and the state of Texas taking action to move solar forward. These policies have been a long time coming, and definitely get us started in the right direction. If the legislature passes the right bills, and the city council and the mayor can fully implement their ambitious plans, we will finally be able to bring truly clean, renewable energy in the form of solar power to South Texas,” said Bill Sinkin, founder of Solar San Antonio.

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](http://www.cleanenergyfortexas.org) or [www.environmenttexas.org](http://www.environmenttexas.org)