

May 12, 2015

The Honorable Greg Abbott
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Governor Abbott,

As local and state civic leaders, we wish to encourage you to make solar energy a key element of Texas' energy future. By using solar energy to power our homes, businesses, schools, farms and government buildings, we can reduce pollution, reduce energy bills and boost local economies.

As the state with the nation's largest solar resources, Texas has the potential to generate through solar 170 times the amount of energy that the state consumes each year.¹ Yet right now, only a small fraction of Texas' power comes from the sun.

Solar is growing in Texas and across the country. Over the past three years solar capacity grew by 84 percent per year in Texas.² In the first half of 2014, more than half of the new electric power capacity installed in the U.S. was solar. ERCOT projects that under a business as usual scenario, more than 6 percent of our electricity will come from solar by 2029.³ However, recent progress shows we can take it to the next level.

Solar helps the environment, and it also boosts local economies by creating local jobs that cannot be outsourced. Solar industry jobs grew twenty times faster than the rest of the economy in 2014. Here in Texas, the solar industry already employs almost 7,000 people.⁴ And because solar has no fuel costs, it helps protect us from rising electricity prices.

By committing Texas to expanding solar, we are investing in a virtually limitless energy source with no fuel costs. For the sake of our environment, our health, and the economy, we ask that you to set a target to generate 20 percent of our power from the sun by 2025. We can achieve that goal if we grow solar by 61 percent per year, less than three fourths of our current growth rate.

The cost of solar is declining. The cost of air and water pollution from electricity production is growing, along with the threats posed by climate change. As you work to better our state, please help to set strong goals for solar in Texas and to put us on a path to clean energy leadership.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Annise Parker
Mayor, Houston

The Honorable Ivy Taylor
Mayor, San Antonio

¹ *U.S. Renewable Energy Technical Potentials: A GIS-Based Analysis*. National Renewable Energy Laboratory. July 2012. <http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy12osti/51946.pdf>

² *Star Power: The Growing Role of Solar Energy in Texas*. Environment Texas Research and Policy Center. November 20, 2014.

http://environmenttexas.org/sites/environment/files/reports/TX_Star_Power.pdf

³ *Impacts of Environmental Regulations in the ERCOT Region*. Electric Reliability Council of Texas. December 16, 2014.

⁴ The Solar Foundation. January 2015. <http://pre.thesolarfoundation.org/solarstates/#tx>

The Honorable Mike Rawlings
Mayor, Dallas

The Honorable Alan Warrick II
Mayor Pro Tem, San Antonio

The Honorable George Riggs
Commissioner, Pecos County

The Honorable Jose Rodriguez
Texas Senate

The Honorable Chris Riley
Mayor, Leon Valley

The Honorable Joe Farias
Texas House of Representative

The Honorable Robert Gallegos
Council Member, Houston

The Honorable Rachel Jonrowe
Council Member, Georgetown

The Honorable Gloria Rodriguez
Council Member, Socorro

The Honorable Ann Kitchen
Council Member, Austin

The Honorable Venetta Seals
Mayor, Town of Pecos City

The Honorable Philip Kingston
Council Member, Dallas

The Honorable Dr. Elba Garcia
Commissioner, Dallas County

The Honorable Leticia Van De Putte
Former State Senator

The Honorable Joe Shuster
County Judge, Pecos County

The Honorable Veronica Escobar
County Judge, El Paso County

The Honorable Dale Ross
Mayor, Georgetown

The Honorable Charlotte Farmer
Council Member, San Angelo

The Honorable Dan Sanchez
Commissioner, Cameron County

The Honorable Shirley Gonzales
Council Member, San Antonio

The Honorable Larry Green
Council Member, Houston

The Honorable Angela Kennedy
Council Member, Buda

The Honorable Gregorio Casar
Council Member, Austin

Laura Spanjian
Office of Sustainability, Houston

The Honorable Dawnna Dukes
Texas House of Representatives

The Honorable Claudia Ordaz
Representative, El Paso

The Honorable Joe A. Gonzalez
Commissioner, Nueces County

The Honorable Tommy Adkisson
Former County Commissioner, Bexar County