

Legislative Agenda

81st Legislative Session

ACT

Alliance for a Clean Texas

www.acttexas.org



Clean Energy

Clean energy is one of the most promising new industries in the 21st century—with great economic and great environmental benefits. Renewable energy can power the nation, create thousands of jobs, and renew Texas' role as the energy capital of the world. The actions of the 76th Texas Legislature helped create a boom for wind energy that has pumped billions into the economy. In 2009, the time has come again for Texas to be bold.

The challenge: To become the leader in other renewable energy technologies, Texas must create the same type of conditions that jumpstarted the wind industry.

2009 ACT Recommendations:

- Diversify our renewable energy mix: establish an additional goal of developing 4000 megawatts of non-wind renewable energy technologies, such as utility-scale solar farms, geothermal and biomass facilities, by 2020.
- Promote on-site renewables: set goal of 2000 megawatts of renewable energy located on homes and businesses (including rooftop solar, small wind and geothermal heat pumps) by 2020.
- Remove barriers for solar: prohibit homeowners associations from blocking solar installations and ensure utilities offer consumers a fair price for surplus generation.

Green Jobs

When a new idea comes to the fore, it's important to distinguish substance from buzz. Texans *already* know the value of jobs in energy manufacturing and efficiency retrofitting. Creating new energy industries will benefit both the economic and environmental future of the state. ACT supports efforts to bring the next generation of clean energy jobs to Texas. If we don't, Texas could miss an historic opportunity to expand its economy and improve the world's environment.

Energy Efficiency

Energy efficiency programs aren't just the "right" thing to do—they're the smart energy choice. Since 1999, market-based energy efficiency programs have helped to lower peak demand for electricity—even as the state has continued to grow. Energy efficiency is the cheapest, quickest and cleanest way for Texas to meet its power needs, especially when combined with controlling and lowering customer demand. Studies have found that energy efficiency programs have far greater potential impact than originally believed.

The challenge: To enact goals and programs on a scope that the full potential of energy efficiency for Texas will be realized.

2009 ACT Recommendations:

- Raise energy efficiency goal: utility-funded incentive programs should be set at 1% of peak demand and energy use by 2015.
- Adopt additional state appliance efficiency standards: Texas could save up to \$1 billion by 2030.
- Promote weatherization: use funds already set aside in System Benefit Fund.
- Building codes: Raise statewide building codes from 2001 to 2009 IECC.
- Loans for efficiency: Increase the Texas LOANStar program from \$100 to \$300 million, require energy audits of all large publicly-owned buildings and initiate a state-funded loan program for electric cooperatives and municipality-owned utilities.

Clean Air

More than two-thirds of all Texans live in places where, on certain days, the air is unsafe to breathe. With the profound health risks associated with breathing polluted air, it's nearly impossible to believe that so many Texans face this danger. However, as the state continues to grow, more Texans will live in these conditions. In 2009, the time has come for Texas to take action on clean air.

The challenge: To make clean air the standard for all Texans.

2009 ACT Recommendations:

- Clean the air school-age Texans breathe: provide additional funding for the Texas Clean Bus Program.
- Reduce polluting emissions: increase funding of the Texas Emissions Reduction Plan and modify TERP to reduce airborne toxins from diesel engines.
- Eliminate inconsistencies between Texas Health and Safety Code Chapter 382 and the federal Clean Air Act.
- Reduce levels of air toxics: reduce emissions from toxic hotspots, increase monitoring, and improve access to public information.

Electronic Waste & Recycling

Recycling is a critical energy-saving and resource conservation strategy. In 2007, producer takeback legislation passed unanimously for computers, placing Texas among fifteen states to have enacted computer takeback laws. However, this law limits both the products covered and the consumers it serves.

The challenge: To improve upon the foundation of producer takeback legislation passed in 2007.

2009 ACT Recommendations:

- Expand electronic recycling to include televisions, computer keyboards and mice.

Climate Change

U.S. regulation of carbon emissions is becoming more likely. As the nation's largest carbon emitter, Texas should prepare now for carbon regulation and quantify the potential costs of adapting to climate change that is already occurring.

2009 ACT Recommendations:

- Require TCEQ to develop and present to the Legislature a report containing a list of "no regrets" emission reduction strategies for greenhouse gases with no costs or savings to the State, consumers, or businesses.
- Establish a statewide greenhouse gas emissions inventory to provide a baseline for measuring reductions under future federal emissions-reduction policies and recognizing early reducers for appropriate credit.
- Require an interim report on the costs of adaptation in the binational border area including health and agricultural costs.

Coal

As a major source of both power and carbon emissions in Texas, coal is an integral part of the conversation about Texas' energy future.

The challenge: To accurately monitor coal's current environmental impacts and plan its future in Texas.

2009 ACT Recommendations:

- Require TCEQ to consider cumulative environmental and health impacts of all projects affecting an area in the permitting process.
- Increase the number of air quality monitoring stations, especially in counties that may become non-attainment areas under the Clean Air Act.
- Adopt a moratorium on new coal-fired power plants that do not capture CO2 emissions.
- Develop state regulations governing the sequestration of CO2 in geologic formations.

Statewide Member Organizations

Caddo Lake Institute

Environment Texas

Environmental Defense Fund

Public Citizen

Sierra Club Lone Star Chapter

Texas Campaign for the Environment

Texas Impact

Texas League of Conservation Voters

National Wildlife Federation

Clean Water Action

SEED Coalition

Baptist Christian Life Commission

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The Alliance For A Clean Texas (ACT) represents more than 20 environmental, public interest, consumer rights and religious organizations dedicated to improving public health, quality of life and the environment in Texas.

For more information about the Alliance for a Clean Texas, visit us online at www.acttexas.org