

# Clean Energy for Austin.org

## *Why Does Austin Need an Energy Plan Now?*

### **Jobs & Leadership**

#### **Jobs and Economic Development in the Green Economy**

The economy is in flux. While there is little doubt it will fully recover, it will look different than it has in the past. It will be greener. Forward-thinking states and cities recognize that there is an enormous economic opportunity to attract green technology companies to their area. Cities like Gainesville, Florida and states like California are setting policies that will enable them to compete in the global green tech marketplace. From 1995 to 2008 “green job” growth in California was 36%, compared to the state’s overall job growth of 13%. Some cities with more aggressive policies, such as the San Francisco area saw 51% jump in green jobs to 41,674 jobs in 2008. Even recently, as employment in the state declined by 1% from 2007 to 2008 green jobs increased 5% according to a recent study by Next 10, a Palo Alto non-profit.

Unfortunately, there is comparatively little in place in Texas that makes it attractive for green jobs. Solar panel manufacturers, green builders, energy efficiency technology companies are expanding right now, but they are finding it more advantageous to locate their head offices and production facilities in locations that send a clear signal that they want them.

The longer Austin waits to send those signals, the more likely we will be importing solar panels and energy efficient building materials from other places. If Austin achieves the robust goals in the energy plan and recommendations, it could create more than 5,500 jobs directly according to analysis by the Pecan Street Project. The plan and recommendations will make Austin a hub for clean energy much like cities in California and New Jersey, attracting companies and customers from a variety of sectors to do business in Austin.

#### **Climate Leadership**

While world leaders struggle to reach agreement after Copenhagen, Austin made the commitment to make ourselves the leader on fighting climate change with the Climate Protection Plan in 2007. Believe it or not, that means something to a lot of Austinites. When we know what is causing this injustice, we are impelled to act, to change what is in our power to change—not to rest on our laurels.

We need the Austin Energy plan and recommendations passed to maintain our leadership. Implementation of these goals would set a carbon cap and reduce greenhouse gas emissions beyond even what Waxman-Markey legislation calls for. That is real leadership.

This plan and recommendations are the culmination of a two-year long public input and participation process. Stakeholders from across the community, from large industrial businesses, to environmental organizations and low-income advocates, have worked hard to make it the best it can be. It is adaptable as costs of various generation resources change over the next decade.

We are ready to see it passed by city council. We call on city council to pass this plan as soon as possible. Please join us at [www.cleanenergyforaustin.org](http://www.cleanenergyforaustin.org).



# Clean Energy for Austin = Economic Development

## Pass the Austin Energy plan now so that green tech companies locate in Austin

Austin can attract 21<sup>st</sup> century companies developing technologies for renewable energy, energy storage, and advanced green building. Austin Energy's Generation Plan will play a critical role in attracting those businesses and retaining Austin businesses with established clean technology business models.

Forward thinking from public officials in the 80s and 90s brought silicon manufacturers and other hi-tech firms to the city despite some initial costs to the city. With them they brought additional companies and jobs in related industries, and a higher standard of living for most Austinites. By adopting the generation plan, the Austin City Council will ensure strong future economic development while maintaining the city's role as a national environmental leader.

The generation plan will bring a wide variety of jobs to the city, from innovative technology companies to installation, retrofit, and construction jobs. The plan's strong energy efficiency component will assure job growth in a number of sectors ranging from construction to innovative technology developers.

That's why these leaders in business and enterprises have endorsed the public plan.

**Applied Materials**  
**Clean Energy Associates, LLC**  
**Texas Solar Power Company**

## Forward Thinking Goals

### **Create a self-sustaining market for locally-generated renewable power**

- Consistent and long-term incentives will enable owners and investors to plan effectively and maximize their capital.
- Setting an aggressive yet reasonable goal will act as a market signal to solar and other technology manufacturers.

### **Periodically re-assess goals as generation costs change**

- Fossil fuel prices are extremely volatile and will continue to rise with economic recovery and increased regulation. Renewable energy continues to decrease in price.
- If cost estimates change, Austin will have the ability to adapt.

### **Establish Property-Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) funding mechanism through ordinance**

- By using city or credit union low-interest loans, homes and businesses can overcome the upfront capital costs of renewables or major energy efficiency improvements.
- This frees up Austin Energy capital to invest in smart grid development and larger-scale renewable power.

### **Set an ambitious energy efficiency goal: 1000 megawatts saved by 2020**

- Austin can become the most energy efficient city in the country with proactive programs that involve the community and utility working together to minimize wasted energy.

### **Review feasibility of ramping down Fayette coal plant every two years**

- The value and need for coal-fired power continues to decrease. By actively seeking to divest Austin's share of the plant, we are cleaning the air, protecting the climate, and empowering green tech.

