

July 1, 2020

The Honorable John Cornyn  
The Honorable Ted Cruz  
United States Senate

The Honorable Colin Allred  
The Honorable Jodey Arrington  
The Honorable Brian Babin  
The Honorable Kevin Brady  
The Honorable Michael "Mike" Burgess  
The Honorable John Carter  
The Honorable Joaquin Castro  
The Honorable Michael Cloud  
The Honorable Mike Conaway  
The Honorable Daniel Crenshaw  
The Honorable Henry Cuellar  
The Honorable Lloyd Doggett  
The Honorable Veronica Escobar  
The Honorable Lizzie Fletcher  
The Honorable Bill Flores  
The Honorable Sylvia Garcia

The Honorable Louie Gohmert  
The Honorable Vicente Gonzalez  
The Honorable Lance Gooden  
The Honorable Kay Granger  
The Honorable Al Green  
The Honorable Will Hurd  
The Honorable Sheila Jackson Lee  
The Honorable Eddie Bernice "Eddie" Johnson  
The Honorable Kenny "Ken" Marchant  
The Honorable Michael McCaul  
The Honorable Pete Olson  
The Honorable Chip Roy  
The Honorable Van Taylor  
The Honorable Mac Thornberry  
The Honorable Marc Veasey  
The Honorable Filemon Vela  
The Honorable Randy Weber  
The Honorable Roger Williams  
The Honorable Ronald "Ron" Wright  
United States House of Representatives

Dear Members of the Texas Congressional Delegation:

We write to thank you for your continued work to address the COVID-19 crisis, the immediate health and human needs that have resulted, and its economic fallout. We also strongly support your efforts to craft further COVID-19 legislative packages, including stimulus policy to support economic security for workers and industries that are important to our country's future, which will put unemployed people back to work building back better.

In 2019, there were over **240,000 Texas jobs (ranked #2 in the country)**<sup>1</sup> in the growing clean energy industry, with many of those jobs coming from small businesses and local contractors. These include jobs related to solar and wind development, but also jobs related to energy efficiency and clean vehicles. But right now, the Texas clean energy industry is hurting and is greatly harmed by delivery delays, employee absences, supply chain disruptions, financing challenges, project cancellations, and postponements due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Before March, clean energy had been one of the U.S. economy's biggest and fastest-growing employment sectors, growing 10.4% since 2015 to 3.4 million jobs at the end of 2019. Indeed, within Texas' electric market, electricity provided by wind and solar projects exceeded energy from coal plants for the first time in Texas's history. From March through May, data from the Labor Department shows that over 620,000 clean energy jobs were lost nation-wide. Overall, Texas is second only to California in

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<sup>1</sup><https://e2.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/E2-Clean-Jobs-America-2020.pdf>

the number of job losses across the clean energy sector, with **32,844** total unemployment claims by Texans through May 2020.<sup>2</sup> Significantly, Harris County alone lost more than 7,000 clean energy jobs<sup>3</sup>

As you consider future legislation, we ask that you prioritize inclusion of specific policy support for clean energy workers and businesses, which are important to the Texas economy and our public health. The following legislative priorities would support this vital and diverse Texas industry.

**First**, reinstate the Treasury Department’s Section 1603 grant program to direct payments of existing tax credits for renewable energy, energy efficiency and storage projects directly to clean energy developers and suppliers now, rather than make them wait to claim these credits in tax filings, and delay the scheduled ramp down of incentives for clean energy projects. **Second**, extend, expand or update clean energy incentives for solar, wind, storage, electric vehicles, and energy efficiency.

With your support, clean energy in Texas is set to remain an economic engine for decades to come. In fact, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) reports that 95% of proposed new generation projects are wind, solar, or battery storage.<sup>4</sup> Keeping in mind that ERCOT manages the flow of electric power to more than 26 million Texas customers -- representing about 90% of the state’s electric load -- it is clear that wind, solar, and battery storage represent the future of ERCOT and energy in Texas.

Importantly, 70% of clean energy job losses in Texas are from energy efficiency jobs<sup>5</sup> – the kind of work that builds resilience in the workforce itself as an important pathway away from a declining fossil fuel industry and in Texas communities by helping to keep homes cooler and safer while lowering electric bills. Electric vehicles, clean energy generation technologies, and energy efficiency programs also build resilience for Texas communities by reducing air pollution which improves public health, *especially respiratory health*. We’re learning recently that increased levels of particulate matter air pollution means worse outcomes for people suffering from COVID-19.<sup>6</sup>

Please support these legislative policies and provide needed temporary assistance to the Texas clean energy industry in order to build resilience for Texas communities; protect existing jobs and economic investment; maintain progress on clean air and clean energy improvements; and lay the foundation to support a vibrant future in Texas.

Sincerely,

**Cyrus Reed**, Interim Director and Conservation Director; Lone Star Chapter of Sierra Club

**Patricia Zavala**, Political Analyst and Strategist; Central South Carpenters Regional Council

**Adelita Cantu**, Steering Committee Member; Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environment

**Steve McKee**, Executive Director; Texas Physicians for Social Responsibility

**Adrian Shelly**, Director; Public Citizen Texas Office and **David Arkush**, Director; Climate Program of Public Citizen

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<sup>2</sup><https://e2.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Clean-Energy-Jobs-May-COVID-19-Memo-Final.pdf>, p. 6

<sup>3</sup> <https://e2.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Clean-Energy-Jobs-May-COVID-19-Memo-Final.pdf>, p 7.

<sup>4</sup> [ERCOT MIS](#)

<sup>5</sup><https://e2.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Clean-Energy-Jobs-May-COVID-19-Memo-Final.pdf>, pp 14-15,

<sup>6</sup> <https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/covid-pm>

**Tom "Smitty" Smith**, Executive Director; [Texas Electric Transportation Resources Alliance](#)

**Hanna Mitchell**, Texas Program Director; Solar United Neighbors

**Amy Heart**, Director, Public Policy; Sunrun