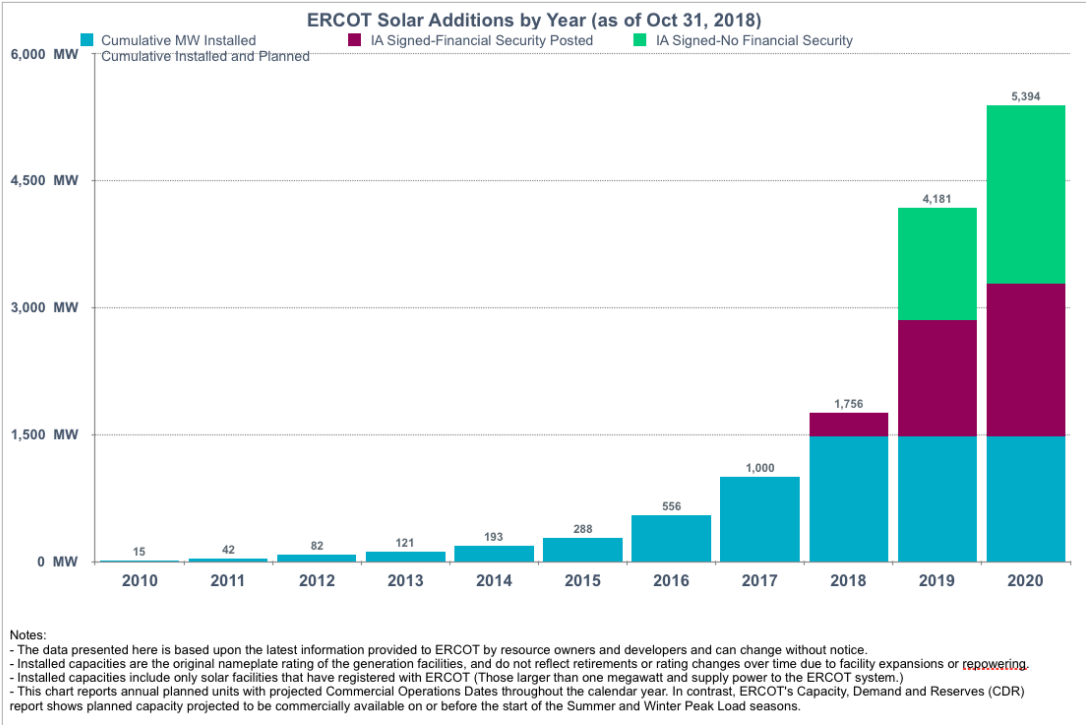


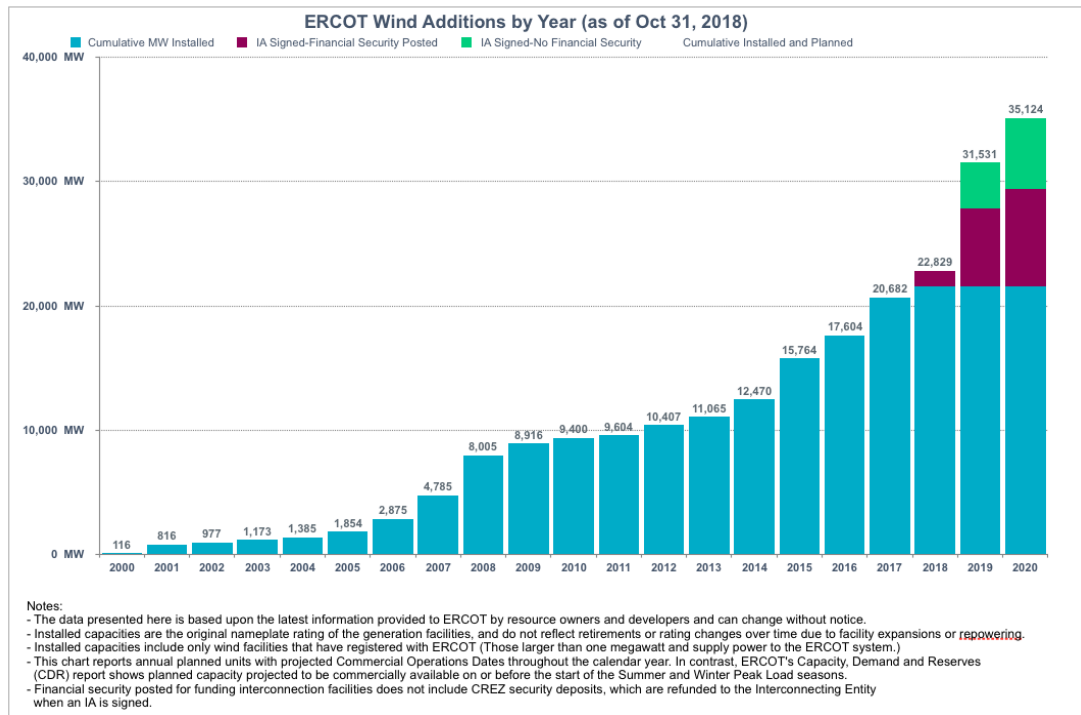
Clean Energy Solutions: Renewables and Energy Efficiency



Texas has been a tremendous success story in the development of renewable energy. Beginning with the decision to deregulate most of our electric market, the Texas Legislature, and Gov. George W. Bush, put in requirements for modest amounts of renewables on our grid. This was reaffirmed under Gov. Perry with the decision to build the modern transmission grid in West Texas, known as the Competitive Renewable Energy Zones.

In 2018, utility-scale solar and wind will provide more than 20% of our electricity in our main energy market, and indicators show that these resources -- which have no fuel costs, have lower water needs, and produce no air pollution -- will continue to grow in the coming years. These resources have not only helped provide low-cost electricity with virtually no water use or pollution, they have also produced thousands of direct and indirect jobs.





Unfortunately, conservative groups backed by fossil fuel interests who feel threatened by this unprecedented growth have targeted renewable energy gains in recent years. An example of these attacks would be SB 277, which assumed that wind turbines were dangerous to nearby military bases despite regulations already in place to ensure that no wind projects pose a threat. SB 277 took away the potential for property tax breaks for wind projects sited near certain military facilities. It is likely that some in the Legislature will attempt to eliminate the ability of solar and wind companies to seek local tax abatements through Chapter 312 and 313 of the Tax Code, which temporarily lower property taxes for 10 years, in return for local investments and jobs.

The Texas energy-only market is working well, and renewables are an important part of our diverse energy mix. The Legislature should avoid putting up new roadblocks to renewable energy development, which is producing wealth, jobs, and tax base in Texas while reducing our pollution and water use.

Texas could do more to assist customers in taking advantage of clean energy opportunities like onsite solar and energy efficiency. Unlike many states, Texas

does not have a comprehensive customer bill of rights to ensure access to new technologies like solar, solar plus storage, and other means to reduce energy use and encourage energy independence.

Finally, despite Texas creating a modest energy efficiency standard for our investor-owned utilities back in 2011, we have fallen well behind other states in energy efficiency programs and goals. We have an energy demand reduction goal to reduce energy use at peak summer use, but the state lacks an overall energy savings goal. A goal of one (1) percent would spur the development of cost-saving energy efficiency programs for residential and commercial energy customers. From insulation to better air conditioners and buildings, even incentives for on-site solar and energy storage, a bump in our energy efficiency programs would produce jobs, save money, and reduce air emissions and water use.

In addition, Texas should extend required annual reporting by government agencies, school districts and local political subdivisions on their energy use and efforts to reduce electricity and natural gas use, and create a revolving loan for residential energy efficiency.

Sierra Club

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