



# CUSTOMER FACTS

## Renewable Energy is a “Natural”

### Major Benefits

There are two clear advantages to using renewable energy:

- It's clean, as opposed to using power plants that burn fossil fuels or using nuclear energy, which leaves radioactive waste.
- It's unlimited, so it can reduce demand for non-renewable sources of energy such as coal, oil, and natural gas.

### Growing Potential

As Texas' population grows, the demand for electricity also grows. Currently, Texas produces and consumes more electricity than any other state. Due to its size and diverse climate, Texas has tremendous potential to use renewable energy resources. However, in 2009, 93% of Texas' electricity was generated from fossil and nuclear power plants. The remaining 7% was generated from renewable sources with the majority coming from wind power.

The AWEA Annual Wind Industry Report illustrates that through 2009, the wind power industry continued to experience growth. In state rankings, Texas leads in wind capacity with more than 9,000 megawatts (MW) installed. If Texas were a country, it would rank sixth in the world in wind capacity. Currently, there are over 6,300 wind turbines in Texas alone, and the numbers continue to increase as the wind industry grows. The Roscoe Wind Farm, which spans parts of four Texas counties west of Abilene, is the largest wind power facility in the world.

In 1999, Texas adopted a renewable portfolio standard that required 2,000 megawatts of new renewable capacity be installed by 2009, bringing the total to 2,880 MW. Having

already met that goal in 2005, Texas passed a new bill increasing the mandate to 5,880 megawatts by 2015 and setting a long-range target for the state to have 10,000 MW of renewable energy capacity by 2025. Wind capacity has contributed most to meeting the state's goals, but the future goals include 500 megawatts of non-wind capacity such as solar, biomass, or geothermal.

Generating power from renewable sources is typically more expensive than burning fossil fuels, but increased demand and tax incentives have brought down the cost of using renewable energy to generate electricity. Electricity from renewable sources should become a more affordable alternative as the cost of fossil fuels rises and technological innovations increase the efficiency of wind farms, landfill gas operations, and solar installations. Since the 2005 legislation also streamlined the Public Utility Commission's ability to create Competitive Renewable Energy Zones for the construction of new transmission lines to meet the state's renewable goals, the cost should decrease as more lines are built to carry renewably produced power to the populated areas of the state.

Several Texas utilities now offer their customers power produced from renewable sources. It generally costs more than power generated from fossil fuel burning plants, but a growing number of consumers are electing to pay a premium for environmentally-friendly power. An alternative is to buy “green” power, which can include electricity generated from relatively clean natural gas-burning plants that burn gas produced in Texas. Either way, choosing one of these plans can contribute to a cleaner Texas.

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When you choose to buy renewable energy from your electric provider, you are simply telling your provider that you want a certain percentage of your power to come from renewable resources. That percentage of renewable power is then produced or purchased from another power generator and placed in the provider's power supply. The actual electricity that finds its way to your home or business represents the mix of all generators connected to the grid, but by choosing renewable power from your provider you help increase the amount of renewable energy used statewide.

**QUESTIONS:**

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