

Majority of Texans back shift to solar energy

February 16 2023, by Rashda Khan



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Two years after Winter Storm Uri wreaked havoc on Texas' power grid, a majority of Texans support expanding the country's reliance on solar and other alternative sources of energy, according to the most recent survey report released by the Hobby School of Public Affairs at the University of Houston.

While 64% of Texans favor expanding U.S. reliance on solar power plants, 59% favor reliance on geothermal plants and 57% favor reliance on wind turbine farms.

In comparison, 42% favored increasing reliance on [nuclear power plants](#) and natural gas-fired power plants. The majority of the 41% who preferred expanding U.S. reliance on onshore conventional oil and gas came from the Boomer/Silent Generation.

Texans also overwhelmingly (90%) supported net-metering legislation that would allow homes and businesses with solar panels to sell any extra power they generate back to the electric grid for the same price that the utility charges consumers to buy the electricity. And 82% supported [tax incentives](#) for homeowners and businesses to install rooftop solar panels and battery storage.

The Hobby School's energy report is the seventh and final report of its Texas Legislative Issues 2023 project. The energy report examined public preferences about [energy sources](#) in the United States, support for using state funds to provide incentives for the construction of natural gas power plants, support for home solar power related legislation, and interest in installing [solar panels](#) and an energy storage system among homeowners.

"Texas has an established energy legacy—it leads the nation in both [energy production](#) and consumption. But we are part of the energy transition and a majority of Texans across-the-board—across partisan lines—are supporting alternate energy sources," said Renée Cross, senior executive director and researcher at the Hobby School.

The respondents who supported increasing reliance on [solar power plants](#) represented 80% Democrats and 50% Republicans. The net-metering legislation had even broader support—93% Democrats and 90%

Republicans.

Mark P. Jones, senior research fellow at the Hobby School and political science fellow at Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy, noted that "between January 2021 and January 2023, there was a noteworthy increase of between 8% and 11% in the proportion of Texans favoring the expansion of U.S. reliance on energy obtained from offshore conventional oil and gas wells, fracking, and coal."

Among the survey's other findings:

- 77% of Texans support using some of the state's \$33 billion budget surplus to provide one-time tax credits or incentives to companies to promote immediate construction of natural gas power plants to increase reliability of the electric grid. That includes 87% of Republican and 69% of Democrat Texans.
- 57% of Texans favored expanding U.S. reliance on [hydroelectric dams](#) for energy.
- 54% of Texans supported expanding reliance of hydrogen power plants—58% Republicans and 57% Democrats.
- 35% favored expanding U.S. dependence on fracking for oil and natural gas while 42% favored reducing this reliance. Of the respondents supporting fracking, 61% were Republicans and 14% were Democrats.
- 40% supported increasing reliance on offshore conventional oil and gas as energy source.

The full energy report is available on the Hobby School [website](#).

Provided by University of Houston

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