**An “Inconvenient Truth” Transitions to an Inescapable Reality**

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True to the famous saying that “everything’s bigger in Texas”, the state both produces and consumes the most energy in the nation—leading in both renewable and nonrenewable sources. Though it may seem like Texas is making its mark in sustainability by holding the position of first in the nation in wind-generated electricity according to the American Wind Energy Association, the state also leads the U.S. in petroleum, lignite, and natural gas production. These accomplishments in the energy industry become more justifiable when paired with the state’s title as third largest in the nation, and, according to the latest data from the U.S. Census, continual achievement of fastest growing population in America. Altogether, this information illustrates that a larger and more populous state would logically be more apt to set records, posing the question of how sustainable the state of Texas truly is and how to transition it into a more renewable future.

According to the Electric Reliability Council of Texas, wind encompassed 17 percent of the energy that powered the state in 2017. Though it could be discouraging to see that the leader in wind energy is leading with what seems like such a small percentage, the state has slowly been working to increase it to over 20 percent in the coming years and take even more green initiatives in the future. Critics initially argued that Texas would not be able to reach the percentage of wind energy that currently powers the state without eliciting serious debt, yet it happened, making Texas a shining example that nothing stays impossible with enough dedication to make it possible.

One may wonder how the oil and gas mogul could have progressed so far in sustainability efforts, especially since climate change has increasingly transitioned from an imminent global concern to a significantly partisan hot-button issue that this republican-dominated state keeps at the bottom of its political agenda. However, one city, Georgetown, has figured out a way to power itself 100 percent sustainably and simultaneously bring its tax rates to the lowest in central Texas—42 cents per 100 dollar valuation on property taxes. The key to the city’s success is solar energy, another type of renewable industry that Texas is one of leading producers in. With a population of around 67,000 people, Georgetown is the largest city in the United States to run completely on renewable energy, surpassing Burlington, Vermont—the now second-largest 100 percent sustainable city—by around 25,000 people. By removing the partisanship surrounding the subject of climate change and devoutly searching for greener solutions to a pressing issue, engineers can overcome any economic and social challenges that present themselves and ensure the clean future of the planet.

As the fastest growing city in America for many consecutive years, Frisco, Texas would make a profound choice as the next target of sustainable implementation. The city is still developing and in the process of obtaining modern and unique additions that call for an equally enticing power source; therefore, with the cost of solar energy dramatically decreasing, installing solar panels on more buildings, finding ways to utilize wind power, constructing green roofs and parks for outdoor activities will help save water, lower greenhouse gas emissions, create jobs, and potentially lower taxes similar to the way they lowered in Georgetown. Frisco already has one of the most advanced recycling programs in the state, with the ability to dispose of e-waste properly, unlike many cities in Texas which do not have recycling programs at all. Not only that, but with every new development introduced there is a ten percent open space requirement to preserve as much of the natural environment as possible. Besides that, it is the first city in the nation to require energy star regulated construction, which is a large achievement. Through all of these fantastic pre-existing sustainability initiatives, however, there is room for improvement. The school district has its own ideas for renewable buildings, but xeriscaping empty courtyards, implementing green roofs to insulate buildings, carry water throughout the schools, and collect solar and/or wind energy could not only save thousands of dollars but also significantly impact the environment in a way that brings it one step closer to being saved. As a continually innovating city, being the first to modernize its schools with sustainable technology could lead to amazing things, especially when regarding that the newest generation (which would have the opportunity to experience the sustainability initiatives implemented within schools) is increasingly concerned with the reversal of climate change. As the city keeps growing rapidly, these additions to Frisco will impact the entire state positively, the nation as a whole, and subsequently, the world. Scientists estimate that the human population only has an estimated 12 years left to save the planet from irreversible climate disruption. Texas should assume its responsibility as a leader and strive for cleaner energy, spreading Georgetown's success to impactful cities across the state, and eventually change the world.