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Texas can still lead in energy production and alternative sources

Lone Star State is proof that traditional and renewables can thrive side by side.

By Michael Slattery and Nikki Morris

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Orsted's Mockingbird Solar Center solar panels line a prairie located in Lamar County near Brookston, Texas. The Lone Star State is proof that expanding fossil fuel production and advancing clean energy can coexist, write Michael Slattery and Nikki Morris. (Tom Fox / Staff Photographer)

On the first day of his second term, President Donald Trump wasted no time reshaping U.S. energy policy, declaring a “national energy emergency” with a focus on expanding domestic fossil fuel production. Trump also signed an executive order withdrawing the United States from the Paris climate agreement, as he did in his first term.

Conventional wisdom might suggest that this aggressive focus on fossil fuels signals a major setback for the clean energy transition, particularly given Trump's history of deriding renewable energy sources like wind and solar.

Texas — the nation's energy powerhouse — is proof that expanding fossil fuel production and advancing clean energy can coexist. As both the largest producer of oil and gas and the leading generator of wind power in the U.S., Texas demonstrates how traditional and renewable energy industries can thrive side by side.

Clean, reliable and affordable energy isn't merely an environmental goal, it is the cornerstone of the most significant economic transformation since the Industrial Revolution. The clean energy market was [valued at over \\$2 trillion last year and continues to grow](#). Texas, with its vast resources and innovation-driven energy sector, is poised to lead this revolution.

Texas plays a critical role in the natural gas market, a sector pivotal for the nation's cleaner energy future. Natural gas emits about 50 to 60% less carbon dioxide than coal when burned for electricity, making it a cleaner alternative to one of the "dirtiest" fossil fuels. The U.S.'s ability to [reduce carbon dioxide emissions](#) by approximately 1,000 million metric tons since the 2006 peak is largely attributable to replacing coal-fired power plants with natural gas facilities, many of which are powered by resources extracted in Texas.

Beyond emissions reductions, natural gas provides critical grid stability, which is particularly evident in Texas. The state's electric grid, managed by the Electricity Reliability Council of Texas, is increasingly reliant on wind and solar energy, with natural gas serving as the reliable backbone during periods of high demand or low renewable output.

As global electricity demand continues to surge, driven by factories, electric vehicles and data centers, Texas' diversified energy portfolio offers a model for balancing growing energy needs with emissions reductions.

Perhaps Texas' most significant contribution lies in its ability to supply liquefied natural gas (LNG) to nations still reliant on coal, particularly in Asia and the southern hemisphere. Export facilities along the Texas Gulf Coast are helping to lower global emissions while enhancing energy security in developing nations. By leveraging its resources and infrastructure, Texas is not just fueling America, it is powering the world.

While withdrawing from the Paris agreement may appear to signal reduced U.S. engagement on climate issues, climate action within the U.S. is far from over. [The U.S. Climate Alliance](#), a bipartisan coalition of 24 states representing 57% of the U.S. economy and 54% of its population, has committed to achieving emission reductions independently. In a letter delivered to UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Simon Steill, the governors noted that the alliance is well prepared for this moment, having launched this coalition back in 2017, when Trump previously withdrew the U.S. from the Paris agreement, and pointed to the coalition's 15-year trend of cutting emissions while simultaneously growing their economies.

Transitioning entirely to renewable energy will take time due to infrastructure, storage and technological constraints. While Texas has dramatically expanded its wind and solar capacity, natural gas remains a crucial stopgap, enabling significant emissions reductions now while buying time to develop and deploy longterm solutions like advanced renewables, grid-scale storage and green hydrogen.

Texas has long been synonymous with energy. Whether through oil and gas exploration, pioneering wind energy or exporting LNG to the world, the state has consistently driven innovation and leadership in this sector. As the global energy landscape shifts, Texas' ability to

balance natural gas with renewables positions it as a leader in shaping the sustainable energy future.

Natural gas certainly is not the ultimate destination, but it is an essential waypoint on the path to a cleaner, greener world. By embracing its energy diversity and fostering innovation, Texas and the U.S. can seize this leadership opportunity and ensure that the Lone Star State remains at the heart of America's energy transformation.

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