

# Texas beats Oklahoma in renewable energy development



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**By Peter K. Wright**



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Momentum is building for renewable energy in America, and Oklahoma is on track to be a national leader. To keep up with other states, however, developers in Oklahoma need to be ready to move quickly.

In 2021, Oklahoma was third in the nation for installed wind energy capacity, according to the 2022 Land-Based Wind Market Report published by the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. Oklahoma had 10.99 gigawatts of capacity. However, Texas had almost 36 GW up and running, and it's charging ahead with new developments. According to the report, Texas added the most wind energy

capacity in the nation in 2021 with more than 3.3 GW. Oklahoma was second, adding 1.4 GW.

Wind already is responsible for a significant share of electricity in Oklahoma. The state was fourth in the nation for in-state wind energy generation in 2021, with 41.1%, according to the report. The top two, Iowa and South Dakota, both generated more than half of their electricity from wind.

In solar energy development, Texas already has a head start on Oklahoma. In 2022, it was second in the nation for solar energy capacity added, down from first in 2021, according to Solar Energy Industries Association and Wood Mackenzie. Oklahoma was 42nd both years. However, Oklahoma is well-positioned to build up solar capacity going forward.

Demand for new Oklahoma renewable energy sources is likely to continue. On March 27, the Energy Information Administration announced that annual renewable energy generation surpassed coal nationally for the first time in 2022. Natural gas first passed coal in 2015 and has continued to grow. Renewables have the momentum to follow a similar upward trajectory.

Renewable energy projects in Oklahoma are subject to an array of rules and regulations that could dramatically affect the development process. Construction of wind farms, for instance, is specifically regulated by the Oklahoma Wind Energy Development Act (17 O.S. § 160.11, et seq.). Other state laws and regulations may affect plans for wind or any other kind of renewable energy project, as well. Additionally, local rules or zoning codes may create unique requirements for developers to navigate.

It's important for companies to have on-the-ground legal assistance that can help them meet regulatory requirements on a case-by-case basis. Oklahoma is poised to continue being a leading renewable energy state, and opportunities abound for companies with the right guidance.

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