

BUSINESS



Elizabeth Conley / Staff photographer

Out-of-state companies sign power purchase agreements for enough wind or solar power to offset their carbon footprint back home. They can then claim they are powered by green energy.

TOMLINSON

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build there. Instead, they decide to offset the power they get from coal and natural gas plants by buying and selling electricity halfway across the country, most likely in Texas.

Texas has a lot of wind and sunshine, which makes it perfect for these investments. But another reason we have so much renewable energy is the state's wholesale electricity market, which makes it easy to build new projects and sell the power. A Michigan cardboard box factory can easily trade in electricity as a side hustle.

Out-of-state companies sign power purchase agreements for enough wind or solar power to offset their carbon footprint back home. They can then claim they are powered by green energy. But since the Electric Reliability Council of Texas grid does not allow exports to other states, the company must sell the clean energy to the wholesale market and use dirty energy from their local grid.

This arrangement creates an opportunity to make big profits when wholesale prices spike in Texas, like during the

freeze. Too many of these deals benefit the company's bottom line at the expense of consumer reliability.

To keep things simple, let's use wind energy as an example. For decades, wind projects could not compete financially with coal and natural gas, so the federal government offered a temporary \$23 tax credit for every megawatt-hour produced. That leveled the playing field and spurred the industry.

Generating tax credits is now as crucial to the project's profitability as the electricity itself. Operators routinely offer electricity to the ERCOT market for free in order to capture the \$23 a megawatt-hour tax credit, which was not a big deal when wind generation was minuscule.

But as wind took greater market share, fossil fuel operators, which by most estimates need at least \$20 a megawatt-hour to make money, became increasingly frustrated. They cannot compete with free, and they will certainly not invest in new power plants or even battery storage if they cannot make a reasonable profit.

Federal lawmakers created this distortion because they prefer to hand out credits rather

than impose new taxes. Oil and gas companies also receive subsidies through other mechanisms. I would suggest Congress eliminate all subsidies and tax greenhouse gas emissions instead, something I've written about before.

Power purchase agreements, known as PPAs, allow companies to buy clean energy and generate tax credits. The wild price swings in the ERCOT market offer them a chance to sell electricity at a profit. But whether a PPA buyer is in-state or out-of-state makes a difference.

Local companies that rely on ERCOT electricity want an affordable and efficient grid. They are more likely to push for weatherization regulations. But out-of-state PPA owners crave price spikes to make money and do not want to spend one penny more than they must.

Dozens of companies made millions during the Texas blackouts because their projects kept operating. The proceeds from ERCOT customers' enormous bills will go to some of the world's most famous brands, which told customers they were going green to save the planet when they were actually making a profit.

The solution is not to get rid of PPAs but to incentivize reliable generation. Texas needs common sense regulations and to connect ERCOT to the rest of the country. That would allow ERCOT to not only import juice when we need it but to sell it when we have too much and allow everyone to make greater profits.

Many nights the wind in West Texas blows so hard that the wind turbines produce more electricity than the state can use. ERCOT's control room has to order operators to feather their blades so the grid is not overloaded, the opposite of what happened last month. Generators could sell that extra power.

Texas has more energy in more forms than any other state. If our leaders are smart, they will allow transmission lines to supply renewable energy to the rest of the country, knowing that those same transmission lines will save us from another disaster during those few days when we come up short.

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CERAWEEK

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more important time to gather industry leaders to discuss the changing energy landscape – even if it's virtually because of the ongoing pandemic.

"CERAWeek has often been called the Super Bowl of energy," said Jamey Rosenfield, a conference co-founder. "And if you think about the Super Bowl, it's a very important event to be there physically, but it's also amplified and seen by millions of people around the world. CERAWeek is a conference, but it's also a global community."

The 39th annual CERAWeek, which begins Monday, will feature more than 140 online sessions covering topics on oil and gas, alternative energy, the energy transition, geopolitics and emerging technologies such as carbon capture, electric vehicles and battery storage. There will be more than 400 speakers, including Microsoft founder and philanthropist Bill Gates, Saudi Aramco CEO Amin Nasser, Chevron CEO Mike Wirth, ConocoPhillips CEO Ryan Lance, Occidental Petroleum CEO Vicki Hollub, and Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner.

After last week's winter storm that knocked out power plants and caused widespread blackouts in Texas, CERAWeek organizers quickly added a session on the impact of the power failure on electric grids and making



Michael Wyke / Contributor

CERAWeek by IHS Markit is going virtual this year after canceling the 2020 event due to the pandemic.

energy sources more resilient to extreme weather conditions.

"One of the hallmarks of CERAWeek is bringing together this critical mass of expertise and perspective," said Dan Yergin, IHS Markit chairman and co-founder of CERAWeek. "So, we invented from scratch a whole new session just focused on the implication of the crisis in Texas."

The conference also will feature several members of the Biden administration, including the U.S. climate czar, former Secretary of State John Kerry, and White House Climate Advisor Gina McCarthy, the former EPA administrator, who has spoken at the conference in past years.

Organizers said Biden administration officials wanted to introduce themselves to the energy industry at the conference and field questions from attendees about their plans to combat climate

change, in particular regulations around carbon emissions and the environment.

"A focus of the Biden administration is to create a dialogue between policymakers and the energy industry," Rosenfield said. "They recognize that this is the forum to have that kind of discussion, where you're going to get a lot of diverse viewpoints."

Organizers acknowledged CERAWeek has become more diverse in its lineup of speakers and attendees over the years, particularly as concern over climate change has driven debate over the future of fossil fuels. The conference, which started out focused solely on oil and gas, has branched over the years to solar, wind, hydrogen and geothermal energy, as well as biofuels.

Innovation and technology also will play a role in the conference as oil majors invest billions of dollars into new lab-

oratories and start-up accelerators researching and developing carbon capture technology and alternative energy sources. Noubar Afeyan, chairman of the biotech company Moderna and a bio-fuels investor, is slated to speak about lessons the oil and gas industry can learn from the pharmaceutical company's rapid development of the coronavirus vaccine.

Although the conference is virtual this year, organizers said they believe CERAWeek will have a larger scale and impact because attendees won't have to hop on a plane to learn from the world's top energy leaders. Organizers said they are expecting higher attendance this year, especially from Southeast Asia and Africa.

Still, CERAWeek organizers said they plan to bring the conference back to Houston next year. The conference, which typically draws some 6,000 attendees from 85 countries to Houston, has been a boon to the local economy, particularly downtown hotels and restaurants that have struggled this past year to survive the pandemic.

"We're building back better and bigger in terms of impact and reach, but we do intend to be back in Houston in 2022," Rosenfield said. "We're very committed to being in Houston. Our partnership with Houston goes back decades and will continue for decades."

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enTouch strives to keep prices as low as possible. From time to time it is necessary to make adjustments to one-time charges due to costs associated with administration and management of our customer accounts and services. Below please find a listing of non-recurring, one-time charges we will be implementing along with minor rate adjustments for fees already in effect. These changes will go into effect **on or about April 1, 2021**. Please note, unless otherwise noted, the listed costs and/or fees are neither government mandated nor a tax imposed on you by the government; they are costs and/or fees enTouch assesses and retains.

| Description | Charge (per instance) |
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| Account Activation Fee | \$9.99 |
| Customer Equipment Hookup Fee | \$39.95 |
| Auto-pay Denial Fee | \$30.00 |
| Technician Visit | \$79.95 |
| Late Fee | \$15.00 |
| Non-pay Restoral Fee | \$40.00 |
| Payment Convenience fee | Up to \$8.50 |
| Seasonal Program | \$10/month/service |
| Home Networking (per 2nd, 3rd and 4th Computer or Device) | Up to \$14.95 |

For any questions, please reach out to our enTouch care team.

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING
MUNICIPAL SETTING DESIGNATION
CITY OF HOUSTON**

Virtual Meeting: Microsoft Teams Platform
Date - Time: April 1, 2021 - 6:00 PM

For meeting link and additional project information go to:
<https://www.publicworks.houstontx.gov/msd-calendar>

Applicant: Mr. Roger Saa

Site Location: 6405 Antoine Drive, Houston, TX 77091

Legal Description: TR 5A-5, ABST 346 A G HOLLAND

Contaminants of Concern: tetrachloroethene, trichloroethene, cis-1,2-dichloroethlyene, and vinyl chloride.

This designates an area in which the use of impaired groundwater is prohibited for use as potable water (i.e. drinking, cooking, bathing etc.). If you have questions or comments, please contact the City of Houston MSD Program at (832) 394-9003 or email at msd@houstontx.gov.

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING
MUNICIPAL SETTING DESIGNATION
CITY OF HOUSTON**

Virtual Meeting: Microsoft Teams Platform
Date - Time: March 29, 2021 - 6:00 PM

For meeting link and additional project information go to:
<https://www.publicworks.houstontx.gov/msd-calendar>

Applicant: Exxon Mobil Corporation North Houston Fuels Terminal

Site Location: 8700 North Freeway, Houston, TX 77037

Legal Description: TR 1A, (RES A PER PLAT), EXXON NORTH TERMINAL, ABST 1295 A C ALLEN

Contaminants of Concern: Benzene, TPH.

This designates an area in which the use of impaired groundwater is prohibited for use as potable water (i.e. drinking, cooking, bathing etc.). If you have questions or comments, please contact the City of Houston MSD Program at (832) 394-9003 or email at msd@houstontx.gov.

Legal Bids & Proposals Legal Bids & Proposals Legal Bids & Proposals

Galena Park Independent School District (GPISD) is requesting Competitive Sealed Proposals (CSP 21-200) for **Woodland Acres Middle School HVAC Replacement at 12947 Myrtle Lane, Houston, TX 77015 (Project #043-2020)**. Proposals are due on **Tuesday, March 23, 2021 at 2:00 CST** in the main lobby of the GPISD Administration Building, 14705 Woodforest Blvd., Houston, TX 77015, and at **3:00 pm CST** proposals for listed Alternates are due at the same location at which time and place the Proposals will be opened publicly and read aloud. A Proposal Security in the amount of ten percent (10%) of the proposal amount is required. The scope of work consists of HVAC system replacement, to include new chillers, pumps, boilers, and air handlers. Demolition of existing chilled water storage tank and foundation and regrading of affected site. Complete replacement of the Building Automation System and existing chilled/hot water control valves. Updates to the fire alarm system to accommodate HVAC equipment replacement and syncing of all existing strobes. A pre-proposal conference will be held at **Galena Park ISD Administration Building, on Thursday, March 4, 2021 at 10:00 am CST**. Attendance is highly recommended. Contract Documents will be available on February 22, 2021 at Stanton Engineering Group, LLC, 1300 W. Sam Houston Pkwy S., Suite 121, Houston, TX 77042, (713) 300-9292, for a \$200.00 refundable deposit. Proposers may also obtain additional documents, at their cost, from Triangle Reproductions, Inc., 8450 Westpark, #100, Houston, TX 77063.

NOTICE TO PROPOSERS:
Request for Subcontractor **Proposals for Modular Buildings at Pyburn Elementary School Galena Park ISD Project # 109.1-2017**

Purcell Construction, Inc., as Construction Manager at Risk on behalf of Galena Park Independent School District will receive subcontractor/vendor proposals for the Modular Buildings at Pyburn Elementary School designed by S. Chu Architects.

Proposals and qualification statements will be received by Purcell Construction, Inc., from interested proposers, sub-proposers and suppliers until 2:00 PM on Wednesday, March 10, 2021, in the presence of the Owner and Architect at the offices of Purcell Construction, Inc. at 277 Dennis Street, Humble, Texas 77388, Phone: 281.548.1000 and Fax: 281.548.2998, email: bids@purcellc.com; Construction Manager Contact: Carter Ullrich.

Drawings and Specifications will be available for review on February 17, 2021 at the offices of Purcell Construction, Inc., and at the plan rooms of AGC, Dodge Data & Analytics, Virtual Builders Exchange, Construction Data and CMD Group. Prevailing wage rates in conformance with Texas law will be paid on this project. All proposals shall remain valid for sixty (60) days.

The Owner, Architect/Engineer and Construction Manager reserve the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive any informalities and irregularities in the proposal process, and to make the awards in the best interest of the school district. By submitting a proposal, each proposer agrees to waive any claim it has or may have against the Owner, the Architect/Engineer, Construction Manager and their respective employees arising out of or in connection with the administration, evaluation, or recommendation of any proposal; waiver of any requirements under the Proposal Documents, or the Contract Documents; acceptance or rejection of any proposals; and award of a Contract.

A virtual Pre-proposal conference will be held via Zoom.us on Tuesday, March 2, 2021 at 10:00 AM. Contractors are strongly encouraged to attend the pre-proposal conference.

NOTICE TO BIDDERS
The Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County, Texas (METRO) is planning to issue the procurement documents listed in this advertisement. IFB No. 4021000099: Polycarbonate Panels for Bus Shelters. Solicitation will be available on or about 03/01/2020. Prospective bidders/proposers can view and download these solicitations by visiting METRO's website at <https://webapps.ridemetro.org/procurement/solicitations.aspx> If you are unable to download the documents or are having difficulty, please contact METRO Plan and Bid Room at (713) 739-4881.

**Sealed Proposal Solicitation #RA05-21
Houston-Galveston Area Council
Cooperative Purchasing Program
Radio Communications/Emergency Response
Equipment**
Pre-Proposal Conference: 3/4/21 @ 9am
Response Deadline: 4/15/21 @ 1pm
Public Opening: 4/15/21 @ 2pm
3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX
Per ADA, reasonable accommodation provided with 24 hour prior notice.
713-993-2417 or www.hgacbuy.org for info.

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