



# News

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**CONTACT:** Robert Weissert  
Director of Communications  
& External Relations  
850-222-5052, ext. 20  
850-321-5052 (cell)  
[robert@floridatxwatch.org](mailto:robert@floridatxwatch.org)

## **Florida TaxWatch Report Concludes Solar Energy could be a Catalyst for Investment and Jobs in the Sunshine State**

**TALLAHASSEE, FL** - A new briefing from Florida TaxWatch warns that "immediate action and assertive policy measures need to be taken" in order for Florida to realize the economic benefits of solar energy production in the sunshine state.

The report, [\*The Positive Economic Impact of Solar Energy on the Sunshine State\*](#), examines the potential benefits of encouraging and expanding the solar energy production industry in Florida. According to TaxWatch, Florida has a natural competitive advantage in luring investment in this critical industry – but other states are gaining ground.

"Sunny days are the most valuable resource for solar power generation, and Florida has more days with sunshine than almost any other place on earth," explained **Robert Weissert**, a spokesman for Florida TaxWatch. "Florida is perfectly positioned to be the nation's leader in the solar energy industry, but any delay in approving another round of solar projects would open the door for other states that are actively recruiting solar companies to locate in their states."

The economic benefits outlined in the research briefing include permanent, high paying jobs for Floridians. According to the econometric analysis conducted by Florida TaxWatch, a reasonable investment in solar energy would directly and indirectly create nearly 100,000 jobs.

Those opportunities contemplated in the Florida TaxWatch report are already evident in Southwest Florida, where Palm Beach Gardens-based developer Kitson & Partners has announced plans for the world's first all-solar city at Babcock Ranch.

"Renewable energy is the future of our economy, and we are currently in discussions with companies around the world that are interested in investing in Florida's solar future," said **Syd Kitson**, Chairman and CEO of Kitson & Partners. "With strong support from our policy makers, we can establish Florida as the leader in solar power generation, research, and development."

Florida TaxWatch invited Kitson and representatives of statewide environmental organizations to participate in the release of their research report, and share their perspectives on proposed Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) legislation. The RPS calls for 20% of energy production to come from renewable sources by 2020.

"I strongly believe that making a significant renewable energy commitment is the single most important thing lawmakers can provide to trigger significant investment here in Florida, and help create thousands of new jobs," Kitson said. "The RPS is a way to assure the business community that Florida is serious about renewable energy and that locating here is the right move."

According to the Florida TaxWatch report, opportunities to attract research and development, manufacturing investment, and the accompanying jobs that are presenting themselves could be lost to states like Pennsylvania, Texas, Arizona, and Michigan where renewable energy incentives are already in place and the market is perceived to be more predictable and stable.

"Without aggressive pursuit, Florida will lose the opportunity to be the nation's leader in the solar energy industry," the Florida TaxWatch report concludes. "This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to attract a new, clean-tech industry to the state, bringing with it new jobs, taxpayer advantages, and critical forward thinking energy policy."

The full report is available at [www.FloridaTaxWatch.org/research](http://www.FloridaTaxWatch.org/research).

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Florida TaxWatch is a statewide, non-profit, non-partisan research institute that over its 30 year history has become widely recognized as the watchdog of citizens' hard-earned tax dollars. Its mission is to provide the citizens of Florida and public officials with high quality, independent research and education on government revenues, expenditures, taxation, public policies and programs and to increase the productivity and accountability of Florida state and local government. Its support comes from homeowners and retirees, small and large businesses, philanthropic foundations, and professional associations. On the web at [www.FloridaTaxWatch.org](http://www.FloridaTaxWatch.org).