# *The Austin Environmental Directory 2025-26*

*Resilience*

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# *The Austin Environmental Directory 2025-26*

Edited and Produced by Paul Robbins

All articles in this edition except those specified below are by Paul Robbins

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# ABOUT THE DIRECTORY

***The Northern Lights are not a constellation. Yet they are all-but-certain to appear. But there is no confirmed place in the sky, no scheduled time, nor certain shape, and not a shape that holds for long.***

***It is not human to live without hope, though I continue to scan the sky until exhaustion for an omen to appear as to when this frozen darkness will melt away.***

***Perhaps the consolation is that we have the wish to see light when it comes. Many no longer possess the will, with some even losing their vision by living in a never-ending starless night.***

*Lighthouse on the Coast of Brittany – Stephane Gachet via Flickr*

The *Austin Environmental Directory* is meant as a user-friendly guide to readers for learning about environmental issues, for identifying and purchasing environmental products, and for becoming involved in environmental organizations. The print version is distributed free to the Austin area. The *Directory* is also on the Internet at **www.environmentaldirectory.info/**.

The *Directory* is edited by Paul Robbins, a longtime environmental activist and consumer advocate residing in Austin. He wrote most of this issue, with government agencies and non-profit organizations producing sections relevant to their programs. These agencies and organizations received this space at greatly reduced cost.

Businesses in subjects that the book discusses and local environmental groups are given free listings. However, the book is supported through advertising and contributions from individuals and environmental groups.

## This Year's Topics

This is the 11th issue of the *Directory* since 1995. Given the increasing dangers of a changing climate, increasing population, and obsolete designs of the complex systems meant to provide our society with basic resources for survival, the theme of this edition is resilience. It was originally inspired by the crash of the Texas electric system in 2021.

The first article will discuss the public's growing demand for backup electric power after the massive Texas power grid failure in 2021. It discusses fossil-fuel electric generators and electric storage batteries, how and why the electric system failed, and the technical and social ramifications of these relatively new technologies in society.

Since whole-house backup power products are relatively expensive and cannot be sited everywhere, there is a companion article describing products that can assist in power outages at a more affordable cost.

The third article exposes another cause of the Texas electric blackout that no other media outlet has covered – that the state was exporting natural gas overseas at the same time there were domestic fuel shortages that drove fuel costs to insane levels.

The fourth article on energy describes another kind of resilience – dispatchable renewable energy. While it is imperative that society transition from fossil and fissile fuel to prevent futher global warming and pollution, intermittent solar and wind needs storage and dispatchable energy. This story urges Austin's electric utility to get directly involved in research and development by repurposing money from its (once vanguard but now obsolete) GreenChoice program.

The *Directory* also discusses pending water shortages. In an article on the subject, evidence is presented that Austin is as little as 15 years and one bad drought away from empty Highland Lakes, where the city obtains almost all of its water.

And this edition also confronts the challenge of agricultural resilience. The Austin area spends billions of dollars importing food from around the country, and to an extent, the world, leaving its food supply vulnerable to scarcity from both global warming and international supply shortages. Austin has spent considerable time and money creating its own food plan, but has yet to fund it. It is past time.

Most of the information in these articles has never been reported by any other Austin publication. This edition also includes an article on how to find safer cleaning products, a large section detailing the region's local environmental groups, and another discussing organizations dedicated to teaching students about ecology.

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**Introducing the Office of Climate Action & Resilience**

If you haven't heard, the Office of Sustainability has officially become the Office of Climate Action and Resilience. This change better reflects the work we do every day — helping Austin prepare for and respond to the challenges of climate change while ensuring a more just and sustainable future for all.

While the name is new, our work is the same. We remain committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving food access, and building community resilience. And most importantly, our team is the same group of passionate, dedicated professionals you've worked with or seen out in the community over the years.

We know the challenges we face — rising temperatures, extreme weather, food insecurity, and environmental injustice — require bold action, and we're committed to meeting this moment. Same team, same passion, new name!

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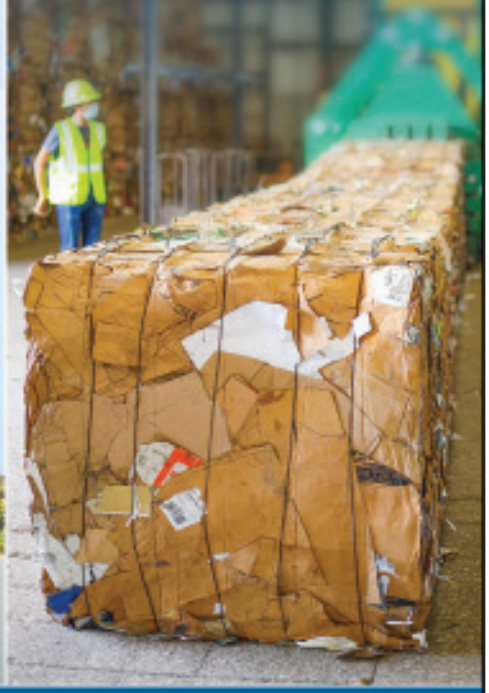

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