

For Immediate Release

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Texas Comptroller Urges Small Cities and Counties to Take Advantage of Energy Saving Grants

(AUSTIN) — Texas Comptroller Susan Combs today announced more than a thousand small cities and more than 200 counties in Texas can receive grants to help with energy efficiency and energy conservation projects. A total of about \$45 million in federal stimulus funds can be used for projects that include public building energy retrofits and energy efficient street lighting.

The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) program will be administered through the Comptroller's State Energy Conservation Office (SECO). The list of the cities and counties, and the allocated grant amounts they can receive, can be found at www.seco.cpa.state.tx.us/arra/eecbg/index.php.

"Small cities and counties don't have to bid for these grants, the money is already allocated to them if they choose to use it," Combs said. "We want to make sure every eligible city and county gets to use these grants and we'll provide as much help as possible. The allocated amounts range from \$20,000 to \$150,000."

SECO will distribute the block grants to cities with populations under 35,000 and counties with populations under 200,000, based on 2007 census estimates. There are 1,127 cities and 244 counties in these categories. Packets have been mailed to the mayors and county judges with an acceptance form to proceed with the application process, examples of eligible projects and a sample of official resolutions that cities and counties must pass. Document copies are at www.seco.cpa.state.tx.us/arra/eecbg/index.php.

"We want to help cities and counties explore options to get long-term benefits of conserving energy and reducing emissions while saving their taxpayers money by cutting energy costs," Combs said.

Projects eligible for the EECBG program include: government building energy audits and retrofits; small on-site systems that can provide electricity, heating or cooling to a public building; installing energy efficient traffic signal lights and outdoor lighting; and installing equipment that uses renewable energy such as solar, wind, water or geothermal energy to generate electricity at a government building.

A city or county has 45 days to preliminarily accept its allocated money and continue with the application process. SECO will team up with other agencies and local utilities and co-ops to help provide assistance and resources for applications and projects. If a city or county does not accept its grant, that money will be redistributed to other local governments that accept funding.

Larger cities (populations over 35,000) and counties (populations over 200,000) are working directly with the U.S. Department of Energy for their block grants.