

Candidate Questionnaire on Austin Energy Issues

Participating Organizations:

- **Public Citizen**
- **SEED Coalition**
- **Sierra Club**
- **Solar Austin**
- **Texas ROSE (Ratepayers' Organization to Save Energy)**
- **Clean Water Action**
- **Austin Climate Action Network**
- **Texas Drought Project**
- **First Unitarian Universalist Green Sanctuary Ministry**
- **Wildflower Unitarian Universalist Church**

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- 1. The mission of the Austin Energy Department is to deliver clean, affordable reliable energy and excellent customer service. During your term, what will be the most important challenge for the city in regard to Austin Energy?**

I believe a challenge will be keeping rates low and affordable. There is also a lot of disagreement on our aggressive goals to move toward more renewables, but I believe Council made the right decision in moving forward with updating our goals related to renewables with a built in 2% affordability goal. All interested parties must continue to work together to ensure that we are indeed delivering clean, affordable reliable energy with excellent customer service.

- 2. From a citywide and district perspective, briefly describe your vision for managing and improving Austin Energy?**

First and foremost, I think that AE should stay under the purview of the City Council leadership and I would oppose any attempts to change that. There needs to be a shift in the culture of AE that works with environmental experts and community members instead continuing to fight change and fight our aggressive goals to become the greenest City in the nation. That culture shift needs to prioritize green energy and affordability first and move as quickly as possible to take the Fayette plant offline.

- 3. What is your position on climate change?**

I believe climate change is real and is supported by scientific evidence. I believe Climate Change is a direct effect of human activity including deforestation and use of fossil fuels. Owning our utility allows us the opportunity to make significant strides forward combating climate change at the local level.

- 4. Do you support implementation of the recommendations in the report developed by the [Austin Generation Resource Planning Task Force](#) and are there any other specific changes you would like made to the [Austin Energy Resource, Generation and Climate Protection Plan to 2020](#)? What would you change and how?**

I'm supportive of these recommendations and believe we can be more aggressive in some of our goals to move to greater dependence on renewables. We should work tirelessly to ensure the City reaches these goals, and continue to update the plan as needed to move our City forward in a way that protects the environment. As stated in the above response, climate change is real and we need to take every step possible to protect our natural resources.

5. City Council serves as the board of directors for Austin Energy. As a council member, what do you consider your role to be in regard to Austin Energy's governance?

I believe my role as a Council Member would be to ensure that AE is delivering on the mission of delivering clean, affordable, reliable energy and provide excellent customer service to our ratepayers. I believe that AE should stay under the purview of the City Council because the Council answers directly to the citizens, is much more accessible to the public, and can provide more structure for public input to help capitalize on the many engaged stakeholder groups that are invested in green energy and consumer protection.

If the Council is not delivering on the AE mission, Austinites have the power to elect other leaders. AE rates significantly impact Austinites, and should be closely monitored by our elected officials. AE energy policies also have a huge impact on environmental issues and our elected officials need to be held accountable to the voters if they are not making appropriate decisions when it comes to protecting our environment. The voters are the shareholders in AE and should have control over who leads it.

6. What renewable energy resources and programs should be incorporated into the Austin Energy generation resource mix?

Solar and wind have become much more affordable options in recent years, and should be the main focus for meeting our increased renewable goals. We should also expand our rebate programs for residential and commercial customers to help us reach our renewable goals, and improve our weatherization program to help low income folks have more energy efficient homes.

7. How and to what extent should Austin Energy provide customer energy efficiency programs?

AE should provide customer energy efficiency programs including rebates, weatherization, and other creative solutions to the greatest extent possible. We should do this by investing enough in these programs so that no one is left out, and by potentially partnering with private industries and encouraging and educating Austinites on the benefits of these programs, and ensure that all ratepayers are aware of the programs available that could help them with increased energy efficiency.

8. What are your thoughts on whether Austin Energy should invest in more nuclear reactors and whether the utility should remain involved in the existing South Texas Project reactors after their currently scheduled retirement dates of 2027 and 2028 if they get relicensed for 20 additional years?

We should be focusing most of our efforts on safe, affordable renewable energy sources. I have concerns about continuing to invest in dangerous energy sources, and am hesitant to continue to move forward with nuclear energy until we have a safe and reliable method for dealing with the waste. Also, nuclear energy sources demand more water use, so focusing more on other types of renewable energy aids in our water conservation efforts.