

# 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?**

This is not a trivial question. On the long run we should be contemplating on putting all power lines underground, just as is the case in new developments.

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

I have given plenty of thought on the matter, as in a book I published a couple of years ago on Amazon entitled “Universalization (Instituting education as third social protagonist of culture)”. The argument is as follows. The manufacturing of pencils is essentially a private concern, just as much as the police is public; but then the question regarding energy is where to place it, in the essentially private or public spheres of the economy? My argument is out of habit some cities place it publicly, like Austin, whereas other do it privately, like our neighbors, but this misses the issue underlying it all that we may be missing something.

What I’m proposing is the constitution of the universal sector of the economy. In order to understand the concept we would need to first be introduced to the triads, that the virtue of everything is a triad, three-in-one. This can be intuitively exemplified by the belief that we are three-in-one, body, mind, and spirit, or a triad; likewise, the family, mom, dad, and child. My claim is that the city is a live collective person constituted out of neighborhoods, corresponding to the body, of schools, to the mind, and of congregations of people, to the spirit. From this it follows that the way to go is to understand that the economy of the city should similarly be triadic, that is, besides the usual players of private and public, now there should additionally be the universal sector.

There’s much more to it, but we’ll cut it short and leave it to the reader to do further reading in the source above mentioned.

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

It is a fact of life, its presence, independently of who or what is causing it.

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?**

My academic formation is physics and later in life philosophy, so I bleed energy. That said, I should have no problem relatively speaking in understanding the subject matter at hand, but at the present I would abstain from commenting for fear of emitting an uninformed opinion.

However, what I could say is that I am in favor of renewable energy resources and getting away from fossil fuels, all things considered.

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?**

As mentioned above regarding Universalization, my main concern constitutes a vital economy that will thrust Austin well into the III Millennium. In order to do this would require financing education with energy revenue instead of from property taxes.

On the larger view of things, this energy as a source of financing at the national level, would entail doing the same with oil and gas, that is, handing it over to the universities in order to finance research and development, and free tuition, and not have to rely anymore on limiting and limited private investments. A side effect of this would be patents free of copyright laws. I believe that knowledge is not to be owned but shared.

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

I must apologize and claim ignorance. It's a question of phasing out fossil, especially the carbon type, and in a lesser degree gas, due to its low price and local production. Renewable should take a greater load such as air and solar, and tides since we do have coastal access. There are a whole host of other alternatives that need be explored. The thing is that we need to get out of the business model regarding energy, but this can only happen in a universal sector milieu.

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

To all extents possible Austin energy should continue with its present day programs of improving insulation in houses. But not only efficiency, we should also contemplate sizing down our fifties egos of the garden home, big cars, and in general high consumption habits.

**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?**

Though this may be far into the future, we must contemplate fusion energy, not fission, though this could be realizable in the near future if only university research centers had the cash to do it with, for it requires huge scale investments; which takes us back to contemplating the constitution of the universal sector of the economy.