

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?**

Aside from the city's police department and transportation department, Austin Energy is, without question, the most controversial city entity. If elected, my first legislative priority will be to pass a resolution to audit Austin Energy. In 2012, a local television station uncovered a tremendous amount of wasteful spending at Austin Energy. Plagued with billing problems, bad customer service, and controversial policies—Austin Energy requires additional oversight. I will push to establish an Office of Inspector General (OIG) at Austin Energy to end waste, fraud and abuse of taxpayer spending. The OIG will encourage a culture of responsibility and public service at Austin Energy.

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

I am on record as supporting the upcoming 10-1 city council to continue to manage Austin Energy. District 3 represents 17 square miles from historic East Austin south to Stassney and northwest towards South First. This district includes many low-income and struggling blue collar parents that rely on both the city council and Austin Energy to seek ways to reduce costs. I envision the council working together with city staff to review energy rates and reverse bad policies.

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

As a youth, I earned my Eagle Scout badge and work as the Director of Finance and Intergovernmental Affairs at natural resources business that has been in my family for generations. I have seen first hand the results of climate change—it's real.

- 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?**

As of this date, I have no specific changes to the Protection Plan, however, I would rely on organizations such as Solar Austin and Public Citizen to reach out to council member staff to provide alternate proposals and feedback on important matters of energy and environmental justice.

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 the city council should maintain their role as the "board of director's" for Austin Energy and believe the 10-1 system will empower council members with the ability to be better public advocates with regard to utility rates, policy and customer service issues.

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

We've losing rooftop solar because of Austin Energy's misuse of setting the Value of Solar (VOS) rate without council approval. The city should re-incorporate rooftop solar as a generation resource.

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

I have advocated for a grant program that would allow property owners of multi-family dwellings to upgrade windows, transition to more energy efficient appliances, replace bulbs, and add insulation to reduce the monthly cost of utility costs for renters—affordability is a big subject that includes reducing bills, where possible, for Austinites. Such a grant program would need to require property owners to set a prorated cap on rent in exchange for upgrades that reduce monthly costs for renters.

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?

Austin Energy should not invest in any new nuclear reactors nor should we continue our partnership with the South Texas Project reactors beyond their scheduled retirement dates.