

# **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

**Candidate Name:** Laura Pressley  
**District:** 4

- 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?**

Austin Energy's most important challenge for the City is to pair affordability with renewable energy sourcing. They have done a good job overall, and they need to maintain both goals moving forward.

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

We need to implement Lean Business practices in Austin Energy and develop, encourage and grow a culture of cost savings in all departments.

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

As a scientist and chemist, yes, I agree that fossil fuel combustion increases the levels of CO<sub>2</sub> in the environment and that cause atmospheric warming due to the absorption of vibrational excitational mechanisms of C-O bonds.

- 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?**

Yes, I support the efforts of the Austin Generation Resource Planning Task Force. They need to be reconvened or another Task Force started to go further to define action plans for implementations and the costs and ROI for each. All conservation efforts are critical.

- 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 see the role of Council Members as Board of Directors with fiduciary and policy responsibilities, up to and including: setting policy, monitoring programs for ROI, managing cost effectiveness, monitoring metrics for employee retention, monitoring customer satisfaction, monitoring and defining safety standards, setting expectations

for cost savings programs and monitoring to agreed upon metrics. Bottom line, we want to ensure Austin Energy remains municipally owned and operated.

As a side note, Austin Energy's mission statement does not include the goal of safety. It includes reliability. Safety needs to be added. See below:

Austin Energy Mission: Deliver clean, affordable, reliable energy and excellent customer service.

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

The most important impact we can make is to set a goal for eliminating our dependency upon nuclear energy. We've done a great job with strategies to reduce our carbon and SO<sub>2</sub> emissions, the next big challenge is to divest us from the South Texas Nuclear Power Plants.

The solutions must be affordable and clean. We can do both if we employ creative engineering and business solutions.

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

The ROI for various programs must be evaluated with regard to savings for the reduction in future needed capacity and actual costs for the programs.

**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?**

I am strongly opposed to more nuclear investments and would support exiting the South Texas Project reactors and replacing with affordable renewable as soon as possible and have testified to this effect at City Council. Again, we need to replace these resources with affordable options.

As a physical chemist, I am very concerned with the generation of radioactive waste. This is the most damaging byproduct that has no technical solution to remove, mitigate, and reduce the negative environmental and health effects. In my mind it has the most potential to devastate our health and the environment.