

# **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?**

While there are multiple challenges, most of equal importance, I consider the most important challenge to the City about AE's Mission is execution of the Equity recommendations (pg 10). There is a documented history of economic injustices due to systemic and institutionalized racism and classism. Wealthier clients and businesses alike will continue to pressure Austin Energy and City Council for what benefits them.

Social justice-economic justice-is long overdue. Austin Energy and City Council must stand their ground, make sure the low/near-low income customers receive equal access to services, assure an equitable distribution of benefits for all customers, and eliminate the cost-burden currently borne by the low/near-low income customers due to subsidies to businesses and clients of greater financial means.

Making good on the equity recommendations makes utilities more affordable, lowers bills, creates jobs, decreases taxpayer burden, enhances property value, makes homes healthier, reduces fuel consumption as well as utility cost, and most important, it delivers the economic justice deserved.

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

My vision, from a citywide perspective, is carrying out the educational initiative detailed in Resolution 20070215-023 (1d); from a district perspective, partnering with Austin ISD and other school districts in the Austin area, environmental leaders, and organizations for purposes of community outreach and education. Outreach and educational programs must include a component about reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Approximately two years ago I attended an AE event at the Metz Recreation Center, it was an excellent resource and included non-AE information (health, etc) as well. Scheduling events, perhaps on a smaller scale, for use at: Back to School Night, school science fairs, festivals (Ex: HOPE Festival @ Reagan HS); sending a representative to Community School Alliance meetings provides an opportunity for networking, information sharing with the community; working with ongoing community projects/initiatives (Restore Rundberg); faith-based organizations also provide an

opportunity for networking and events.

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

Industrialized communities are responsible for climate change. If the communities hope to have a future they for themselves, their children/grandchildren, and society, not to mention the environment, they are responsible to make needed changes ensuring a future of production and consumption of clean energy.

Locally, elimination of greenhouse gas emissions is the most important response. In order for this to happen, local leaders must develop and carry out an aggressive initiative with a timeline including policies and procedures, targeted goals, and a citywide educational outreach component for residents.

**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 spoke at a few of the Austin Generation Resource Planning Task Force meetings, supporting implementation of the recommendations, especially the Equity recommendations, in their report. I continue to support implementation of the recommendations in the Austin Generation Resource Planning Task Force report.

At this time there are no specific changes I would recommend. I do want to remind City Council and Austin Energy the key to executing the AE's Mission "to deliver clean, affordable, reliable energy and excellent customer service." **is** the customer service - deliver the economic justice deserved and demanded by Austin residents, include Austin residents in the conversations – leave no one at the curb.

**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?**

Make sure Austin Energy and City Council stand their ground, making sure members of vulnerable populations receive equal access to services, assuring an equitable distribution of benefits for all customers, and eliminating subsidies to businesses and clients of greater financial means. Accomplish this by working with community and environmental leaders.

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

Renewable energy resources must include solar and wind.

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

Refer to responses for Questions 1 and 2.

**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?**

Nuclear energy contributes to existing climate change. AE must cease investment in nuclear reactors due to the nuclear energy being too dangerous. AE should no longer invest in the STP reactors.