

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: David C. Senecal

District: 5

Website: davesenecalatx5.com

Email: davesenecaldistrict5@gmail.com

Phone: 512-387-1123

- 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?**

Affordability is the primary concern and it covers all utilities, rent, transportation, food and taxes. On the energy side, we have good planning and good capacity in place. Our challenge will be in balancing the revenue stream requirements, our conservation goals and enabling our population in the lower income brackets to live and thrive here.

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

Agree and set goals and metrics, then put a huge effort into consistent communication of those goals and the progress towards them. Consistent and predictable responses and direction from the council will help AE continue to be efficient and effective.

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

It is scientific fact that the earth is getting warmer and the predicted impact of that change is reasonable. Burning fossil fuels can be linked as a contributor to the factors proven to correlate to this increase. It is prudent to reduce those actions that contribute to those factors.

- 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 support the general recommendations of the report. I would like to maintain the current goals set. Let's reach these goals, early if possible, and then set the new goals with the information and technologies available then. Our Future energy sources should avoid gas and coal. I would set an earlier year than 2019 for having builders offer an optional solar package for new construction.

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?

Participate in setting the strategy, define the metrics and key performance measures that indicate progress towards that strategy, and ensure AE has the resources it needs to pursue that strategy.

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

Remain open to new technologies while focusing resources to ensure we get to our defined deliverables. Current options of thermal, wind, solar and biomass are all interesting and each the focus of investment and research. We need a comprehensive strategy that defines a path yet also puts a foot into each of these pools so we are connected to the advancements in each.

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

Demand is an important leg of capacity planning. To the extent it can be mitigated or peak levels pushed out, we should consider efficiency options based on their potential to impact our supply reserves. The affordability aspect addressed earlier applies here as well.

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 options are unpopular due to volatility, hazardous waste volumes and expense. That said, we need to be driven by data and analysis. My current stance would be to do the life cycle cost of extending our involvement and measure that against alternatives open to us.