

# 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?**

Austin Energy's clean energy initiatives are going to be the biggest challenge with Austin Energy over the next 15 years. The current Austin City Council has approved the Affordable Energy Resolution which requires Austin Energy to procure all energy from carbon-free sources by 2030. The charges from this resolution challenge Austin Energy with getting away from the current carbon producing sources and paying for the carbon-free sources without exceeding an annual 2-percent increase for ratepayers.

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

The oversight of Austin Energy by the Austin City Council needs to be improved by involving more direction from the community. There needs to be a better balance between the desire to add more green energy sources to existing operations of Austin Energy and keeping the energy rates affordable for all Austin residents. I believe this new oversight will be accomplished through the new Austin City Council and the need to improve the governance of Austin Energy.

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

Texas has been affected by the longest drought since the 1950's. The weather conditions attributed to this drought are linked to the La Nina in the Pacific that is in the process of changing to an El Nino this fall. The weather conditions affecting Texas are not directly attributed climate change from the production of carbon. I do support using cleaner energy sources, but do not support using climate change for the reason fo removing all carbon producing energy sources by having Austin ratepayers cover this change.

- 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 parts of the plan created by the Austin Generation Resource Planning Task Force. The massive investment of 600 megawatts of solar energy needs to consider

how that energy will be stored and distributed 24-hours a day. Wind energy could be a better option for supplying green energy to Austin.

**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?**

Austin Energy's governance by the City Council needs to be improved through a division of board oversight into separate governing and advisory boards. The city council will still have governing powers over Austin Energy, however, the advisory board of energy-focus members will have the ability to improve the strategic operations of Austin Energy.

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

Austin Energy should look into increasing wind energy as the main source of carbon-free energy. Solar energy will require additional energy storage technology in order to support the needs of Austin.

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

Austin Energy's energy efficiency programs should have a focus with providing the resources for lower-income residents who could use the assistance from these programs to improve housing affordability.

**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?**

The investment Austin Energy has in the South Texas Project reactors has paid off by providing inexpensive clean energy to Austin. The scheduled retirement dates for the reactions should be evaluated in order to determine when is the best retirement date for these reactors.