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Community Advocates Secure Victory Against Massive Gas Plant: Win Key Amendments to Austin Energy's Fossil Fuel Plan

Austin City Council prioritizes clean energy in the new 2035 Austin Energy Resource, Generation, and Climate Protection Plan.

AUSTIN, TX - A diverse coalition of community members, energy experts, and environmental justice advocates won critical amendments to Austin Energy's long-range energy plan. Austin City Council voted to approve a plan that includes new commitments to local solar, energy efficiency, battery storage, and demand response. The new plan sets an ambitious 70 percent renewable energy goal by 2030, and puts new, necessary constraints on any plans to add new gas units. The plan does allow for investments in new gas, but requires an assessment as to whether cleaner alternatives exist.

"We, the community, won significant changes to the plan that prioritize clean energy and battery storage," says Shane Johnson, clean energy organizer with the Sierra Club Lone Star Chapter. "I'm grateful for organizations like Public Citizen, PODER, Austin DSA, Creative Action, Parents Climate Community, AFSCME, and Community Powered ATX who worked tirelessly to ensure that renters, low-and-fixed income seniors, and young Austinites were represented in the plan. Now that the vote is over, together we'll continue to organize to make sure Austin Energy is accountable to the needs of the people of Austin and the oversight of our incoming city council."

This decision is a long time coming. In late 2023, Austin Energy proposed to build a massive 1,000 megawatt methane gas power plant to replace the Fayette coal plant and aging fossil fuel power plants at Decker Lake and Sand Hill generating stations. Sierra Club, Public Citizen, and a coalition of community organizations generated thousands of petition signatures in opposition to new gas power plants and in support of expanding clean energy.

The coalition worked for more than a year to involve the community, empowering Austinites to share their vision for a clean energy future. While the plan includes the goal of pursuing additional gas "peaker" units, the coalition won significant changes to the plan, including a required Request for Proposal for non-polluting resources, and important emissions guardrails. The coalition collected thousands of petition signatures, sent countless emails, made hundreds of phone calls to council offices, and spoke at nearly a dozen public meetings. In the end, community members, environmental and progressive advocates, and

local labor organizations, along with help from Electric Utility Commission members' amendments to the plan, collectively made sure Austin Energy's new 2035 energy plan reflected community values.

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ABOUT THE SIERRA CLUB LONE STAR CHAPTER:

With over 24,000 members across the state, the Sierra Club Lone Star Chapter is committed to protecting Texas' natural resources, advocating for equitable environmental policies, and empowering communities to take action for a sustainable future. The Chapter accomplishes its goals through direct and grassroots legislative and administrative lobbying, education, outings, litigation, and electing environmental champions to local, state, and federal office.