

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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Statement on Austin City Council vote to include Working Group recommendations in Austin's Climate Protection and Generation Plan

Austin, Texas - Today, on a 10-1 vote, the Austin City Council approved the Electric Utility Commission's Resource Planning Working Group recommendations to boost Austin Energy's renewable energy, storage, and energy efficiency goals, while recommitting the Utility to close two dirty gas plants in East Austin and stop our use of dirty coal by the end of 2022 by phasing out the use of the Fayette Power Plant.

In addition, as called for by the Sierra Club, the Council added a series of required studies to see if Austin Energy can go even further by looking at the feasibility of a net-zero carbon goal for 2030 and a 100% renewable energy goal by 2035, as well as other stretch goals. The studies must be completed by September 2019 for possible action by City Council, which serves as the Board of Austin Energy. The City Council also added some more specific goals on electric vehicles, low-income energy efficiency spending, and electric vehicle infrastructure. Finally, the City Council added some aspirational goals to reduce carbon emissions as fast as possible and get to 100% renewable energy.

Some of the workgroup recommendations adopted by the City Council include:

- Assuring that Austin Energy rates remain in the lower 50% of statewide rates and do not rise by more than 2% per year;
- Raising the renewable energy goal from 55% renewable energy by 2025 to 65% renewable energy by 2027;
- Committing to closing both natural gas steam units at Decker by 2021;
- Beginning the retirement process of Austin Energy's share of the Fayette Power Plant by the end of 2022;
- Raising the energy efficiency goal from 900 MWs of demand reduction by 2025 to 1,000 MWs by 2027 and committing that at least 20% of the annual budget would be dedicated to "hard-to-reach" programs that help working Austinites;
- Raising the local energy storage goal from 30 MWs of storage in 2025 to 40 MWs of storage by 2027;
- Committing at least \$7.5 million in local solar incentives for the next two years and at least \$5 million per after, while maintaining the local solar goal of 200 MWs by 2025.

In addition to the workgroup recommendations, the City Council added a number of studies that were suggested by the working group or community members, including:

- Assessing raising the renewable energy goal to 80% by 2027;
- Assessing a net-zero carbon goal by 2030;
- Assessing a 100% renewable energy goal by 2035;
- Conducting a study on electric storage, electric vehicles and dispatchable renewable energy.
- Assessing raising the energy efficiency goal to 1,100 MWs by 2027;
- Raising the local solar goal to 300 MWs by 2027;
- Raising the local storage goal to 100 MWs by 2027.

“This is a win for Austin ratepayers and a win for the environment. The City Council adopted recommendations that continue to make Austin Energy a leader on green energy, help us end the life of dirty fossil fuel plants, and ensure important budgetary commitments to solar and energy efficiency programs that help all Austinites,” Cyrus Reed, Conservation Director of the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club and a member of the Working Group, stated in response to this historic victory.

“We salute all community stakeholders, including the business community and low-income advocates, and in particular Mayor Steve Adler, Councilmember Leslie Pool, and Councilmember Alison Alter, for working with the Sierra Club and other stakeholders on a series of further studies that hopefully can get us to net-zero carbon by 2030.”

For any further questions regarding Austin's Climate Protection and Generation Plan, contact Sierra Club Lone Star Chapter Conservation Director Cyrus Reed at [512-740-4086](tel:512-740-4086) or cyrus.reed@sierraclub.org.

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