

RECOMMENDATIONS TO AUSTIN ENERGY ON INFORMATION TRANSPARENCY

Better public access to Austin Energy (AE) information would be an asset to participants in public participation forums, other interested citizens, and prospective businesses. Information transparency should be based on the premise that all information is open to the public unless the utility provides evidence to prove the record is confidential. Our information transparency recommendation has three integral parts.

I. Institute a Standard Annual Report

Establish a standard annual reporting process that provides information on-line and on paper. The information provided would be similar to that provided by publicly traded corporations and would include some new categories of reporting as follows:

- Annual and Monthly Description of Customer Base, System Load, Generation Facilities, Purchase Power and Energy Efficiency Programs.
- Breakdown of Revenue and Expenditures, Fuel Costs.
- Average Rates and Bills for Customer Classes and Residential Energy Burden.
- Performance Measures and Economic and Environmental Impacts of Investments.
- Customer Service Performance and Targets for Low-Income Programs.

II. Identify and Provide Convenient Public Access to Information

All information should be open to the public unless AE provides specific documentation that protected status is warranted under well-defined eligibility standards for confidentiality. Additional standards are needed to:

- Establish a temporary window for confidential status and automatic expiration as appropriate.
- Provide information for public review prior to public discussion.
- Make energy usage data available for evaluation of building energy efficiency.
- Maintain all current and historic public information including reports and information submitted to other agencies at a readily accessible location on AE's website.

III. Improve the Open Records Process and Public Access to Information

All information should be provided under a standard procedure that requires AE to:

- Provide a descriptive response and data location within a prescribed turnaround time.
- Identify standard locations where data and descriptive responses will be shared.
- Explain the denial of an open record request and establish an outside review for appealing decisions to restrict access.
- Provide a facilitator or librarian to help citizens locate facts and identify sources that may be beneficial to the individual's information search.

Developed with input from Chris Searles, (Burnt Orange Report), Carol Biedrzycki (Texas Ratepayers' Organization to Save Energy), Mike Sloan (Virtus Energy), Andy Wilson (Public Citizen Texas), Roger Wood (Coalition for Clean Affordable Reliable Energy), Colin Meehan (EDF), Dr. Tony Capraro (Citizen Activist), Paul Robbins (Consumer Advocate)