



**CAPITAL AREA  
FOOD BANK  
OF TEXAS**

February 9, 2012

Late Backup  
#37

The Honorable Lee Leffingwell, Mayor  
Members, Austin City Council  
City of Austin  
P. O. Box 1088  
Austin, Texas 78767

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Dear Mayor Leffingwell and Council Members:

I understand you are continuing deliberation on proposals by Austin Energy to increase customer utility rates. As I have mentioned in previous correspondence with you, the Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB) remains concerned about any rate increases and their effect on the food bank's ability to serve low-income clients. However, I want to call your attention to how increased rates for faith communities would also affect CAFB.

CAFB operates as a food warehouse, receiving food from a variety of sources, and then distributing it through our 300 Partner Agencies in a 21-county area. We rely on these Partner Agencies to feed the hungry through food pantries and soup kitchens. These Partner Agencies also provide our staff locations for social services outreach, including food stamp education and enrollment; nutrition education; and disaster relief.

Within Austin Energy's service area, 50 of our Partner Agencies are located in houses of worship. Should those facilities see significant rate increases, many will no longer be able to continue their partnership with us to feed the hungry. The result will be less food to meet what has been a growing demand. In fact, we have seen a 50% increase in demand over the past three years.

The clients our agencies serve are primarily the working poor, children, and seniors. These citizens face uncertainty about where they will find their next meal, or how they will feed their family. Decreased food availability would exacerbate the effects of hunger for these clients, including increased health care costs, or in the case of children, lower grades and increased truancy.

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We appreciate your consideration of our concerns, and stand ready to assist you as you make decisions on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Perret'.

Hank Perret  
CEO and President  
Capital Area Food Bank of Texas