



**BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION**  
**RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMISSION**

**Recommendation No. 20150324-005: Free Appliances in Weatherization Program**

**WHEREAS**, Austin Energy has the goal of saving electric demand and volume at less than the cost of new power purchases and generation; and

**WHEREAS**, Austinites have institutionalized these goals for decades because they recognize that the effort makes economic sense, helps individual consumers, and prevents air, water, and carbon pollution; and

**WHEREAS**, past programs that have given away free appliances to low and moderate income customers have been found to lack cost effectiveness, with some having paybacks on investment as long as 60 years, even though equipment has an average life of over 15 years; and

**WHEREAS**, continued investment in these options will discourage public confidence that their money in clean energy is being spent well; and

**WHEREAS**, the program to assist low and moderate income people save energy by giving away free appliances was largely funded by federal grants that no longer exist; and

**WHEREAS**, the Low Income Consumer Advisory Task Force is in active discussion about reviving this appliance giveaway program despite its economics; and

**WHEREAS**, low-income consumers as well as average consumers will pay for this effort, while receiving little in return if they do not participate; and

**WHEREAS**, there are more targeted and strategic ways that low-income customers can be assisted than giveaways of free appliances;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Resource Management Commission recommends to the City Council and the Low Income Consumer Advisory Task Force that giveaways of free appliances be abandoned as an active strategy in favor of options that can assist more low and moderate income consumers save more energy.

**Date of Approval:** March 24, 2015

**Record of the vote:** Approved on a vote of 4-1 with Chair Leo Dielmann, Vice Chair Sean Kelly and Commissioners Richard Amato and Grace Hsieh voting for; Commissioner Carol Biedrzycki voting no; and Commissioners Hari Krishna and Luke Metzger absent.

Attest: 

Toye Goodson, Staff Liaison