

**SUNRISE ATX PRESENTS: A TEACH IN ON THE  
FAYETTE POWER PROJECT**







# WHO WE ARE





# SUNRISE MOVEMENT AUSTIN

## What do we do?

- Fight for climate justice and a Green New Deal on a local and state level
- Climate strikes & direct actions (sit-ins, walk-outs, protests, teach-ins, and more!)
- Support other movements for social justice
- Endorse & throw down for candidates
- And more!



# WHAT IS CLIMATE JUSTICE?



- Climate change affects vulnerable populations disproportionately
  - **Increase volume of power outages** in historically low-income/BIPOC neighborhoods during **Winter Storm Uri**
  - **Higher rates of asthma** in Black and Brown communities, the effect of **Hurricane Hanna** on the Rio Grande Valley
- This means that we cannot solve climate change without addressing all systems of oppression
  - Climate justice = racial justice, economic justice, an end to misogyny and the oppression of marginalized people
- “Climate justice insists on a shift from a discourse on greenhouse gases and melting ice caps into a civil rights movement with the people and communities most vulnerable to climate impacts at its heart.” -Mary Robinson



# THE FAYETTE POWER PROJECT (FPP): HISTORICAL CONTEXT



# WHAT IS THE FAYETTE POWER PROJECT?

- The Fayette Power Project is a coal-fired power plant in La Grange, TX.
- Began operating in 1979 and is co-owned by Austin Energy and the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA).
- The plant is responsible for 80% of Austin Energy's emissions and 28% of Austin's total emissions.
- In March 2020, Austin Energy promised that it would cease operating their portion of the plant by the end of 2022 as part of their "Resource, Generation, and Climate Protection Plan to 2030".
- HOWEVER in November 2021, Austin Energy went back on that promise, citing inability to reach an agreement with the LCRA on how to cease operations as the reason.
- We are demanding that Austin City Counsel take action to hold Austin Energy accountable and transition the power plant.





# FPP CONTAMINATION & POLLUTION

Throughout its 4 decade tenure, the Fayette Power Project has been involved in numerous scandals surrounding its pollution and contamination.

THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

Report: Texas coal power plants leaching toxic pollutants into groundwater

- **WATER CONTAMINATION**
  - A 2019 study found unsafe levels of contaminants in groundwater near all of Texas's 16 coal plants including the Fayette Power Plant
  - Water under the Fayette Power Plant was found to contain “unsafe levels of arsenic, cobalt, manganese, molybdenum, nickel, selenium, and sulfate.”
- **VEGETATION DAMAGE**
  - About ten years ago a wave of dying vegetation in Hill Country near Austin was linked to sulfur dioxide emissions from the Fayette Power Plant
  - The plant had been operating with little equipment to decrease sulfur dioxide emissions
  - Sulfur dioxide is a component of acid rain
  - The dead vegetation ranged from agricultural pecan trees to plants that grow wild in the area

# EPA VIOLATIONS



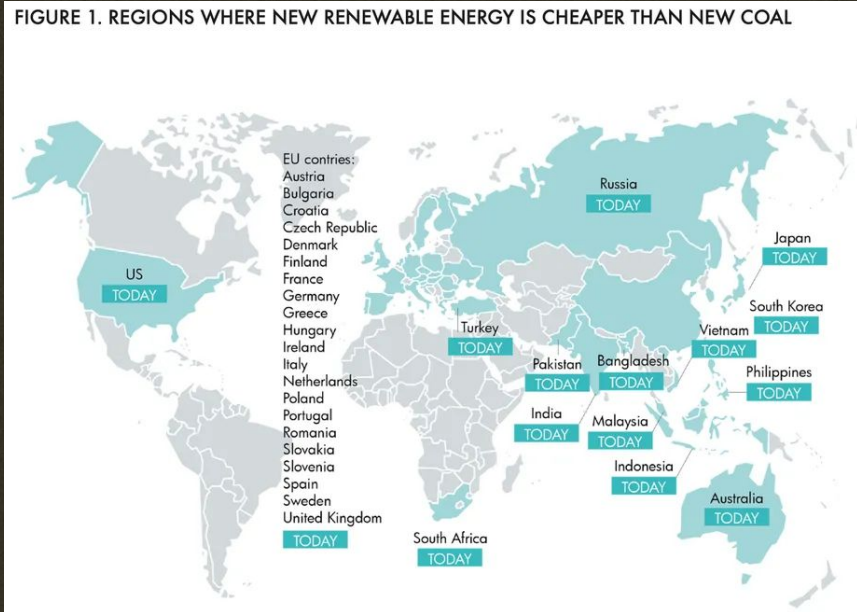
Cecily

- The Fayette Power Plant has been behind a number of violations of regulations put forth by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
  - In 2011, three environmental organizations [sued](#) the Fayette Plant for increased emissions of particle pollution in violation of the clean air act
  - Particle pollution is linked to increased rates of [asthma and lung cancer](#)
  - While a [settlement](#) was reached in 2013 where the plant agreed to lower soot emissions, other EPA violations continued
  - In 2016 an investigation found that impoundments used to store discarded coal [lacked the proper insulation](#) to prevent leakage. This is a direct violation of the 2015 “Coal Ash Rule,” an Obama era regulation aimed to mitigate the damage of coal energy.



# HISTORICAL CONTEXT - COAL IS AN ECONOMIC LOSER

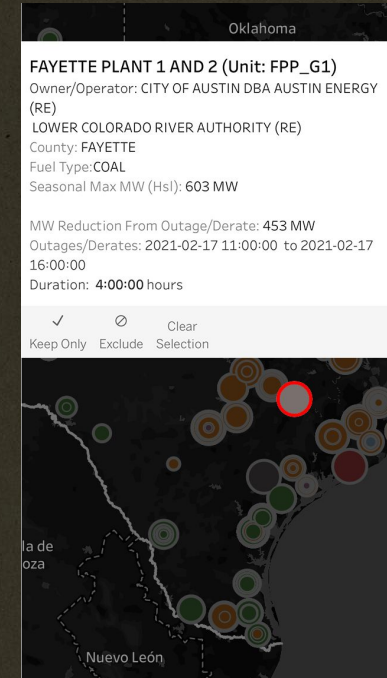
- Coal is propped up by entrenched political interests. **\$600 billion** are in stranded assets globally.
- By 2030, new and existing coal plants will be more expensive to build and operate than solar and wind *worldwide*.
- In the US the majority of existing and new coal plants are more expensive than renewables. For Fayette, wind is 18% cheaper net cost.



Source: Carbon Tracker

# FAYETTE FAILED DURING WINTER STORM URI

- Coal is touted as “dispatchable” power. The plant lost 453 MW of power during the winter storm. Also, “capacity factor” is low.
- Majority of power loss was from natural gas. Coal plants also failed dramatically.
- Power plants in Texas are built to shed heat. Winterizing a coal plant in the name of “resilience” would be an unconscionable waste of taxpayer money.



[Source: ERCOT Lists Generators Forced Offline During Texas Extreme Cold Event](#)



# THE FAYETTE POWER PROJECT (FPP): WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW



# THE FAYETTE WORKERS

- The FPP does not guarantee long term jobs - these jobs will disappear
- When this plant is unable to continue operating, the owners will not provide for the plant workers
- We need a plan for new jobs NOW
- Our initiative is in the workers
- A just transition is crucial to addressing climate change in an way that is equitable to all members of a community

**“That plant is not getting any younger...it will retire at some point.”**

**-Pat Sweeney, VP of Power Production, Austin Energy**



# WE HAVE THE POWER

- If we can't rely on our elected officials, we must take action
- Movement needs collectivism, not individuals
- You are a part of this, now and in the future
- Words mean nothing without action

**“I am not a liberator. Liberators do not exist. The people liberate themselves.”**

**- Che Guevara**

# A BETTER FUTURE IS POSSIBLE!

- By centering those most affected, we could **level the playing field** for the lower and middle class.
- A just transition has the potential to create millions of jobs, especially in a state like Texas, the 5th largest producer of wind energy **in the world**.
- This transition can include other forms of employment such as infrastructure repair, healthcare upgrades, hiring teachers, and more.





# GET PLUGGED IN!

- **Sign our petition** (on our linktree) to support our demands & contact Austin City Council
- **Donate** to us or **join our upcoming action** (look for it on our social media!)

## Join our movement :

- Visit our **Linktree**: [\*\*https://linktr.ee/SunriseATX\*\*](https://linktr.ee/SunriseATX)
- Keep up with us on **Slack**
- Follow us on **Facebook**, **Instagram**, **Twitter**, and **TikTok!** **@SUNRISEATX**
- If you haven't already, fill out our **new member form**

## OUR PETITION!



**THANK YOU!**



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