



Joint Sustainability Committee

RECOMMENDATION 20240327-006

Date: March 27, 2024

Subject: Joint Sustainability Committee Budget Recommendations (Part 2)

Recommendations on the FY 24-25 Budget

Description of Recommendation to Council

1. Low-Income Bill Discounts: Austin Energy customers pay a dedicated Customer Assistance Program fee to provide bill discounts for low-income customers. The purpose of this fee is to provide needed support in a transparent way. Forcing solar to pay for low-income discounts (as is the current structure of Austin Energy's Community Solar program) only serves to slow the transition to clean energy. Low-income discounts are needed regardless of the source of energy. **The Joint Sustainability Committee recommends that all bill discounts for lower-income residents be paid from the Customer Assistance Program fund, including bill discounts for low-income Community Solar subscribers.**

Motion: Christopher Campbell

Second: Amy Noel

Vote: 12-0

Yes: Kaiba White, Rodrigo Leal, Anna Scott, Jon Christopher Campbell, Richard Brimer, Charlotte Davis, Diana Wheeler, Chris Maxwell-Gaines, Craig Nazor, Jon Salinas, Amy Noel, Alice Woods, Chris Campbell

Off Dais: Anna Scott

Absent: Yure Suarez, Heather Houser, Bertha Delgado, Stephanie Bazan

2. Transmission Improvements: Improvements to Austin Energy's transmission system are essential for mitigating local congestion that increases costs to the utility and customers and for enabling the transition from fossil fuels to clean energy. Austin Energy commissioned a study that identified five recommended types of transmission upgrades.

The Joint Sustainability Committee recommends that these recommended upgrades be implemented as quickly as possible, by 2030, and that sufficient funding be allocated to this need to ensure that that of funds is not a source of delay.

Motion: Christopher Campbell

Second: Amy Noel

Vote: 12-0

Yes: Kaiba White, Rodrigo Leal, Anna Scott, Jon Christopher Campbell, Richard Brimer, Charlotte Davis, Diana Wheeler, Chris Maxwell-Gaines, Craig Nazor, Jon Salinas, Amy Noel, Alice Woods, Chris Campbell

Off Dais: Anna Scott

Absent: Yure Suarez, Heather Houser, Bertha Delgado, Stephanie Bazan

3. Fayette Coal Plant: Austin Energy and the Austin City Council have established that shutting down Austin Energy's portion of the Fayette coal plant is a top priority. Investing in an asset that the utility is actively trying to shut down is not a prudent use of ratepayer or utility funds. **The Joint Sustainability Committee recommends that the budget not include any capital investments in Fayette. The Joint Sustainability Committee also recommends allocating \$175,000 to support water quality monitoring and remediation.**

Motion: Christopher Campbell

Second: Amy Noel

Vote: 12-0

Yes: Kaiba White, Rodrigo Leal, Anna Scott, Jon Christopher Campbell, Richard Brimer, Charlotte Davis, Diana Wheeler, Chris Maxwell-Gaines, Craig Nazor, Jon Salinas, Amy Noel, Alice Woods, Chris Campbell

Off Dais: Anna Scott

Absent: Yure Suarez, Heather Houser, Bertha Delgado, Stephanie Bazan

4. Food Plan Implementation: The Austin/Travis County Food Plan will soon be completed. The plan includes a number of strategies that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Austin Climate Equity Plan also includes strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from food consumption and to improve carbon sequestration as part of food production. This work is complex and has the potential to yield significant emissions and equity benefits. **The Joint Sustainability Committee recommends that: one (1) Food Plan Project Manager be added to the Office of Sustainability. (est. \$150,000) In addition to implementing the Food Plan, this position should be responsible for implementation of the strategies related to food consumption and food production in the Climate Equity Plan.**

Motion: Kaiba White

Second: Diana Wheeler

Vote: 13-0

Yes: Kaiba White, Rodrigo Leal, Anna Scott, Jon Christopher Campbell, Richard Brimer,
Charlotte Davis, Diana Wheeler, Chris Maxwell-Gaines, Craig Nazor, Anna Scott, Jon
Salinas, Amy Noel, Alice Woods, Chris Campbell

Absent: Yure Suarez, Heather Houser, Bertha Delgado, Stephanie Bazan

Attest:



Rohan Lilauwala, Staff Liaison