



## BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

### Resource Management Commission

### Recommendation No. 20240917-009

Recommendation to Mandate Alternatives to Resistance Water Heating in the Energy Building Code

**WHEREAS**, all-electric resistance water heaters are profoundly inefficient, expensive for consumers to operate, and increase air pollution and carbon emissions; and

**WHEREAS**, the majority of Austin Energy's new Residential customers between 2013 and 2023 have electric resistance water heaters installed; and

**WHEREAS**, many of these Residential customers do not have a choice about using this appliance because they live in rented single-family homes and multifamily units; and

**WHEREAS**, most customers who reside in rented units are likely to be in the lower half of income levels and therefore less able to pay high electric bills; and

**WHEREAS**, 60% or more of the energy costs for all-electric resistance water heating can be saved by use of heat pump water heaters and solar water heaters; and

**WHEREAS**, Austin Energy has no programs for electric water heating load management, and has no rebate program for new buildings to encourage alternatives to resistance water heating, including heat pump water heaters and solar water heaters;

**WHEREAS**, the state of California mandates high energy-efficiency heat pump water heaters or solar water heaters in its prescriptive option for its Residential energy building code; and

**WHEREAS**, prescriptive codes set a floor of efficiency levels while allowing alternative compliance performance codes to meet this minimum level of efficiency;

**THEN BE IT RESOLVED** the Resource Management Commission recommend that the City Council delay enactment of the new Residential Energy Building Code to insert language that requires the use of heat pump water heaters and solar water heaters as alternatives to electric resistance water heaters in all-electric buildings not also served by gas utilities to the extent legally allowed; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Austin Energy quickly prepare enhanced rebate and load management programs that will reduce all-electric water heater loads, and that these programs begin in the next fiscal year.

**Date of Approval:** September 17, 2024

**Vote:** 6-0-2

**For:** Commissioner Paul Robbins, Vice Chair; Commissioner Trey Farmer; Commissioner Martin Luecke; Commissioner Chelsey Scaffidi; Commissioner Raphael Schwartz; Commissioner Alison Silverstein

**Against:** None

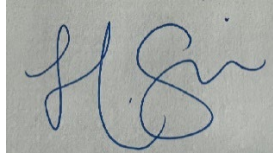
**Abstentions:** Commissioner Louis Stone, Chair; Commissioner Charlotte Davis

**Off Dais:** None

**Absences:** Commissioner GeNell Gary; Commissioner Dino Sasaridis

**Vacancies:**

Mayor's Office

A square image containing a handwritten signature in blue ink on a grey background. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'H. S. in'.

**Attest:**

Natasha Goodwin, Staff Liaison