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**To:** [ihe@herreraboylslaw.com](mailto:ihe@herreraboylslaw.com); [Rate Review](#)  
**Subject:** Rate review issues  
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Dear Mr. Herrera,

Here are some issues we would like to have considered in the Austin Energy Rate review case on behalf of our Church, First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin.

- 1) The House of Worship (HOW) customers currently receive a discount which Austin Energy (AE) proposed to eliminate. This discount keeps HOW customers from being unfairly penalized by extreme peak use which occurs when the general system is not peaking. Since the commercial rates based on peak are intended as an incentive to get commercial users to cut down their use when the system is peaking it has little real application for the HOW customers who generally peak on Sunday mornings or other times when the system in general is not at peak. This serves as a financial punishment for HOW customers without providing the peak relief the utility is seeking. Is there a more fair way to charge HOW customers?
- 2) Many HOW customers are in the smaller commercial classes who are currently paying the highest amount above cost of service. Voiding the HOW discount amounts to a double whammy on them.
- 3) HOW customers use their monies to provide social services for the community. Our church offers homeless a place to sleep and meals on nights when it is freezing and provides sack lunches for ARCH and so on. AE predicts they will receive \$1,000,000 additional revenue from churches each year if the HOW discount is eliminated. Some of this money going to AE would be subtracted from funds the churches can use to provide critical public and social services. Is this a good rate policy for a public utility? Would the Houses of Worship better fit in a class by themselves because of their critical social service role and atypical commercial usage pattern?
- 4) Is this peak use rate a fair rate for HOW customers and other smaller and mid-sizes commercial users whose usage patterns do not fit the typical commercial user, especially if their peak usage is atypical? Would some other rate structure more similar to the residential tiered rate structure be a better and fairer way to charge these customers?
- 5) The smallest HOW customers who meet only on the weekends will be the hardest hit if the HOW discount is revoked. Many meet in old buildings that they own or rent. These congregations do not have the resources to vastly alter their electric usage even with the AE rebates. The on peak/off peak rates will hit them the most severely and may make the difference of whether or not they continue to function as a congregation. Is there a more fair rate, charge, or class for these congregations?

Thank you for your consideration of these issues,  
Sincerely,  
Beki and Richard Halpin  
Co-Chairs Green Sanctuary Committee  
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