

BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Joint Sustainability Committee

June 6, 2017

Resolution on City of Austin Participation in Austin Energy's GreenChoice Program

WHEREAS, the Austin City Council adopted Resolution No. 20070215-023, which calls for "powering all City facilities with renewable energy by 2012"; and

WHEREAS, an electricity customer can only legitimately claim to be powered by renewable energy be either producing renewable energy on-site equal to their demand, or by purchasing energy from a program that directly results in additional renewable energy production at another location; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin began participation in Austin Energy's GreenChoice program when the program was directly tied to specific wind farms that were contracted to serve the program; and

WHEREAS, because prices have declined significantly in the past several years, Austin Energy has greatly expanded its procurement of wind and solar energy, and new renewable energy projects are not constructed or contracted for based on the demand for GreenChoice; and

WHEREAS, the current structure of Austin Energy's GreenChoice program is such that participating customers will always pay a premium to participate, regardless of the price the utility pays for renewable energy or other sources of energy;

WHEREAS, distributed solar offers an opportunity to both add renewable energy capacity and reduce bills over time; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin has many demands on its budget and should use funds where they will provide the most benefit;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Joint Sustainability Committee recommends that the Austin City Council direct Austin Energy to evaluate options by November 1 to ensure that GreenChoice participation directly results in additional renewable energy production, and present a recommendation on how to meet this goal to the Joint Sustainability Committee, Electric Utility Commission, Resource Management Commission and the Austin City Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Joint Sustainability Committee recommends that the Austin City Council direct each city department to evaluate options appropriate for their facilities for utilizing on-site renewable energy to meet climate goals and reduce budget expenses over time. Outside funding opportunities, including the Texas LoanSTAR Revolving Loan Program administered by the State Energy Conservation Office (SECO), should be investigated and considered.