

Individual Statement of Randy Chapman
to the Electric Utilities Commission Recommendations on
The Austin Energy Resource Generation and Climate Plan to 2035

I concur with my fellow work group members in support of the draft EUC Report to Austin City Council. While I support the recommendations, I especially support the requirement for maintaining affordability. I am concerned with the considerable expense that could be imposed on Austin's most vulnerable ratepayers.

The full costs of shutting down Fayette plus the existing gas generation plants are unknown. An agreement with LCRA to exit the Fayette plant has not yet been concluded. AE's existing cash reserves to decommission plants are completely inadequate to cover the required remediation expenses that will be incurred. Sharply expanding demand side management energy efficiency, and energy storage programs each come with added, but necessary, costs that must be borne by individual ratepayers.

As stated in the report, there has long existed inadequate access to energy efficiency programs by families in rental housing. Yet, those same households pay through their electricity bills for those rebate programs that primarily benefit property owners. When electricity bills rise to pay off the transition costs for the redesign of our generation, our most vulnerable consumers in the CAP program must be protected.

At a minimum, the City Council should act promptly to update the CAP discount for families participating in income-tested programs such as Medicaid and SNAP. Just as the City Council approved an expanded discount of 15% during the pandemic, the Council should hold harmless eligible CAP customers from rate and PSA increases that will be reflected in transition costs. Now is the time to structure the discount program to help people whose budgets for shelter will be impacted the most.