

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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## **Agreement in Austin Energy Rate Case Will Advance Environmental Objectives, Keep Bills Low**

*Where Does Austin Energy Go From Here? Environmental Groups Outline Path From Rate Case*

Austin, TX - Public Citizen, the Sierra Club, other environmental groups, Mayor Steve Adler, and other city council members celebrated reaching an agreement with Austin Energy to address key environmental concerns. As the utility's seven-month long rate case comes to a close, these parties have been working on an agreement that will include a path to develop solar policies that will treat future solar customers fairly as incentives are reduced, and a financial plan to prepare for the retirement of the Fayette coal-fired power plant, a key requirement of the 2025 Generation Resource and Climate Protection Plan approved by City Council in 2014.

After a public hearing at 4 p.m. on Thursday, City Council is scheduled for a final vote on the rate case on Monday, August 29.

In response to this agreement, **Kaiba White, Energy Policy and Outreach Specialist at Public Citizen's Texas Office**, and **Cyrus Reed, Conservation Director of the Sierra Club's Lone Star Chapter**, issued the following statements:

**White:** "We are pleased that this settlement will include a path forward to allow Austin Energy to retire its portion of the coal-fired Fayette Power Project. Retiring the plant is essential to meeting Austin's climate goals and will eliminate a major source of harmful air pollution. The economics of producing power from coal are looking worse all the time, so retiring the plant will ultimately benefit all ratepayers. Establishing what the financial options are to achieve the 2022 retirement date will give the Austin City Council the information they need to make important decisions in the coming years. This settlement demonstrates that ensuring affordable rates and standing by our environmental commitments can both be achieved."

**Reed:** "After months of work on the rate case, and weeks of intense negotiations, we finally have a settlement that ensures sufficient funding for solar and energy efficiency programs, keeps residential rates low, and creates a process to deal with two fundamental policy issues: how to compensate commercial solar owners and how we are going to retire the Fayette coal plant that is responsible for most of our carbon dioxide pollution. We call on City Council to honor this settlement agreement, which represents good and fair compromises by multiple parties, including Austin Energy. It ensures competitive rates, and a commitment to advancing solar power and to transitioning away from the city's use of coal."

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