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Austin City Council Passes First Resolution Supporting Historic Carbon Protections

*Texas Capital City First Elected Body in Nation to Support Pollution
Safeguards, Clean Power Plan*

AUSTIN, TX – Austin is the first major city in the nation to endorse new, historic safeguards from unchecked carbon pollution from power plants. The City Council [voted today to pass the resolution](#), after local residents spoke out in support of the new plan to cut carbon pollution and spur more clean energy growth. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced the new safeguards on Monday, June 2, marking the first federal effort to curb climate disruption by curbing carbon pollution from power plants. Today's vote is especially significant, because even though Texas is the nation's largest producer of carbon pollution, many state regulators deny climate science and refuse to clean up air and water pollution coming from the state's power plants.

"We want to show the rest of the state and the country that the greenest city in the Lone Star State not only supports the EPA's carbon pollution limits, but is a leader when it comes to acting for our climate," **said City Council Member Mike Martinez, lead sponsor of the resolution.** "Right now, citizens and staff are working to develop a ten-year energy plan that will phase out Austin's dirtiest coal and gas units, increase our clean energy goals, expand low-income weatherization and create good jobs, all while maintaining our affordability goals. We can and will do it, to the benefit of all Texans."

The City of Austin is in the process of updating its ten-year energy plan with Austin Energy, the municipal utility. The Sierra Club, along with other environmental and public health advocates in Austin, is working to strengthen the plan to support more local clean energy projects employing Austin-area residents, enabling the utility to phase out dirty and expensive coal and gas-fired power plants. Retiring the city-owned coal-burning unit at the Fayette power plant is a key element to curbing carbon pollution as well as soot, smog and mercury pollution.

"Whether it's extreme weather like the tragic Onion Creek floods or an increasing number of record hot days, pollutants like carbon and nitrous oxide from power plants have a drastic impact on our economy and the health and safety of our children," **said Council Member Kathie Tovo, a co-sponsor of the resolution.** "This plan proposed by the EPA will help move Texas and the nation into a 21st century clean energy economy that doesn't sacrifice the well-being and health of our neighbors most impacted by climate disruption."

The City Council members, Sierra Club and allies hope the city resolution will prompt other Texas cities to consider similar resolutions as state regulators with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) begins to craft a state-based plan to curb carbon pollution and meet the standards of the new safeguards.

“Austin has shown time and time again that we are a leader when it comes to providing clean, renewable and affordable energy to our citizens,” **said Council Member Laura Morrison, a co-sponsor of the resolution.** “The City Council recently signed a deal for the cheapest solar power in the world at 5 cents a kilowatt hour – a deal that, according to Austin Energy, will lower costs and save customers money. We can only hope the rest of Texas will see this as an example of what clean energy can do for our state.”

Texas residents and industries are already seeing the impacts of a destabilized climate in the form of record heat, droughts, wildfires and other extreme weather events, impacting local economies as well as putting Texans’ safety at risk. Texas clean energy is helping mitigate these consequences while cutting air pollution and creating new jobs. Clean, low-cost wind power is already providing ten percent of Texas’s electricity on average, and according to grid operator projections, wind will continue to grow and nearly double over the next ten years. Texas is only beginning to tap its solar power and energy efficiency potential, both of which can create many thousands of good jobs while cutting carbon pollution, soot and smog pollution and saving consumers money.

“These proposed pollution safeguards mark the dawn of a brighter, cleaner future for the children, farmers and working families of Central Texas,” said Sierra Club Organizer Dave Cortez. “I’m proud to have such strong climate leaders on our city council and thank them for their ongoing efforts to move Austin Beyond Coal and into a more just energy future.”

View the resolution [here](#).

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