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### **Statement on Austin City Council Adoption of Solar-Ready Requirement**

AUSTIN, Texas - On Thursday night, the Austin City Council approved a new ordinance that will make all new residential and commercial construction in Austin “solar-ready” beginning on October 1, 2017. The vote was a 9-1, with Ellen Troxclair with only dissenting vote.

Under the provisions of the ordinance, new homes larger than 800 square feet, new multi-family building, and new commercial construction larger than 2,000 square feet, will be required to identify a solar-ready zone on their roof where future solar can be easily added. In addition, the outside electrical box will be large enough to incorporate a circuit-breaker for future solar. The ordinance contains exceptions for buildings that are heavily shaded or have other impediments to meeting the ordinance, as well as for buildings that decide to go ahead and put in solar at once.

During discussion, Council Members Leslie Pool and Kathie Tovo offered and amendment, which was accepted, that raised the minimum size of solar-ready roof zones for multi-family units from 25% to 35% of the total roof space. The amendment passed on a 9-1 vote, with only Council Member Ellen Troxclair voting no.

The solar-ready provision was a major effort by Austin Energy, Sierra Club, and Public Citizen, with significant discussions with the Development Services Department of the City of Austin, Association of Homebuilders of Greater Austin, and the Austin Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) among others.

The City of Austin is now the third city in Texas to require “solar-ready” construction, following the cities of Houston and Lewisville, but the first to require multi-family and commercial construction to also become solar-ready.

#### **In response, Cyrus Reed, Conservation Director of the Sierra Club’s Lone Star Chapter, issued the following statement:**

“Solar-ready just makes sense, and Austin just became the leader in Texas on this issue thanks to the hard work of Austin Energy and City Council. Designing our homes and businesses to easily incorporate solar will lower costs for all new building owners and tenants who wish to add solar in the future, and also convince many designers and homebuilders to incorporate solar from the beginning.”

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