



Dr. Richard Rhodes
President/CEO, Austin Community College District
5930 Middle Fiskville Rd.
Austin, Texas 78752

March 9, 2020

Dear Dr. Rhodes,

As faculty, staff, and student leaders concerned about the warming of the earth that is changing our climate, we urge Austin Community College to make a rapid and steady shift away from fossil fuels to clean, renewable energy.

We applaud Austin Community College for its dedication to reducing energy consumption and minimizing energy sourced from the fossil fuel industry. ACC owns and operates solar power systems in 9 out of 12 campuses, offsetting a portion of the system's electricity use, and has set a goal to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.¹ However, to avoid the negative effects of climate change, we need nothing less than a commitment to meeting all our energy needs with 100 percent pollution-free renewable energy as soon as possible.

As significant users of energy and centers of innovation, institutions of higher education can make a big difference. According to ACC's Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report, "purchased electricity is responsible for 46% of total GHG."² ACC has the potential to reduce their production of greenhouse gas emissions by transitioning to 100 percent clean energy.

Many colleges and universities have already reached 100 percent renewable energy goals, including Southwestern University and the University of North Texas.³ Now, as we confront the devastating effects of climate change, we need our college to step up to the plate and lead our community into a more sustainable future. The actions of ACC can set a bold and influential example for communities across the state and nation.

The incorporation of renewable energy technologies onto campuses can be beneficial to the college, the students, and our planet. Technologies like solar panels, wind energy systems, and geothermal energy systems lower energy costs, provide technical training experience for students, and give colleges the opportunity to be at the forefront of innovation. Campuses can also work to improve energy efficiency and conservation, advocate for sustainable transportation, and purchase renewable instead of fossil-produced energy.⁴

¹Andy Kim, *ACC Climate Action Plan* (Austin: Austin Community College, 2011)

²*ACC Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report* (Austin: Austin Community College, 2009)

³*America's Top Colleges for Renewable Energy* (Environment America)

⁴*Renewable Energy 101* (Environment America)

In order to build on the progress that has been made and ensure that we transition to a clean and renewable future, we call on Austin Community College to obtain 100 percent of our electricity from renewable sources no later than 2023.

We thank Austin Community College for its leadership to date and stand ready to help achieve 100 percent renewable energy and put America on a path to a truly clean energy future.

Sincerely,

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