



## 2024 Salt River Project (SRP) Candidate Questionnaire

*Please answer the following questions so that Arizonans whose electricity is provided by SRP can learn more about what you hope to accomplish if elected to the board of governors and councilors. We plan to make all responses available through our website.*

### **What is your name?**

Lauren Kuby

### **Why are you running for a position on SRP's board of directors and councilors?**

Fourteen candidates are running to create a climate-focused board and council for the largest public power generator in the country. We can win a majority if we can just get more people to request a ballot as, currently, less than 2% of SRP ratepayers vote!

I'm running to protect over 1.2M SRP ratepayers as well as advance a clean-energy economy and a just transition away from fossil fuels in Arizona. It makes little sense to import fossil fuels (coal, gas) from other states when Arizona is the sunniest state in the nation and has all the resources we need to lead the US in the renewable-energy transition. Solar is cheaper and expanded investment in solar will build affordability and maintain reliability.

Specifically:

1. Decarbonize SRP's portfolio: Arizona's second-largest utility, has amongst the lowest amount of solar in its portfolio (only 3.4%). We need to
  - Squeeze fossil-fuel gas out of our economy
  - Set retirement dates for all SRP coal plants.
  - Increase SRP's utility scale solar and battery deployments.
  - Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by setting smarter goals.
  - Let customers reduce their carbon footprint and bring with rooftop solarIn February 2015, SRP adopted policies to limit distributed solar energy. A majority on the board will restore Rooftop Solar and thereby increase

the resilience of our energy system and better distribute the benefits of solar to ratepayers.

2. Democratize the Election and Governance Processes at SRP: Over 48% of SRP customers cannot vote in the elections and the utility throws up many barriers to voting. In addition, SRP has not been redistricted since the 1930s. SRP needs to modernize and elect new leaders who are invested in balancing climate equity, consumer advocacy, grid reliability, and decarbonization.
3. Electrify: As our grid gets greener, climate action more and more translates into "electrify everything." Working with IRA incentives, we need SRP policies that promote adoption of electric vehicles, electric heating/cooling our homes, electric water heaters instead of gas, electric stovetops, and electrification in industrial processes.
4. Enact fair voting processes. The acreage-based voting system for the 10 district seats is antiquated and makes no sense in 2024 Arizona. It is alarming that less than 2% of those that can vote do vote.
5. Eliminate large greenwashed advertising paid for by ratepayers. Despite SRP's paid messaging, most utilities are far ahead of SRP in these areas. SRP can catch up without raising power or water rates.

**What type(s) of energy resources do you want to see SRP build more of?**

All renewables: solar with battery storage, hydroelectric, geothermal, and wind.

**Do you think that SRP should make it easier for customers to install solar on their homes and businesses? If so, how would you achieve this?**

If SRP would only collaborate with cities (instead of defining collaboration as sponsoring events), we could encourage (and not discourage, as SRP has done) solar installation on homes and businesses. I had planned to "solarize the city" when I was elected to Tempe City Council in 2014, establishing group-buying programs for solar in neighborhoods and across the city. That plan was killed when SRP adopted their rate-killing plans in February and solar adoption took a nosedive.

Tempe is SRP's home, but there have been scant attempts to solarize the city's residential or commercial ratepayers, or work with the city on solar projects that fall within Tempe's boundaries. Instead, the city is working with SRP on a PPA in Flagstaff.

**Do you believe that the credit SRP provides to customers who have solar is fair compensation for the energy they provide to the grid? If not, what changes would you propose?**

No, that credit was greatly reduced in February 2015, and solar adoption decreased markedly. Solar customers realize the benefits of solar through net metering and one of the reasons I am running is to make those benefits whole again.

**What is your position on the customer charges and demand charges that SRP currently charges to solar customers?**

I was incentivized to install solar in my home 20 years ago. Early adoption was encouraged. Now, solar customers are villainized. The customer charges and demand charges discourage solar adoption and need to be repealed

**Do you think SRP should encourage adoption of residential battery storage by its customers? If so, how?**

Yes, because such adoption would build a more resilient distribution of electricity. How do we encourage adoption? By incentivizing battery storage, as well as actively informing ratepayers of those incentives along with federal (IRA) and state tax credits.

**Should SRP help its customers be more energy efficient? If so, how?**

Certainly. In 2015, as a new councilmember, I met with SRP's government affairs liaison to the City of Tempe. They told me they had eliminated funding for energy efficiency because they had already reached their energy-efficiency goals. That was an absurd notion, as a city, business, or homeowner never stop making their structures more energy efficient. It is an ongoing process.

Nonetheless, SRP has crafted good programs encouraging electric car owners to charge during off-peak hours and offer rebates for programmable thermostats, and

more. We need to supercharge these programs and ensure that the benefits are distributed in an equitable fashion.

### **Should SRP help customers integrate electric vehicles? If so, how?**

SRP recognizes the benefits and challenges of transportation electrification to both the company and the communities they serve. They have a goal of serving 500,000 EVs in their territory by 2035 and offer some excellent rebates and programs to homeowners and businesses and governments for transportation electrification. There are rebate programs for EV chargers, which are—appropriately—higher for costlier installations such as at multifamily developments and schools and for Level 3 charging. There are also rebates for multi-vehicle fleet electrification. SRP should be applauded for offering bonus rebates for chargers installed in Justice 40 communities. As the EV market has grown, SRP has phased out its EV rebate, which is not unreasonable given the expansion of federal subsidies and the maturation of the EV market. SRP should continue to lead in this area, identify the most pressing needs, and expand these programs. Many of the rebate programs are limited in total payouts, and customers may decide to get an EV or install a charger early in the year only to find out that the program has run out of money and their investment is no longer eligible.

SRP participates in and supports outreach efforts such as ride-and drive events, but they could do more to educate various stakeholders and customers. When EV owners have always available and inexpensive charging at home, it is actually more convenient than owning a gasoline car; but for prospective EV buyers without home charging, charging becomes a huge inconvenience and a major obstacle to adoption.

Multifamily housing is perhaps the most difficult barrier to widespread EV adoption because the costs and complexity are much higher than for single-family housing. Few apartment and condo complexes offer EV charging. The few apartments that do have chargers often have them installed and/or managed by third-party companies like ChargePoint or Blink, and renters often end up paying more per kWh of charging than single-family homeowners. SRP could do more to coach or “handhold” apartment owners and managers through the maze of options, and begin providing

rebates and technical guidance for cheaper Level 1 (110V) charging options in addition to Levels 2 and 3.

Beyond rebates, education, and outreach, SRP should evaluate its substations and neighborhood delivery lines for to ensure they are sufficient for eventual complete electrification of vehicles. Such steps would accelerate widespread EV adoption in SRP territory, which would help SRP expand and diversify its load and help communities achieve better air quality, carbon reduction, and more affordable and reliable electrified transportation for all SRP ratepayers.

**Do you think SRP should work to increase customer participation in its elections? If so, how would you achieve this?**

Yes, a top priority for me is to increase turnout in the SRP elections and, in the longer term, commit to the hard work of redistricting, as the maps have not been changed since 1937 and the Valley has grown since then.

SRP makes it difficult to vote. They refuse to send ratepayers their ballots automatically. Over 50% of customers cannot vote because you need to own a home (renters cannot vote) and the utility has not redistricted since 1937, excluding entire cities from the democratic process, and 10 of the 14 board seats are acreage-based, meaning farmers decide energy policy in Central Arizona.

First steps are to enable potential voters to discover their voting eligibility and district online. They have the database but simply need a board to instruct them to do it. Then they need to send a ballot to every qualified voter in the territory. Renters and those living outside the 1937 boundaries will still not be allowed to vote, but at least we can increase the turnout for those that can vote. Then comes the hard task of re-districting, which will be a long and tedious process but we must bring this subject to the fore.

**What are your views on customer participation in SRP's planning process and stakeholder meetings?**

Currently ratepayers (I don't call them customers because they have no choice where they get their electricity) have little voice in the planning process. Yes, there

are 4 at-large seats and one district seat where solar advocates have been elected, but we still are a minority on the board and board members are presented with huge topics (e.g., Coolidge Power Plant expansion) with only a few days to study. Yes, there is a Customer Utility Panel (CUP) institute to give a voice to the customers outside of the defined voting territories, but CUP plays lip service to the more robust engagement that would come if the election process was democratized.

**Is there anything else that you want to make sure voters know about you?**

Yes, I ran for the Arizona Corporation Commission in 2022 alongside climate warrior and former Arizona Corporation Commissioner Sandra Kennedy, who is running for an at-large seat). Back then, I called the ACC “the most important office no one’s ever heard of” and that is true of the SRP seat as well (except that maybe it is the second-most important office no ones ever heard of!)

I am a former two term councilmember and vice mayor from Tempe and served on the AZ Municipal Water Users Association for seven years. I also have the designation of Senior Global Futures Scientist at ASU.

I’m a new grandmother who is passionate about using my life experiences and resources to effect climate change solutions for the present and future generations.

Learn more about me at <https://srpcleanenergy.org/candidates/lauren-kuby>

**Solar United Neighbors** is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that works in Arizona and nationwide to represent the needs and interests of solar owners and supporters.

