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## **Sierra Club Files Amicus Brief Addressing Data Collection of Cryptocurrency Mining Operations**

**Waco, Texas** – Following last week’s lawsuit from the cryptocurrency mining industry, Sierra Club attorneys filed an [amicus brief](#) addressing the Department of Energy’s (DOE) efforts to collect information on the energy usage of cryptocurrency mining operations.

Cryptocurrency mining operations put a [severe burden](#) on already-strained grids in Texas and across the country by increasing electricity demand. In 2023, new cryptocurrency mining operations in Texas added nearly as much demand as the entire City of Austin and are projected to increase the state’s demand for electricity by nearly 50 percent by 2027. Sharp demand increases raise prices for consumers and threaten the grid – especially in Texas, where extreme summer and winter weather is now common. Despite the dramatic growth of the cryptocurrency mining industry in states like Texas, there are no reporting standards, leaving utilities, grid operators, and regulators without the information they need to understand its impacts.

To address the absence of data and help grid operators plan for and manage new energy loads, the Energy Information Administration (EIA), a statistical agency of DOE, launched an [emergency survey](#) of cryptocurrency mining in late January. Last week, cryptocurrency mining company Riot Platforms and the industry group Texas Blockchain Council sued DOE for issuing the survey.

EIA has temporarily suspended the survey in response to the lawsuit, and the court has [indicated](#) that the parties have reached an agreement that will be filed by this Friday, March 1. Sierra Club is closely following this development.

### **In response to the lawsuit and amicus brief, Sierra Club and community advocates issued the following statements:**

“Bitcoin operations have already caused increased reliability risks and prices for the Texas grid,” **said Cyrus Reed, conservation director for the Sierra Club Lone Star Chapter.** “ERCOT has even warned that it has limited visibility into crypto operations’ forecasts and that operators don’t respond consistently to requests to go offline during high demand, which could drive the grid into emergency conditions. Considering the expected growth of these operations, we urgently need greater transparency and information if we are going to keep the lights on and electricity prices affordable.”

“The bitcoin mining industry is dramatically increasing demand on the Texas grid, making it less safe and less stable,” **said Jackie Sawicky of Concerned Citizens of Navarro County**, a community group that opposes crypto operations in the county and isn’t represented by Sierra Club. “Bitcoin miners are driving up every Texas energy customer’s electricity bills and forcing poor folks to make tough choices to keep their lights on. They are inserting themselves between Texans and the grid, playing energy arbitrage and making life materially worse for millions of us.”

“Cryptocurrency mining operations use [enough energy](#) to light every home in the United States and produce more pollution than seven million cars,” **said Sierra Club Chief Energy Officer Holly Bender**. “Their operations in Texas and across the country are driving higher energy prices and threatening grid reliability. Following the devastating impact of Winter Storm Uri, which led to hundreds of deaths in Texas due to power failures, it’s particularly reprehensible for Texan cryptocurrency miners to obstruct basic efforts to gather essential data energy regulators need to deliver reliable, affordable power.”

“This lawsuit is just about timing and process,” **said Senior Attorney Thom Cmar of Earthjustice**, an environmental organization that also works on cryptocurrency issues. “The EIA clearly has authority to collect this type of information from cryptominers, as it does from many other industries, so that it can provide reports to inform energy planning decisions throughout the country. The reporting burdens here are minimal, and this is information that regulators and the public have the right to know because – as EIA noted – in times of peak demand, say a cold snap or heat wave, the energy demands of cryptominers can affect grid operations and cause blackouts and brownouts.”

Earthjustice and Concerned Citizens of Navarro County are not represented by Sierra Club.

Sierra Club experts and attorneys are available to discuss developments on this case as needed.

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