



# SIERRA CLUB

## LONE STAR CHAPTER

June 27th, 2023

The Honorable Governor Greg Abbott

Dear Governor Abbott,

Very important work was accomplished during the 88th Legislative Session to help make our electric grid more reliable and safer for all Texans, including passage of [HB 1500](#), [SB 2012](#), and [SB 2013](#) among others. The Sierra Club was generally in support of these measures, as well as the additional financial resources given to the PUCT through HB 1 and the supplemental appropriations bills.

However, in the last two weeks alone, you have established emergency declarations in some two dozen Texas counties facing extreme weather conditions in ERCOT and non-ERCOT areas like SPS, SWEPCO and Entergy Texas, as climate extremes have wreaked havoc on our electric infrastructure and grid. Notably missing from the plethora of legislative solutions to our grid you signed into law were solutions focused on Texas homes and businesses.

Just this weekend, ERCOT set a new all-time demand record, approaching 80,000 MW, while this week we are seeing the highest peak demand levels ever recorded in ERCOT at well over 80,000 MW. Most of this demand is not being driven by our industry's needs, but by residential and small commercial growth fueled by energy waste and inefficient building stock.

That is why the Sierra Club asks you to add measures to a future special session designed to make our electric grids more resilient by focusing on the demand side, either beginning tomorrow or soon after.

Among the measures we would suggest would be:

- SB 258 by Eckhardt, which passed the Senate but not the House, which would have set a long-term one percent energy efficiency goal by 2030 for private

utilities in ERCOT and outside of ERCOT. Texas was once the leader on energy efficiency programs, but has not raised goals or programs since 2011;

- SB 2453, related to energy efficient building codes, which passed both the Senate and House, but was vetoed by you not based on the merits of the bill, but only on the lack of action on property tax relief;
- HB 4811 by Anchia which passed the House but not the House and would have implemented a unanimous PUCT recommendation to establish a Texas Energy Efficiency Council to coordinate state, private utility, and federal funding on energy efficiency;
- Utility relief by using surplus or rainy day money to provide gas and electric customer rate relief charges imposed for costs related to Winter Storm Uri and was included in the supplemental budget as it passed the Senate in SB 30 (about \$3.8 billion) and also contained in separate legislation (SB 1501).

Finally, in your role as the head of the executive branch, we call on you to encourage our state agencies to take advantage of federal monies available right now to help make our grid more reliable and put additional monies into customer-facing programs to reduce energy load. There are literally dozens of allocated and competitive grants currently available through the DOE, EPA, Department of Agriculture, and HUD that could flow down to Texans in the coming months, and you can help make sure Texas doesn't get left behind on these one-time opportunities.

Texans are suffering from high bills, triple digit climate extremes, and summer storms threatening the grid. We deserve action to help customers - especially residential and small business customers - save energy, reduce bills, and make our grids more reliable.

We ask you to add demand-side solutions that benefit consumers to the electric grids to a special session. While not all of these measures would provide immediate relief, some will and all of them will help make our grid more stable while helping customers afford their energy bills.

Sincerely,

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Cc. The Honorable Speaker Dade Phelan  
The Honorable Lt Governor Dan Patrick