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Contact: Courtney Naquin, courtney.naquin@sierraclub.org, 512-661-1285

Chrissy Mann, chrissy.mann@sierraclub.org, 512-413-8346

Governor Abbott and Texas Legislature's Failure to Improve Power Grid Jeopardizes Lives of Texans, Again

Austin, Texas - Four months after an estimated 700 Texans perished in a freezing winter statewide blackout that stranded hundreds of thousands of Texans in the dark for days, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT), Texas' independent electric grid operator, called on individual consumers to conserve electricity to prevent the possibility of power outages. ERCOT's request on Monday was issued shortly after the end of the 87th Texas Legislative Session, during which Gov. Greg Abbott announced that "[everything that needed to be done was done to fix the power grid in Texas.](#)" Gov. Abbott and the Texas Legislature failed again to pass comprehensive legislation to protect Texans or reform Texas' electrical grid. Once again, the impact of years of bad decisions will be hardest on those least responsible and least able to manage the disruptions to reliable power supply.

"There was ample opportunity for Governor Greg Abbott and the Texas Legislature to improve our grid and protect Texans. The passage of SB 3, a bill purported to fix problems with our infrastructure, is insufficient in actually protecting Texans from the danger of power outages and providing solutions accessible to all Texans. SB 3 did not include any provisions regarding the weatherization of businesses and homes, and also left out customer-friendly solutions for demand response and local distributed energy generation and storage," **said Cyrus Reed, the Conservation Director of Sierra Club's Lone Star Chapter.** "These are the kinds of solutions that would protect people in their homes and businesses in extreme weather, generate good local jobs, and reduce our reliance on dangerous, unreliable fossil fuel infrastructure."

Electricity is a basic necessity and human right. Blackouts put vulnerable Texans, especially people of color, low income families, children, the immuno-compromised, and the elderly at disproportionate risk. It is Sierra Club's view that ERCOT is unfairly putting responsibility on individual Texans to prevent infrastructure collapse without providing them the incentives and programs to do so, rather than putting the pressure on big industry to conserve energy or on lawmakers to make immediate improvements to the power grid.

Texas is staring down a summer that is on track to being one of the hottest on record, a clear indicator of climate change in effect. Texans do not deserve another season of unreliable power with no plan to provide equitable solutions to protect Texas' most vulnerable. With two special legislative sessions on the horizon, developing a sustainable future for Texas' power grid with people-centered solutions and taking action to expand our demand response and energy efficiency programs will be among Sierra Club's major priorities.