



SIERRA CLUB

LONE STAR CHAPTER

Support Energy Efficiency for Low and Moderate Income Texans

During February's disastrous winter storm, millions of Texans found out how fast their homes lost heat. More than 100 Texans did not survive. The impact was [felt disproportionately on low-income communities of color](#). As the Texas Legislature debates winterizing fracked gas infrastructure and power plants, Texans are left to figure out for themselves how to prepare for the next climate emergency. **It does not need to be this way.** The Texas Legislature and major utility companies like American Electric Power, Oncor, and Centerpoint Energy have the tools and programs to help Texans keep their homes and small businesses warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer. It's called energy efficiency, and Texas needs to ramp it up.

Why energy efficiency?

- Energy efficient homes [fare better in a crisis](#). Better insulation, weather stripping, and windows help keep heat in during hard freezes and keep homes cooler in heat waves.
- Low-income homes spend a larger portion of their income on energy costs (i.e. [energy burden](#)). The Department of Energy [estimates](#) that low-income households in Texas could save 20-25% on their energy bills with energy efficiency improvements.
- Making homes and small businesses more energy efficient is a climate resiliency strategy because it lowers demand from fossil fuel power plants, which lowers air pollution. Energy efficient homes also require less water, which helps preserve our most precious resource: clean potable water.
- Energy efficiency creates and sustains green jobs by supporting businesses that make homes more comfortable.
- Energy efficiency is not a luxury add-on to a home that only the financially well off Texan can afford. In the wake of the deadly winter storm, and before the next bad heat wave claims more lives, Texans should view it as a necessity.
- Energy efficient homes demand less from the electric grid. During Uri, the grid was unable to keep the lights on, leading to blackouts for millions of us because there was skyrocketing demand when 30,000 megawatts of power supply went offline. If more homes and small businesses were sealed and insulated better, that demand would have been thousands of megawatts lower without compromising comfort.

What can I do?

Talk to your State Representative and State Senator. Urge them to support SB 243/HB 4556 and other bills that would improve energy efficiency programs for homes and small businesses. Join the network of Texans working together to put people first when they make decisions on addressing the Winter Storm. [Learn more here](#).

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Thank you to Kate Zerenner who covered many of the great points covered in this fact sheet [here](#).