

Modernize Our Electric Grid

Our electric grid remains at risk, driving up energy costs, polluting our environment, and putting Texans in danger. Texas families and businesses deserve better. Building more gas plants and keeping dirty coal plants open will not solve our electric grid problems. The Lone Star Chapter supports advancing solutions to make our electric grid more resilient, reliable, affordable, and cleaner.

The future Texas deserves includes a modernized, reliable electric grid. We call on our legislators to make it happen.

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Tapping Underutilized Resources

The Texas Legislature has spent **time, (our) money, and attention** creating incentives to build new, expensive, and unneeded power plants. To reduce stress on the grid, and ensure homes and businesses have enough power no matter the time of year or weather conditions, **there are inexpensive, taxpayer friendly solutions ready to go.**

The Lone Star Chapter supports policies that:

- Support a new program to help working Texans with an electric discount program.
- Pay Texans the same way wealthy corporations are paid to use less electricity when energy conservation calls are made.
 - Entities like crypto miners and data centers are financially reimbursed when they turn off their machines. Texas families get no such compensation for conserving energy. That should change. By compensating Texas families, we would encourage more conservation when grid conditions get tight, lower bills, and reduce the need to run polluting power plants.
- Ensure Texans with solar or storage can interconnect to the grid and participate in “[virtual power plants](#),” providing power to the grid and earning Texans money.
- Develop regional microgrids that empower communities to meet their own energy needs, expanding the use of local clean energy and battery storage resources that can provide pollution-free backup power.
- Fully fund the \$1.8 billion backup power program promised to voters that will help develop regional microgrids and backup power for vulnerable communities.
- Support efforts to lower congestion costs and move power across regions, including renewable energy by supporting buildout of transmission, including high voltage transmission lines.
- Raise private utility goals for energy efficiency programs, and continue and expand programs at public utilities, and efforts by state agencies, universities and local governments to reduce energy use.

- This would increase investments in energy savings programs that lower electric bills, make homes more resilient to extreme temperatures, and reduce stress on the grid.
- The most affordable investment utilities can make to meet electric demand is energy efficiency. These are programs that help people upgrade the insulation, windows, HVAC systems in their homes.
- These programs lower bills not just for the home that uses the program, it lowers bills for their neighbors too.
- Because energy efficient homes need less energy, they also reduce pollution from power plants, and reduce the demand on the grid.
- Ensure that utilities and state agencies coordinate their programs and efforts to save energy through the creation of a Texas Energy Efficiency Council;
- Update building energy codes to the most recent standards, including modern energy codes, and overall building codes to allow buildings to better withstand floods, hurricanes, and fires.

Stakeholder Support

There is widespread stakeholder support for grid modernization and programs that reduce energy waste in homes and businesses.

- In the last legislative session, more than 40 organizations supported increasing the state's energy savings goal, representing consumer, environmental, labor, and bipartisan support.

Funding Needs

Supporting Much-Needed Improvements

- Allocation of \$1.8 billion approved by voters in 2023 to provide grants and loans for backup power packages for vulnerable communities and microgrids
- The Sierra Club supports PUCT's request for an extra \$15 million in funds this year to support an additional 53 staff to keep pace with the necessary regulatory functions to ensure reliable utility services at a reasonable cost for Texans and address customer service and caseload growth challenges ; implement a case management system as recommended by the Sunset Commission; enhance PUCT's focus on infrastructure reliability and resiliency; and refresh the Power to Choose resource.