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Contact: Courtney Naquin, [courtney.naquin@sierraclub.org](mailto:courtney.naquin@sierraclub.org), 512-661-1285  
Chrissy Mann, [chrissy.mann@sierraclub.org](mailto:chrissy.mann@sierraclub.org), 512-413-8346

### **Federal Report Confirms That Fracked Gas Failures Top Reason Behind Texas' Catastrophic Winter Power Outage**

**Texas** - Last week, a joint team from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) presented [a preliminary report](#) responding to the massive power failures that occurred this past February across Texas, identifying frozen power plant equipment and fracked gas fuel supply shortages as the top two causes of the power shortfalls that week.

Among the report's other findings, FERC also identified that:

- gas supply plummeted even before the freezing weather arrived and did not recover in time to respond;
- poor coordination between the inter-dependent gas and power sectors contributed to fuel shortages and the ensuing blackouts;
- and there was an inability to manage or roll the massive blackouts across much of Texas.

In addition to these findings, FERC and NERC made over two dozen recommendations. Sierra Club agrees with many of the recommendations including the need for reliability and weatherization standards; increasing the flexibility of managing blackouts; enhanced incentives for energy efficiency improvements in home; and meaningful coordination among state, regional and federal partners.

This was not the first time FERC was called upon to issue stern recommendations following a grid emergency and failure in Texas. In 2011, after winter grid failures, FERC issued a series of recommendations to the Texas grid operator and regulators, with insufficient response from the Legislature, Governor and the Public Utility Commission of Texas. This pattern of negligence has led to the deaths of hundreds of Texans, and has had especially negative impacts on low-income and communities of color.

#### **Chrissy Mann, Senior Campaign Representative for Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign, issued the following statement:**

"What is clear from this report and from a decade of inaction is that Texas regulators need to step up and get serious about the future of Texas energy. This future should include a growing amount of reliable clean energy and storage and a foundation of innovative and expansive weatherization, energy efficiency and demand response programs for homes and businesses that will keep Texans safer through uncertain, extreme weather conditions."

The joint report comes shortly after the Texas Legislature failed to pass bills that sufficiently address the blackout's root causes. Senate Bill 3 (SB3) was passed to help remedy Texas' faulty infrastructure, but lacks adequate directives that would meet FERC's recommendations. SB3 anticipates studying weatherization options but contains minimal weatherization requirements for gas, leaving Texans unprotected in their homes.

"We knew decades ago that freezing temperatures can cause problems with gas production and transport, leaving people without power at the very moment they need it most," said **Cyrus Reed, Conservation Director for the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club**, "Federal agencies identified Texas' unweatherized gas wells as a reason for fuel shortages in 1989, 2003, and 2011, but Texas leaders refused to act. Now, after hundreds of Texans have died, we have a chance to go back to the drawing board and try again -- state regulators owe it to the people of Texas to get this one right."