Please set hearings for SB 243 (Eckhardt) and HB 4556 (Anchia): Expand Texas' utility energy efficiency goals to 1 percent

When the blackouts in Texas began, demand soared to 76.8GW, dwarfing forecasts of usual peak (58GW) and even the extreme scenario projections (67GW).

Much of this peak demand was driven by inefficient buildings that waste massive amounts of electricity when energy is most valuable: at times of near- or actual crisis. In addition to other issues that the winter storm exposed, legislators should focus on weatherizing homes and buildings to save energy and increase resilience, not just power plants and gas supply.

Two bills address this problem most directly: SB 243 by Senator Eckhardt and HB 4556 by Chairman Anchia. The identical bills would expand Texas' goal for energy efficiency to achieve 1% of annual energy savings by 2025, making Texas slightly below average among the 28 states that have set a goal. **Texas' energy efficiency goal has not increased at all in a decade,** which is why Texas currently ranks dead last in energy efficiency among those 28 states.[1] Texas's goal is 80% lower than the average state.

Energy efficiency has multiple benefits:

- It reduces demand, lowers risks of blackouts, and lowers the size of blackouts when they occur.
- It increases resilience in storms by keeping heat in houses during the winter and cool air in houses during the summer.
- It lowers energy costs for all customers, especially those experiencing high energy burden. **In 2019, every dollar spent on energy efficiency yielded $2.80 in savings for consumers.[2]**
- There are more energy efficiency workers in Texas (169,400) than oil and gas workers (159,400) — increased focus on efficiency efforts would energize this part of our economy.

Texas' energy efficiency programs have cumulatively saved 2.1GW[3] over the 20 years they have existed. Had our programs simply been up to average over the last two decades, conservatively we would have had an additional 6 GWs of savings and reduced the impact of outages by 30%.[4] Further, hundreds of thousands of homes would have had more insulation, which would have kept those homes warmer during the outages.

The winter storm crisis was a problem of both supply and demand. Both sides of the equation must be addressed to ensure we avoid more power outages in the future.

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[1] Average state with a goal achieves 1.2% savings per NCSL: https://www.ncsl.org/research/energy/energy-efficiency-resource-standards-eers.aspx; Texas achieves 0.2% through its goal per ACEEE: https://database.aceee.org/sites/default/files/docs/spending-savings-tables.pdf

[2] http://www.texasefficiency.com/images/documents/RegulatoryFilings/DeemedSavings/py2019v1.pdf p.56

[3] http://www.ercot.com/content/wcm/lists/197379/CapacityDemandandReservesReport_Dec2020.xlsx

[4] The amount of load shed (power cut off to homes and businesses) at the peak of the blackout was 20GW.

Our organizations call on the Senate Committee on Business and Commerce and the House Committee on State Affairs to set these bills for a hearing as soon as possible.

SIERRA CLUB LONE STAR CHAPTER	U.S. GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL CHAPTER TEXAS	ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY PROJECT
NAIMA NORTH AMERICAN INSULATION MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION	TEXAS ADVANCED ENERGY BUSINESS ALLIANCE	EIS Lighting
PUBLICCITIZEN	CEER COALITION FOR ENVIRONMENT, EQUITY, AND RESILIENCE	CLEAN WATER ACTION
ENVIRONMENT TEXAS	INDIVISIBLE TX LEGE	S.A.F.E. Diversity Communities Celebrating 20 Years!
EDF ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND Finding the ways that work	MOVE TEXAS	TEXAS CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
Jolt ACTION	★ TEXAS IMPACT	ACEEE American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy

		

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