

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Morgan Griffith
Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations Virtual Hearing
“Power Struggle: Examining the 2021 Texas Grid Failure”
March 24, 2021
As Prepared for Delivery

Thank you, Chairwoman DeGette, for holding this hearing on the challenges facing our power grid, both in Texas and nationally. I also want to thank the witnesses for taking the time to join us today, and I want to extend my condolences to all of those who have suffered due to last month’s tragic winter storm.

Given the recent extreme weather event in Texas, it is crucial to examine the problems and discuss solutions to prevent another crisis. However, it would be a mistake to focus only on Texas when electric grids across the country have shown vulnerability to a variety of issues and hazards.

First, other states *have been and continue* to be threatened by widespread power outages due to extreme weather. The extreme cold that brought blackouts to Texas also brought them to Oregon, Oklahoma, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Louisiana around the same time. These outages followed the extreme heat of last summer which led to rolling brownouts in California. Valuable perspectives would be gained by studying these types of failures across the country, especially as we discuss weatherization and other ways to make our grid more resilient.

I believe the lessons to be drawn from these examples may be numerous, which is why we should be inclusive in looking at them. Texas’ problems occurred

despite the state's leadership in achieving a diversified, all-of-the-above energy mix which includes coal, natural gas, nuclear, renewables, and storage, and indicates a need for better weatherization.

The need for proper planning and preparation of all hazards emphasizes the need to broaden our scope to vulnerabilities affecting the grid nationally and stemming from other causes such as cyberattacks or even physical attacks. Our colleague Representative Soto mentioned at one of our hearings just earlier this week the cyberattack targeted at a Florida water system in his district that could happen to any of our necessary utilities. These are all issues we should be looking into.

As more events occur across the country, the importance of grid resilience is further highlighted. We must address the energy emergencies that millions of Americans have faced across our country – not just those in Texas. I hope that we can look for solutions in a bipartisan way to prevent blackouts for *all* Americans since these energy resource interdependency issues are not unique to Texas.

Thank you Chair, and I yield the rest of my time to Dr. Burgess from the great state of Texas.