



COMMITTEE ON

SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

REPUBLICANS Frank Lucas, Ranking Member

## Ranking Member Frank Lucas Opening Statement

*Lessons Learned from the Texas Blackouts: Research Needs for a Secure and Resilient Grid*

*Thursday, March 18, 2021, 10:00 a.m. EST*

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Thank you, Chairwoman Johnson for holding this important and timely hearing. Today, we have an opportunity to examine last month's blackouts in Texas and other southern and midwestern states. There is no better time to hear about the ongoing efforts by industry, federal agencies, and the Department of Energy (DOE) national laboratories to learn from these events and adapt for the future.

Before we begin, I'd like to express my gratitude for the safety of my Texas friends here. I hope that your families are well and your districts – like mine – are on their way to a full recovery.

Physical and cyber threats to our power grid are constantly evolving. This incident, alongside last year's wildfires on the West Coast and the recent SolarWinds cyber-attack, highlights the need for Congressional action to ensure the security and resilience of the U.S. energy sector. As we discuss these events and their causes, we on the Science Committee have a responsibility to focus on the long-term technological solutions that can help us prepare for and respond to the next trial. As the past year has shown, it's not a matter of *if* our grid will be tested again, it's a matter of when.

The Science Committee has jurisdiction over DOE's electricity delivery, cybersecurity, energy security, and emergency response research and development activities. This work is essential to maintaining the stability and flexibility of our grid, not just for today's needs but also for the next generation's.

Through its world-leading national laboratories and Grid Modernization Laboratory Consortium, DOE supports R&D in advanced grid modeling, grid energy storage, information sharing, and advanced control systems. By partnering with industry, DOE can provide stakeholders with critical expertise and enable the deployment of new grid security tools and technologies.

This morning, we will hear from Beth Garza, a senior fellow with R Street's Energy & Environmental Policy Team. She served as director of the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) Independent Market Monitor from 2014 through 2019. Beth brings a critical perspective to this distinguished witness panel and can provide first-hand insight into ERCOT and the power supply industry as a whole. I look forward to her testimony highlighting the needs and challenges of our diverse and complex power delivery system.

This hearing will also serve as an opportunity to discuss grid security legislation. Last Congress, H.R. 5760, the Grid Security Research and Development Act, passed the House with strong bipartisan support. This legislation authorizes DOE research, development, and demonstration activities that focus on the discovery of innovative tools and technologies for energy sector security and resilience. The provisions in this bill were originally a central component of the bipartisan and bicameral Energy Act of 2020, which became law last Congress. Unfortunately, due to last minute jurisdictional claims from outside committees, this bill had to be removed from the Energy Act in the 11th hour. I'm hopeful that we can work together to once again introduce and pass grid security legislation this year.

The energy sector faces unique challenges that require institutional knowledge and data that only the Department of Energy can provide. DOE is responsible for energy critical infrastructure, which includes electric power, oil and natural gas. It also has authority over the cybersecurity of energy delivery systems. Providing DOE researchers and industry with the tools they need to ensure the long-term security and resiliency of our electric grid should be something we can all agree on. This Congress I will prioritize getting these provisions over the finish line, working with my friends on both sides of the aisle to get this done.

I thank our witnesses today for their valuable testimony at such a critical time. I look forward to a productive discussion about how federal agencies can work with industry to deliver affordable power to American homes, businesses, and essential services.

Thank you Madam Chair and I yield back the balance of my time.