

**Committee on Energy and Commerce**

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery  
of  
Chairman Frank Pallone, Jr.**

***Hearing on “Power Struggle: Examining the 2021 Texas Grid Failure”***

**March 24, 2021**

Today, we are examining the causes of the recent widespread power outages in Texas and how to fortify the electrical grid against extreme weather events and climate change.

The enormity of this disaster and its aftermath cannot be overstated. At one point, almost half of the generation capacity of Texas’ electric grid was lost, causing more than 4 million homes and businesses to lose electricity. Texans struggled to get food, medical treatments, and safe drinking water. This storm resulted in extensive property damage, unprecedented energy bills, and, most tragically, loss of life.

The challenges brought on by this storm were particularly acute for low-income communities, which often lack the resources to prepare for or quickly recover from the effects of extreme weather disasters.

Today, I look forward to hearing from our witnesses, particularly from the President and CEO of the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT)—which functions as the air traffic controller of the Texas energy grid—about what went wrong and why it happened. I also look forward to hearing from the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) on why its recommendations to weatherize the Texas grid were not sufficiently implemented following another major storm there ten years ago, and how we should prepare nationwide for extreme weather events.

Indeed, these extreme weather events are becoming more and more frequent. They are unmistakable signals that the climate is changing and creating extreme risks. Life-threatening weather events are happening more frequently, and we can no longer afford to delay action.

While much of today’s discussion will be about what went wrong in Texas and how to make the grid more resilient, we need to go one step further and tackle the climate crisis if we are going to really get our arms around these catastrophic events.

That’s why I recently introduced the CLEAN Future Act, comprehensive climate legislation which would achieve net zero greenhouse gas pollution no later than 2050. This legislation also empowers American workers and creates millions of homegrown jobs in a climate-resilient economy.

The CLEAN Future Act, along with our LIFT America Act, will modernize our electric grid for the future. On Monday, we held a full Committee hearing on the LIFT America Act and

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this afternoon, our Energy Subcommittee will hold a legislative hearing on the CLEAN Future Act. These hearings, along with this oversight hearing, are critical as we discuss solutions to help make the grid more reliable and resilient.