



Over the last couple of weeks, I have heard from many of you about the power outages and the physical and financial suffering caused by the unprecedented winter storm our state experienced. Like most of you, I am disappointed, frustrated and question how this could have happened in Texas, a state with vast natural resources and a diverse power supply.

Communities in House District 60 went without power and water for days at a time. The entire City of Coleman lost power for two days and the City of Brownwood came dangerously close to losing power to the wastewater treatment facility. With the help of local leaders, state leaders (including the Governor's office), and electricity providers, the City of Coleman was able to have their power restored and Brownwood's water supply was spared. Our problems did not stop after the winter weather went away, however. Costly repairs need to be made and there are numerous communities and individuals who are fearful of their next utility bill.

Throughout the duration of the storm, we saw progress thanks to the tireless, round-the-clock efforts of men and women working to thaw and repair damaged equipment. My office and I stayed in communication with our city, county, state, and national leaders, as well as electrical providers to assist in resolving these issues. Communities, such as Clyde, Strawn, and Mingo came together to assist in thawing the city's main water lines and pumping stations. The people in Albany opened a shelter and fed their neighbors from Lueders. Breckenridge ISD utilized school buses to transport residents to and from shelters in the county. The City of Granbury provided warming centers for those without heat, shelter, or food and Granbury ISD provided school buses for transportation. The fire departments in Eastland County rallied together and delivered water bottles to residents who desperately needed potable water. The City of Mineral Wells worked together with numerous volunteers to provide more than 67,000 bottles of water and food for thousands. These communities cited are just an example. Every single community and every citizen has a story. During this time of crisis, I am proud to see neighbor helping neighbor, businesses stepping up to provide for those who are without, and those essential workers still working harder than ever.

We are fortunate to have community leaders that are incredibly dedicated and committed to their residents. When their neighbors were in need, our communities stood together to provide a warm place to stay, clean water to drink, and support to get through this unparalleled time. I know that they will continue to fight for you as Texas recovers from these catastrophic events.

On February 25th and 26th, there was a joint hearing of the House committees on State Affairs and Energy Resources. Energy providers – from generation to retail – were grilled by the committee for hours. State agencies, such as the Public Utility Commission (PUC) and Railroad Commission were invited for questioning by state officials to determine what went wrong and how Texas can move forward. What ultimately caused this massive failure was poor

communication, insufficient emergency management planning, and the inadequacy of regulation and management of the PUC.

As of this writing, seven members of the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) board and the Chair of the PUC, who oversees ERCOT, have resigned. While there has been plenty of blame to go around, we must now focus on solutions.

Costs from the storm are already being felt by local energy cooperatives. For instance, the Brazos Electric Cooperative, Texas' oldest and largest generation and transmission co-op has filed for bankruptcy. More are sure to follow. This will have a ripple effect on numerous electrical entities and, ultimately, electrical customers. This must be handled immediately to ensure Texans, especially those in rural areas dependent on these co-ops, continue to have access to reliable, affordable electricity.

We must make sure that there is sufficient oversight to ensure Texans are not left in the cold and dark ever again. The Texas Legislature is responsible for this task. I trust you will hold me and the rest of my colleagues in Austin accountable for correcting the mistakes that resulted in this unmitigated disaster.