
Electric Power Industry Closely Coordinating as Severe Winter Weather Continues to Impact Texas, Other States Across the Country

WASHINGTON (February 17, 2021) – As extreme cold weather and a series of winter storms continue to impact electricity customers across the country, investor-owned electric companies, electric cooperatives, and public power utilities are working together to ensure that power is restored to customers safely and as quickly as possible.

In Texas, more than 2 million customers are without power as the state’s primary grid operator—the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT)—continues to order electricity providers to interrupt power delivery. A historic arctic cold snap across the state has impacted electricity generation, and there is not enough energy supply to meet customer demands.

“Most electricity providers in Texas are transmission and distribution companies and do not generate electricity,” said Edison Electric Institute (EEI) President Tom Kuhn. “The shortage of generation capacity is not something electric companies, electric cooperatives, and public power utilities can directly address. They must follow directives from ERCOT and other grid operators. Our frontline employees who operate the transmission and distribution systems are actively keeping that system operational and in balance, while restoring power to customers as soon as generation resources become available.”

Customers in other states also have experienced outages if their electricity providers have been directed to interrupt power as system operators grapple with an overwhelming demand for electricity and limited supply due to the historic weather that has affected all forms of electricity generation.

“Electric utilities in several states in the middle of the country are facing serious challenges due to extreme cold weather conditions and related power constraints,” said American Public Power Association (APPA) President & CEO Joy Ditto. “The electric power industry is united in responding to this situation in order to protect the grid and get the power back on for everyone as quickly and safely as possible.”

In addition to extreme cold, several states—including Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Ohio, Oregon, Virginia, and West Virginia—have been hard hit by devastating ice and winter storms. In these areas, mutual assistance networks are activated, and crews continue to work around the clock to restore power to customers who lost power due to downed wires and other infrastructure impacts.

“Electric co-ops are working as swiftly and safely as possible to restore power in the wake of record-cold temperatures,” said National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) CEO Jim Matheson. “As the arctic cold persists and work continues, the continued cooperation of federal, state and local communities is vital as we work together to protect the electric system

and restore outages. This historic storm serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of a diverse fuel supply, robust transmission infrastructure, and effective coordination between grid operators and electricity providers.”

Electricity providers in all impacted areas are encouraging their customers to remain vigilant against scams targeting utility customers and are reminding customers that portable generators and grills never should be used indoors or in other enclosed areas where lethal fumes quickly can accumulate.

With another winter storm in the forecast this week, electric companies, electric co-ops, and public power utilities in the path are preparing and in close coordination with emergency response officials, state leaders, and customers.

“We know that being without electricity creates hardships and presents additional challenges in extreme cold,” added Kuhn. “We greatly appreciate our customers’ patience and understanding.”

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About the American Public Power Association

The American Public Power Association is the voice of not-for-profit, community-owned utilities that power 2,000 towns and cities nationwide. It represents public power before the federal government to protect the interests of the more than 49 million people that public power utilities serve, and the 93,000 people they employ. The association advocates and advises on electricity policy, technology, trends, training, and operations. Its members strengthen their communities by providing superior service, engaging citizens, and instilling pride in community-owned power.

About the Edison Electric Institute

EI is the association that represents all U.S. investor-owned electric companies. EI’s members provide electricity for more than 220 million Americans, and operate in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. In addition to our U.S. members, EI has more than 65 international electric companies, with operations in more than 90 countries, as International Members, and hundreds of industry suppliers and related organizations as Associate Members.

About the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association is the national service organization representing the nation’s more than 900 private, not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives, which serve 42 million people in 48 states.

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