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Item Number: 55

Gretchen Day
1000 Remington Court
Fairview, TX 75069

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Public Utility Commission

September 20, 2024

Public Utility Commission
P.O. Box 13326
Austin, TX 78711-3326

56896

Dear Commissioners:

I write to you today as a member of my church's Green Team. Our team works to inspire and mobilize the Catholic community, and people of good will, to care for our common home and achieve climate and ecological justice. **I ask that PUC disperse 18% of the Texas Energy Fund (TEF) monies for backup power systems such as microgrids.**

I feel compelled to write to you about the recent selection of project proposals to receive loan funding from the Texas Energy Fund. It is my understanding that TEF was to dedicate 18% of its monies to back up power packages designed to improve grid reliability. None of the selected projects represent investments in grid reliability nor in back-up power. In fact, the selected projects are all for natural-gas fired power plants, the failure of which was by far the largest cause of the power outages during Winter Storm Uri.

Backup power systems include innovative grid systems, like microgrids, where power is generated and distributed on a small scale, improving reliability and reducing cost. Ninety percent (90%) of power outages happen on the distribution side of the grid. Hurricane Beryl gave clear evidence of this phenomenon - toppling power lines and trees - which took out power to millions of people, some for extended periods. Microgrids, since they place electrical generation close to electrical customers, avoid long power lines and reduce the risk of large numbers of people losing power.

In addition, microgrids are particularly well-suited to taking advantage of renewable generation, especially solar and battery power. Moving to renewable power generation is critical for the well-being of all life on earth. And, of course, grid battery power is the most dispatchable form of energy generation, which is key to handling variable demand.

While I understand that the legislature disallowed use of TEF monies for grid scale batteries, **I ask that you revise your current announced plans such that the fund disperse 18% of its monies for microgrids** which could ultimately incorporate renewable energy and battery power (although funding for such would not come from TEF loans). And, while TEF doesn't support renewable energy and grid batteries, I ask that you do everything in your power as commissioners to grow this form of energy in Texas. This will help to stabilize our grid, make it more reliable, and reduce costs to Texans, while acting to preserve all life.

I truly appreciate and thank you for your attention to my comments.

Sincerely,

Gretchen Day

