

Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Economic Development
Texas Senate, Sam Houston Building, 325
Austin TX 78711-2068

April 9, 2019

Subject: SB 76 Enables Texas to Protect the Electric Grid Just Like Texas Protects Its Environment

Dear Chairman Birdwell, Vice-Chair Zaffirini and other members of the Committee:

My name is Dr. Fred Reitman. I am a resident of Houston, Texas and will be testifying as a private citizen in support of SB 76. I want you understand why I, and many others in Texas, support this bill.

I am a toxicologist by training and experience, having recently completed a 30-year career first with the U.S. EPA regional office in Dallas, followed by Texaco and finally Shell. In these capacities I have experience with regulatory development and compliance as seen from the perspective of both regulatory agencies and industry. While I am not an electric industry professional, I believe this experience bears on the issue of protecting the Texas electric grid. Let me explain.

Texas and many other states have established their own regulatory agencies to protect public health and the environment. In Texas, that agency is the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, or TCEQ. The TCEQ Mission Statement states it "...strives to protect our state's public health and natural resources consistent with sustainable economic development" and will "base decisions on the law, common sense, sound science, and fiscal responsibility."

Our state counts on TCEQ to draw on its own research as well as that of independent subject matter experts to set state regulations for protecting public health and the environment. Senator Hall's bill sets up exactly the same type of state-level Council to oversee the protection of our MOST critical infrastructure – the electric grid.

For example, just as TCEQ consults with West Texas A&M scientists to help it assess risks and develop Protective Concentration Levels to protect humans and wildlife from toxic chemicals in the environment, the Texas Grid Security Council would assess the various risks posed to the electric grid from all hazards and help the state develop adequate standards to protect the grid against all of those hazards. Because a prolonged blackout would devastate both the environment and our public health, I believe that the role of a Grid Security Council is even more important than that of the already-established TCEQ.

Every state has its own environment and public to protect and so most have established a variation of the TCEQ. However, not every state has its own electric grid and the opportunity to have its own government & security experts involved in protecting it.

I ask you to take that opportunity and show us that you care about protecting the grid as much as protecting the environment by passing this bill out of committee. Thank you.

Fred Reitman

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