

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 2, 2015

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Governor
Office of the Governor
State Insurance Building
1100 San Jacinto
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Governor Abbott:

We write to encourage you to take a leading role on an issue of critical importance to our constituents and to our state: the vulnerability of our electric grid and the potential loss of power for millions of American families and businesses.

There are a number of ways in which such a disruption of our bulk power distribution system could be caused. Physical disruptions to the infrastructure, space weather events, cyber-attacks and electromagnetic pulses (EMPs) are the most significant and pressing threats to our electric grid. It is imperative that we make the grid resilient against all such hazards. By virtue of the fact that our state has its own interconnected power supply, we have an opportunity to be a model for what can and must be done nationwide.

Taking action today to protect our critical infrastructure is an absolute necessity. As you know, we are under relentless assault from hostile cyber operations and have evidence that some have targeted our grid's electronic control systems. In 2014, the National Security Agency reported that the agency had detected intrusions by entities with the capability to take down control systems that operate U.S. power grids.

In addition, evidence continues to accumulate that many of our adversaries envision the use of EMPs against us in any future conflict. According to the Commission to Assess the Threat to the United States from Electromagnetic Pulse Attack (EMP Commission), the Government of Iran has conducted missile tests consistent with the use of an EMP, and Iranian military writings explicitly discuss nuclear EMP attacks of a kind that would devastate our nation. This real threat has forced our military to relocate assets of the North American Aerospace Command (NORAD) back to an EMP-hardened facility.

Even if no enemy decides to attack our electric infrastructure, the grid – and all of us who depend upon it – are still at risk. Scientists warn that we are overdue for an intense geomagnetic disturbance of a kind not seen since the solar storm of 1859. Such an event would unleash a wave of electromagnetic energy that could disable the grid *indefinitely*.

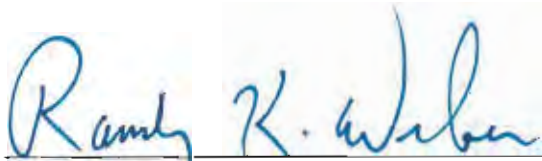
Whatever the cause, the effects of such a sustained loss of electricity would be nothing short of catastrophic due to the loss of critical services reliant on electric power such as water treatment, food and fuel supply, healthcare, financial services, communications, transportation, and law-and-order. We risk large scale loss of life without these critical services. The former chairman of the EMP Commission, Dr. William Graham, has estimated that the lives of nine out of ten Americans are at risk from these cascading effects should our grid lose power for a year or more.

To date, the federal government has struggled to address the vulnerabilities of our critical infrastructure at the national level. There are many factors contributing to the lack of corrective action, and we believe it is imperative that they be overcome.

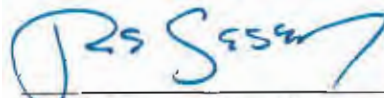
In the meantime, it behooves our state to adopt measures that maximize the resiliency of our electric grid against all hazards. We were gratified that legislation aimed at assessing the extent of the Texas grid’s vulnerabilities were introduced in the Texas State Legislature during this year’s session. Although these measures were not enacted, we applaud your efforts thus far to address our grid’s vulnerabilities.

We urge continued leadership and rigorous action within the authorities of your office to protect the electric grid of the State of Texas. Thank you for your service to our great state.

Sincerely,



Randy Weber (TX-14)
Member of Congress



Pete Sessions (TX-32)
Member of Congress



Lamar Smith (TX-21)
Member of Congress



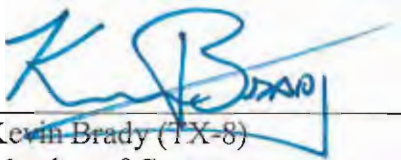
Blake Farenthold (TX-27)
Member of Congress



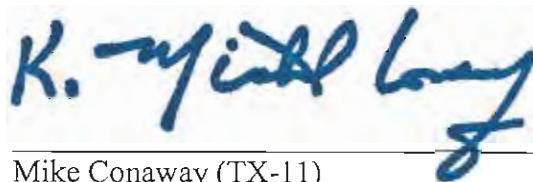
Bill Flores (TX-17)
Member of Congress



Kay Granger (TX-12)
Member of Congress



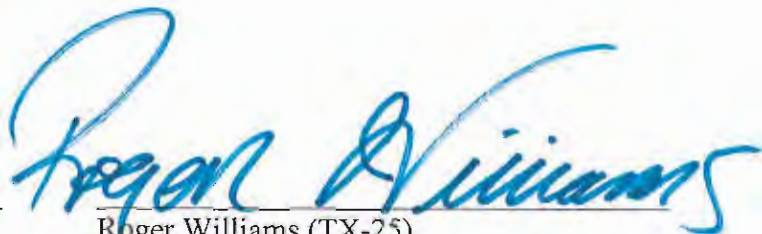
Kevin Brady (TX-8)
Member of Congress



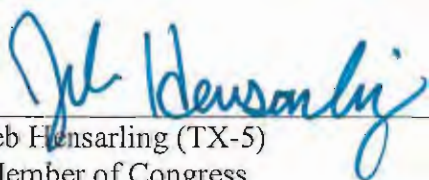
Mike Conaway (TX-11)
Member of Congress



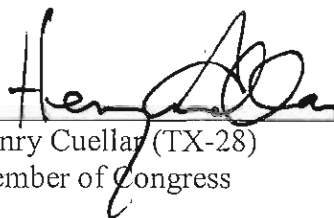
Louie Gohmert (TX-1)
Member of congress



Roger Williams (TX-25)
Member of Congress



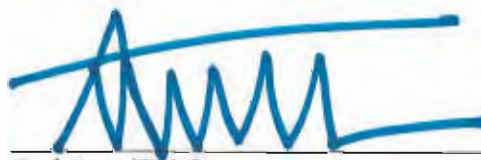
Jeb Hensarling (TX-5)
Member of Congress



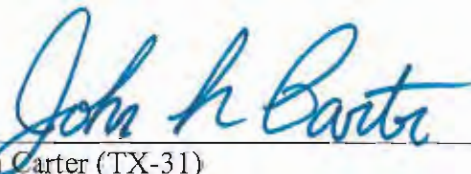
Henry Cuellar (TX-28)
Member of Congress



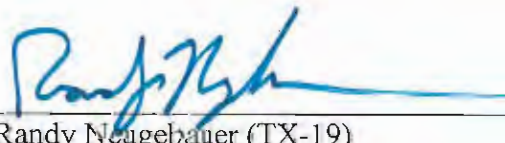
Michael McCaul (TX-10)
Member of Congress



Ted Poe (TX-2)
Member of Congress



John Carter (TX-31)
Member of Congress



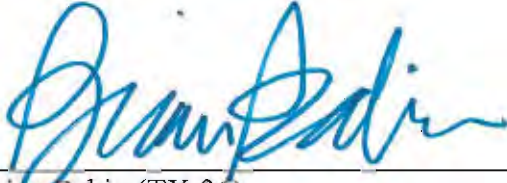
Randy Neugebauer (TX-19)
Member of Congress



Pete Olson (TX-22)
Member of Congress



John Ratcliffe (TX-4)
Member of Congress



Brian Babin (TX-36)
Member of Congress



Kenny Marchant (TX-24)
Member of Congress



Sam Johnson (TX-03)
Member of Congress



Joe Barton (TX-06)
Member of Congress



John Culberson (TX-7)
Member of Congress