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CITY OF HOUSTON

John Whitmire

Mayor

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September 3, 2024

Thomas J. Gleeson, Chair
Public Utility Commission of Texas
P.O. Box 13326
Austin, Texas 78711

RE: PUC Docket 56211

Dear Chairman Gleeson and Members of the Commission

On August 1, 2024, CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC (CenterPoint) filed a request to withdraw its rate case application. This request was denied by the State Office of Administrative Hearings, and opposed by several parties in this proceeding, including the Houston Coalition of Cities (HCC) of which the City of Houston (City of Houston) is a member.

CenterPoint was required to file this application per State Law and the Commission's corresponding Rate Review Schedule. Utilities, such as CenterPoint, take advantage of the numerous mechanisms in place that allow them to recover a significant portion of their costs outside of a base rate case. Alternative rate mechanisms, such as the Distribution Cost Recovery Factor (DCRF), incentivize utilities to avoid filing a rate case, thus the reason for the rate filing schedule. Houston is concerned that allowing CenterPoint to withdraw establishes a negative precedent, exacerbated by the fact that the ratepayers may be entitled to rate decrease based on the collective findings of the parties in this proceeding, including HCC.

Houston agrees that CenterPoint needs to focus on power resiliency and restoring the public trust. However, as regulator, Houston is also committed to ensuring ratepayers receive safe and reliable (and resilient) electric service at just and reasonable rates. A utility should not be allowed to continue to over-earn, especially when it is under investigation for failing to maintain the reliability of its system. If the Commission decides to abate the proceeding, Houston urges the Commissioners to set interim rates based on the evidence presented in the proceeding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Whitmire".

Mayor John Whitmire