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Filing Date - 2024-08-30 03:00:30 PM

Control Number - 56822

Item Number - 111

PROJECT NO. 56822

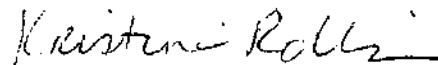
**INVESTIGATION OF EMERGENCY § PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE BY §
UTILITIES IN HOUSTON AND § OF TEXAS
SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES**

**RESPONSE TO COMMISSION STAFF'S FIRST REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION
TO RETAIL ELECTRIC PROVIDERS**

In an effort to assist the investigation of the Public Utility Commission of Texas (Commission) of emergency preparedness and response by utilities during recent extreme weather events, the NRG Energy, Inc. (NRG) family of retail electric providers (collectively NRG REPs)¹ respectfully provide the attached responses to certain Requests for Information (RFI) posed in this proceeding for voluntary responses by retail electric providers (REPs).

The NRG REPs also join in the responses to RFIs filed by the Aggregated REP Group and Alliance for Retail Markets and therefore do not duplicate in this filing the answers provided in those responses. The NRG REPs appreciate the opportunity to provide this information, which gives insight into the retail electric provider and customer experiences, most notably during Hurricane Beryl.

Respectfully submitted,



Kristina F. Rollins
Assistant General Counsel, Legal Regulatory
Affairs & Policy
State Bar No. 24033012
Lauren D. Damen
Senior Counsel, Regulatory Affairs
State Bar No. 24078394
NRG Energy, Inc.
1005 Congress Ave., Suite 950

¹ For purposes of these RFI responses, the NRG REPs include: Reliant Energy Retail Services LLC, Green Mountain Energy Company, U.S. Retailers LLC (Cirro Energy and Discount Power), Stream SPE, Ltd., XOOM Energy Texas, LLC, and Direct Energy LP.

Austin, Texas 78701
Telephone: (512) 691-6245
Facsimile: (512) 691-6353
Email: kristina.rollins@nrg.com
Email: lauren.damen@nrg.com

PROJECT NO. 56822: NRG REPS' RESPONSE TO REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

REP 1-1: Please detail the extent and duration of outages experienced by your customers during and in the aftermath of Hurricane Beryl. If known, please include the total number of customers impacted, minimum and maximum hours of service interruptions, average hours of service interruptions, and average time to service restoration.

RESPONSE:

It is difficult for retail electric providers (REPs) to know with certainty the extent and duration of outages experienced by their customers during and in the aftermath of Hurricane Beryl because REPs do not currently have access to real-time outage information for their customers from transmission and distribution utilities (TDUs). That said, the NRG REPs have attempted to determine the information requested by RFI 1-1 by retrospectively analyzing TDU interval data reads (IDR) from customer meters during July 8, 2024 (the date of Hurricane Beryl's landfall) through July 22, 2024. Intervals containing zeroes for a total duration of at least an hour were assumed to indicate that the customer was experiencing an outage.

Although the NRG REPs understand that the TDUs have largely updated their IDR reads to correct instances in which the TDUs reported estimates rather than zeroes for periods in which customers were experiencing an outage, to the extent that TDU corrections still need to be made, the outage information provided by the NRG REPs in response to RFI 1-1 would be under-reported. For TDU service territories that were only partially impacted by Hurricane Beryl, the NRG REPs included only those counties that were included in the disaster declaration.

Subject to the caveats above and summarized at a level so as to not disclose confidential, competitively sensitive information, below is an estimate of the outage extent and duration experienced by the customers of the NRG REPs:

Table RFI 1-1: Customer Outages During 7/8/2024 – 7/22/2024

TDU Service Area	Percent of Customers that Experienced an Outage	Average Outage Length
CenterPoint	87.1%	3.35 days
TNMP	76.6%	2.70 days
AEP	72.5%	2.14 days
Oncor	45.6%	1.76 days

PROJECT NO. 56822: NRG REPS' RESPONSE TO REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

REP 1-2 Please detail and provide any supporting data on the extent and duration of outages experienced by your customers during and in the aftermath of the May 2024 Derecho event. If known, please include the total number of customers impacted, minimum and maximum hours of service interruptions, average hours of service interruptions, and average time to service restoration.

RESPONSE:

It is difficult for REPs to know with certainty the extent and duration of outages experienced by their customers during the May 2024 Derecho event. That said, the NRG REPs have attempted to determine the information requested by RFI 1-2 by retrospectively analyzing TDU interval data reads (IDR) from customer meters during May 16, 2024 (the date the Derecho struck the Texas Gulf Coast) through May 23, 2024. Intervals containing zeroes for a total duration of at least an hour were assumed to indicate that the customer was experiencing an outage. Because this event primarily impacted the NRG REPs' customers in the CenterPoint service territory, the analysis provided below is specific to that area.

TDU Service Area	Percent of Customers that Experienced an Outage	Average Outage Length
CenterPoint	38.7%	2.24 days

PROJECT NO. 56822: NRG REPS' RESPONSE TO REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

REP 1-4 Please describe how you communicated with your customers before, during, and after Hurricane Beryl regarding service disruptions and restoration efforts. If you have any representative examples of these communications, please attach them to your response.

RESPONSE:

For the Hurricane Beryl event, between July 7 through July 19, the NRG REPs prepared their call center agents to field customer questions on topics such as: power outages, recovery updates, available payment assistance (e.g., deferred payment plans, bill credits, late fee suppression), explaining invoices with estimated reads and extended periods of no power. During this time, the call centers for the NRG REPs delivered an “Average Speed of Answer” of 51 seconds. “Speed to Answer” is the time it takes a customer to reach a live agent in the event they are unable to receive answers to their questions through the call center’s interactive voice response (IVR) system. The IVR is an automated system that enables customers to receive and provide information (e.g. answers to common questions, menu guide to help route customer to the right agent).

The NRG REPs also published numerous communications to customers during the Hurricane Beryl event in various forums, such as direct to customer emails, social media posts, and updates to the NRG REPs’ webpages. Included as Attachment Staff-NRG REPs RFI 1-4(a) are representative examples of those communications. Included as Attachment Staff-NRG REPs RFI 1-4(b) is an example of Reliant’s Storm Recovery webpage,² which provides TDU outage contact information. Clicking on the “Outage and alerts” button would take the customer to the applicable TDU’s storm center/outage tracker website, which generally provides resources for customers to report an outage, check outage status, and view outage information for the TDU’s service territory.

Before Hurricane Beryl made landfall, the NRG REPs’ communications to customers focused on storm preparation. During and in the immediate aftermath of the storm, customer communication messaging pivoted to outage information (to the extent it

² Reliant is NRG’s largest REP and has been in the retail electric market since its inception over two decades ago.

was available) and recovery resources, including the availability of local cooling centers for customers who were without power. As the recovery effort continued, communications shifted to the availability of payment assistance and, as the TDU disconnection moratoria were nearing conclusion, communications were sent to customers with past due balances informing them again of payment assistance options and advising them that the disconnection protection would end soon. The NRG REPs tailored their communications to the information customers needed most as the situation evolved.

PROJECT NO. 56822: NRG REPS' RESPONSE TO REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

REP 1-7: Please describe your coordination efforts with local authorities, TDUs, and other relevant entities during and in the aftermath of Hurricane Beryl.

RESPONSE:

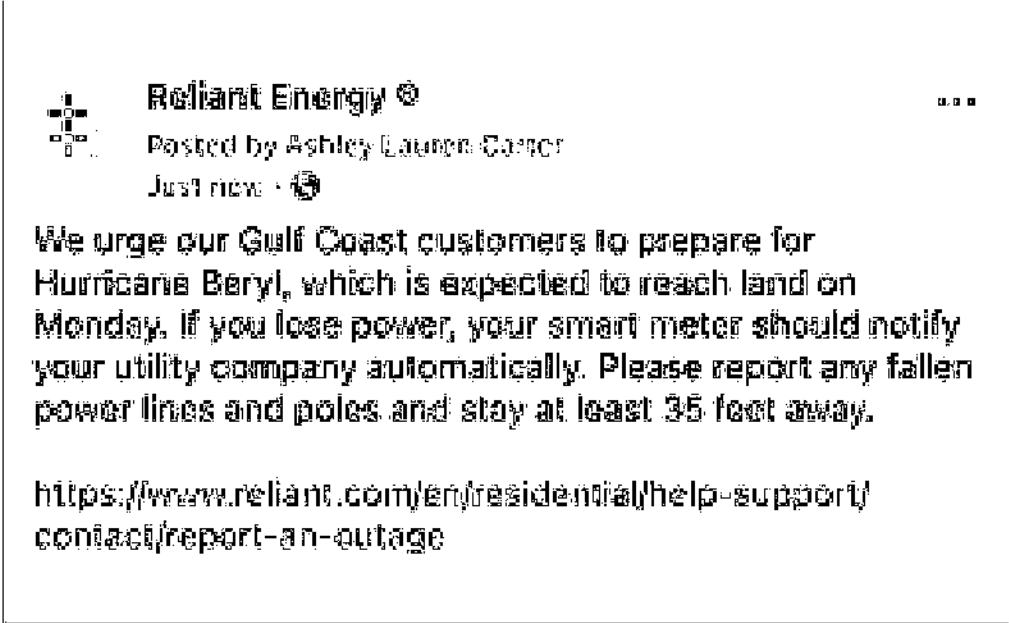
In addition to TDU coordination efforts described in the Aggregated REP Group response to REP 1-7, the NRG REPs coordinated with other entities during in the aftermath of Hurricane Beryl. To expand upon and in addition to the outreach described in NRG's filing in Project No. 56793 on July 16, 2024, NRG and the NRG REPs have engaged in the following coordination efforts of note:

- During and in the aftermath of Hurricane Beryl, the NRG REPs have been in close contact with their social service agency partners to understand the increased needs for electricity bill assistance due to the impacts of the storm. As a result, Reliant and Direct Energy increased their funding to their respective bill payment assistance programs, Reliant CARE and Direct Energy Neighbor to Neighbor.
- To support the communities we serve, NRG partnered on immediate and long-term relief efforts including a \$500,000 commitment to numerous charitable organizations (including cash and in-kind contributions) and employees continue to volunteer at relief and recovery events.
- In the first week following the storm, Reliant worked closely with its 22 Reliant Beat the Heat partners, including City of Houston and Precinct 2, the Houston Rockets and other local partners to assist with immediate needs for the community. As Reliant's Beat the Heat sites had power restored, they were able to open as cooling centers and distribution sites. NRG donated water, ice, and batteries, and Reliant donated portable chargers to several of these cooling centers and temporary relief sites throughout the region. Many other partners, including the Houston Rockets, held food and essential items distribution events where employees volunteered and Reliant donated portable chargers so people could charge up their phones.
- NRG made a \$250,000 cash donation to the Hurricane Beryl Recovery Fund, which was established by the Greater Houston Disaster Alliance. The Greater Houston Disaster Alliance, a joint effort by the Greater Houston Community Foundation and United Way of Greater Houston, organized this initiative to provide low-to-moderate income families with emergency financial assistance, home repairs, and help accessing resources for residents of the City of Houston and the counties of Harris, Fort Bend, Montgomery, and Waller.

- Reliant made a total of \$100,000 in cash donations to local food banks and nonprofits, such as the Houston Food Bank, Kids' Meals, and Community Family Centers. The storm's significant impact on the Greater Houston community brought into focus how much our neighbors depend on these organizations, which continue to experience increased demand. In addition to the monetary donation, our employees have volunteered at many of them to help restock the shelves, pack meals and distribute food.
- Reliant and NRG made a total of \$130,000 in cash donations to longer term recovery partners, such as Rebuilding Together Houston, Houston Habitat for Humanity and Memorial Assistance Ministries, for repairs and continued financial assistance. NRG also triple matched all eligible employee donations for disaster relief to increase their impact.

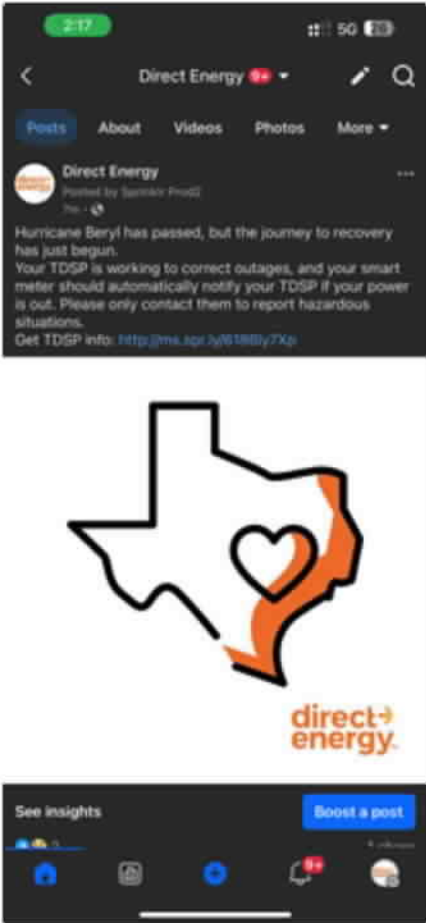
Attachment Staff-NRG REPs RFI 1-4(a)

Example of Pre-Storm Social Media Post



The image is a screenshot of a social media post from Reliant Energy. The post header shows the Reliant Energy logo, the name "Reliant Energy" with a registered trademark symbol, and a three-dot menu icon. Below the header, it says "Posted by Ashley Lauren Carter" and "Just now" with a globe icon. The main text of the post reads: "We urge our Gulf Coast customers to prepare for Hurricane Beryl, which is expected to reach land on Monday. If you lose power, your smart meter should notify your utility company automatically. Please report any fallen power lines and poles and stay at least 35 feet away." Below the text is a blue hyperlink: "https://www.reliant.com/en/residential/help-support/contact/report-an-outage".


Example of Outage Information Social Media Post and Banner on REP Websites



cirro ENERGY For Home For Business Customer Care About Us Contact Us Easy Pay Login

Hurricane Beryl has caused power outages across Texas. If you are without power, your smart meter should automatically notify your utility company. Be sure to report downed power lines and poles and stay at least 35 feet away. Utilities have stated they are committed to restoring power as safely and quickly as possible.

Example of Storm Recovery Email to Customers



We're in this together

While Hurricane Beryl may have passed, we understand that the journey to recovery has just begun. If you are among the millions affected in the Houston area, please know that we are here to support you.

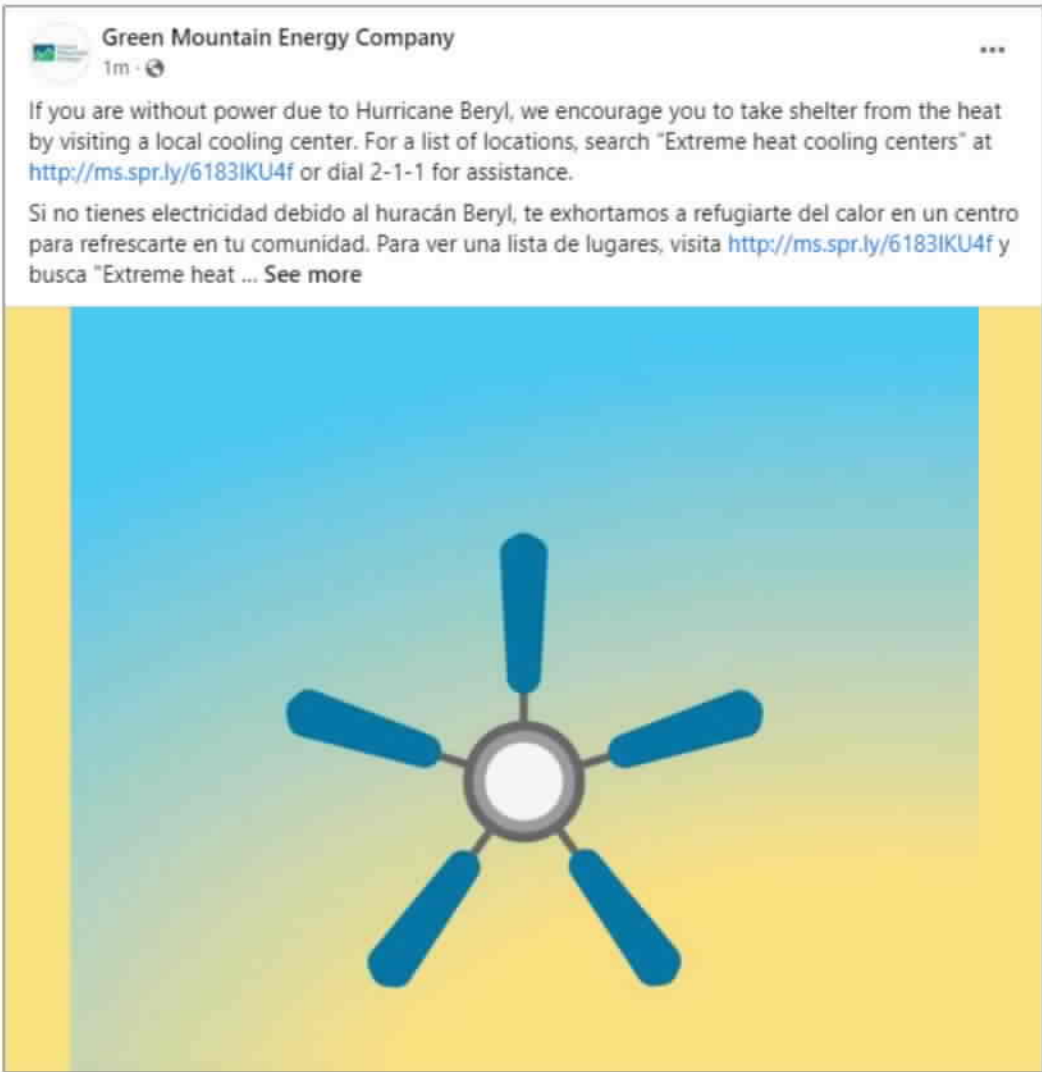
Beryl has caused widespread outages, but CenterPoint (your transmission and distribution service provider) is aware and committed to restoring power as quickly and safely as possible. If you are without power, your smart meter should automatically notify CenterPoint. You only need to contact them if there is a downed power line or other hazardous situation.

CenterPoint will continue to provide general outage information such as total outage counts – updated approximately every 5 to 15 minutes – at [CenterPointEnergy.com/StormCenter](https://www.CenterPointEnergy.com/StormCenter). CenterPoint's electric customers are encouraged to enroll in Power Alert Service® to receive outage details and community-specific restoration updates as they become available.

As you begin navigating your recovery from the effects of Beryl, you can use these tips to help ensure the safety of you and your loved ones:


- Do not use gas-powered generators indoors to prevent risk of carbon monoxide poisoning
- Stay at least 35 feet away from any downed power lines and report them to your transmission and distribution service provider as soon as possible
- Discard perishable food exposed to temperatures of 40 degrees or higher for 2 hours or more
- If you are currently without power, unplug electronics and appliances to prevent power surge damage when the power is restored

Example of Cooling Center Social Media Post



Example of Recovery Resource Posted on REP Websites

If you were impacted by Hurricane Beryl, please know that recovery resources are available on the **Storm Center**. Smart meters should keep your TDSP informed of any power outages you may still be experiencing. For your safety, stay at least 35 feet away from downed poles or power lines and immediately report them to your TDSP.




Plans and Services Why Go Green? About Us Customer Service [Sign Up](#) [My Account](#)

Reliant Storm Center

Hurricane Beryl recovery resources

Navigating the road ahead.




Help is available

Knowing where to go or whom to call during an emergency can give you peace of mind. We encourage you to save these phone numbers and share them with loved ones in case you ever need them.


First and foremost, for an immediate life-threatening emergency, call 911 or text 911. If you can't call, you can check to see if the 911 call center in your area supports text-to-911 and learn more about it here.

- The City of Houston Office of Emergency Management: Find cooling centers and food and water distribution locations
- Harris County Emergency Management
- Fort Bend County Office of Emergency Management
- City of Corpus Christi Emergency Operations Center



We all need help sometimes

That's why we offer a variety of assistance options, including deferred payment plans, payment extensions and the Reliant CARE.

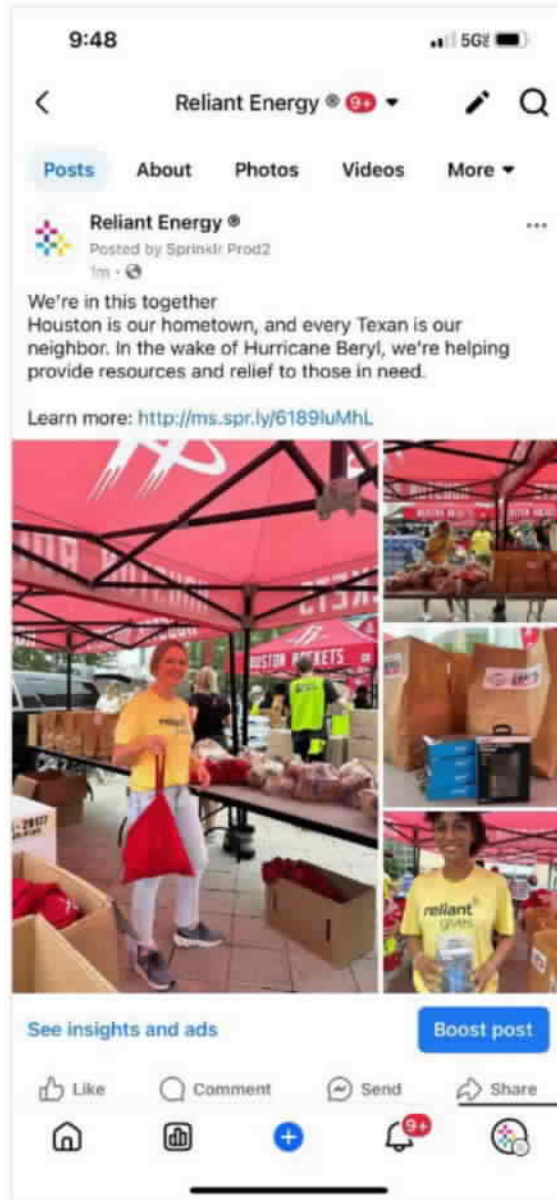


We're in this together

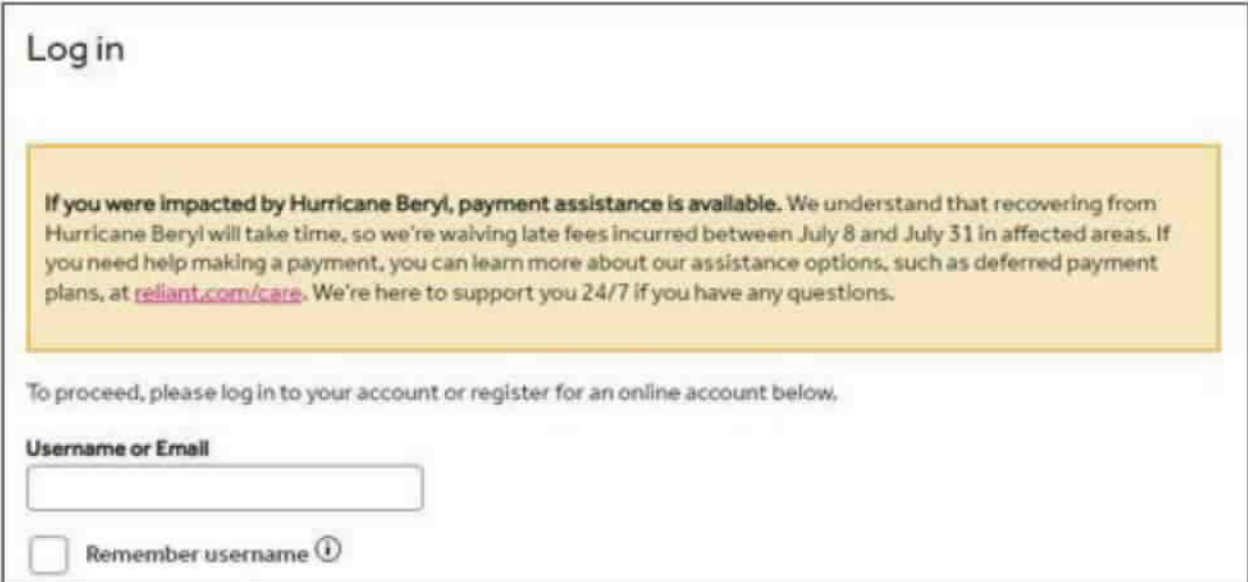
Houston is our hometown, and every Texan is our neighbor. In the wake of Hurricane Beryl, we're helping provide resources and relief to those in need.

[Find out more](#)

Example of Recovery Resource Social Media Post



Example of Estimated Usage and Payment Assistance Posts on REP Websites





NRG Commits \$2 Million in Hometown Support Following Hurricane Beryl

—Immediate and long-term relief directed to impacted customers, employees and community organizations—

HOUSTON – July 16, 2024 – As recovery efforts in Houston continue following the widespread destruction from Hurricane Beryl, today NRG Energy announced a commitment of \$2 million to provide near and long-term disaster relief. The funding includes support for customer bill payment assistance, a four-county recovery fund, employee relief and charitable donations.

“Houston is our home, and the widespread impact Hurricane Beryl had on our community, colleagues and customers was devastating to see,” said Rasesh Patel, president, NRG Consumer. “In the immediate aftermath, we focused on supporting our impacted employees and customers. Now, we are looking to expand our relief efforts to the Greater Houston area. We stand with our neighbors during their time of need and – together – we are confident we will recover.”

Customer Assistance

NRG is providing assistance to its customers of its family of retail electricity brands, including Reliant. To support those facing hardships following the storm, NRG is providing more than \$1.3 million to directly help customers in need by:

- Waiving late fees
- Providing need-based bill credits to eligible customers
- Increasing funding for Reliant’s CARE program

Reliant’s CARE (Community Assistance by Reliant Energy) program provides bill pay assistance through social service agencies, including Baker Ripley, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston and Memorial Assistance Ministries, among others. For anyone who needs assistance or information on these programs, contact 2-1-1 within Texas or visit 211texas.org.

In addition, NRG’s retail electricity brands are offering voluntary payment extensions and deferred payment plans to customers in counties impacted by Hurricane Beryl. Deferred payment plans allow customers to pay their balances due in installments, rather than all at once.

Houston Strong

To support the communities we serve, NRG is making a \$500,000 commitment to numerous charitable organizations. This includes a \$250,000 cash donation to the Hurricane Beryl Recovery Fund, which was established by the Greater Houston Disaster Alliance for residents of the City of Houston and the counties of Harris, Fort Bend, Montgomery and Waller. NRG is also triple matching all eligible employee donations for disaster relief to increase their impact.

Reliant also offers 22 Beat the Heat cooling centers across the Houston area, which provide a safe space for seniors and vulnerable residents to cool off. The majority of these centers are currently operational following the storm. In the days following Hurricane Beryl, NRG donated water, ice and batteries to several of these cooling centers and temporary relief sites and will continue to do so as recovery efforts progress. In addition, more than 500 portable chargers have been donated through a Houston Rockets relief distribution event. For more information, visit reliant.com/beattheheat.

To assist our impacted Houston-area employees, NRG is also providing an initial \$150,000 toward the NRG Employee Relief Fund (NERF) and designated its headquarters as a cooling center for employees and their household who were without power.

###

About NRG

NRG Energy is a leading energy and home services company powered by people and our passion for a smarter, cleaner, and more connected future. A Fortune 500 company operating in the United States and Canada, NRG delivers innovative solutions that help people, organizations, and businesses achieve their goals while also advocating for competitive energy markets and customer choice. More information is available at www.nrg.com. Connect with NRG on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [X](#).

Media Contact

Megan Talley
713-537-2160
megan.talley@nrg.com

Attachment Staff-NRG REPs RFI 1-4(b)



English



Reliant Storm Center

Report a power outage

Resources for reporting a power outage to your utility company

Your utility company can help

Where strong storms go, power outages tend to follow. And we understand how inconvenient that can be. To get power restored as quickly and easily as possible after an outage, please contact your Transmission and Distribution Service Provider (TDSP). You can find the number of your TDSP, also commonly referred to as your utility company, below. And if you haven't yet, sign up for service alerts to receive power outage status updates sent directly to your phone.

Why am I reporting my outage to my TDSP?

The electricity purchased from Reliant — or any retail provider — is delivered to your home by the infrastructure, including wires, transformers, and poles, maintained by your TDSP.

Downed power line safety

Always assume that downed power lines are energized and report them to your TDSP.^{RFI 1-4(b)}
Be sure to stay at least 35 feet away from them and anything they're touching.

Centerpoint Energy: 1-800-332-7143

Outage and alerts

Oncor: 1-888-313-4747

Outage and alerts

AEP: 1-866-226-8508

Outage and alerts

Texas-New Mexico Power: 1-888-866-7456

Outage and alerts

Lubbock Power & Light : 1-806-775-2509

Outage and alerts



Houston-area residents

Please know that help is available if you need relief from the heat, a place to charge your devices, food, or water. If you are in need, we encourage you to visit one of these relief centers for assistance.

[Learn more](#)

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