



## **Filing Receipt**

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**Control Number - 56822**

**Item Number - 28**

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## *Public Utility Commission of Texas*

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**TO:** Local Governments

**FROM:** Barksdale English, Deputy Executive Director

**DATE:** August 2, 2024

**RE:** **Project No. 56822**, *Investigation of Emergency Preparedness and Response by Utilities in Houston and Surrounding Communities*

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Commission Staff opened Project No. 56822 to investigate the underlying causes of repeated power outages in the Greater Houston area in the aftermath of severe weather events, with a focus on Hurricane Beryl and the May 2024 Derecho event. To bolster its understanding of the experiences of the entities most directly impacted by these kinds of weather events, Commission Staff invites Local Governments to share with the Commission details about how they were affected by electric, water, sewer, or telecommunications utility outages during those events.

Attached to this memorandum is a set of 19 questions concerning the effect the May 2024 Derecho and Hurricane Beryl had on Local Governments. The questions are detailed in an effort to elicit specific responses. However, any relevant information you can provide is greatly appreciated and will assist the Commission with this important examination. While encouraged, your participation in this investigation is purely voluntary. Additionally, providing a response to one question does not obligate you to respond to all questions presented.

Commission Staff requests responses be filed electronically on the Commission's filing interchange in Project No. 56822 **no later than August 30, 2024**.<sup>1</sup> Instructions on how to file a response can be found at the beginning of the attached request for information.

Additionally, if you have questions that cannot be answered through the [FAQs on the PUCT's website](#), please direct:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://interchange.puc.texas.gov/filer>

- Technical questions related to filing to:
  - Central Records: [centralrecords@puc.texas.gov](mailto:centralrecords@puc.texas.gov)
- Questions related to the substance or subject of the requests for information to:
  - Luisa Venegoni, Chief of Staff for the Executive Director:  
[luisa.venegoni@puc.texas.gov](mailto:luisa.venegoni@puc.texas.gov)

On behalf of the Public Utility Commission of Texas and residents of the state of Texas, Commission Staff thanks you for your participation in this investigation.

**PROJECT NO. 56822****COMMISSION STAFF'S FIRST REQUEST FOR INFORMATION  
TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS  
QUESTION NOS. LG 1-1 THROUGH 1-19****DEFINITIONS**

- 1) "AEP" refers to AEP Texas, Inc.
- 2) "CenterPoint" refers to CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC.
- 3) "Commission" or "PUCT" refers to the Public Utility Commission of Texas.
- 4) "Derecho" or "Derecho Event" refers to the windstorm event that occurred between May 16, 2024 and May 17, 2024 and impacted the gulf coast of the United States, including the city of Houston and surrounding metropolitan area.
- 5) "Electric service provider" refers to the entity that owns the electric meter, poles, and other distribution infrastructure required to serve an end-use customer. An electric service provider may be a municipally owned utility, electric cooperative, or an investor-owned utility, like CenterPoint or Entergy.
- 6) "Entergy" refers to Entergy Texas, Inc.
- 7) "ERCOT" refers to the Electric Reliability Council of Texas, Inc.
- 8) "Hurricane Beryl" or "Beryl" refers to the hurricane or storm that made landfall in the gulf coast of Texas on July 8, 2024. The term also refers to all life cycles of the storm prior to and after July 8, 2024, that was named Hurricane Beryl.
- 9) "Impacted Area" refers to the 121 Texas counties identified in Acting Governor Dan Patrick's July 6, 2024 Amended Disaster Declaration.
- 10) "Local Government" refers to a city, county, or other governing body.
- 11) "TDEM" refers to the Texas Department of Emergency Management.
- 12) "TNMP" refers to Texas-New Mexico Power Company.
- 13) "Utility" or "Utilities" refers to a person or entity providing electric, water, sewer, or telecommunications service.

**COMMISSION STAFF'S FIRST REQUEST FOR INFORMATION  
TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS  
QUESTION NOS. LG 1-1 THROUGH 1-19**

**INSTRUCTIONS**

- 1) Please provide responses to any of the attached questions. Providing a response to one question does not obligate you to respond to every question; however, the more answers you can provide, the more information the PUCT will have to assess utility preparedness and responses to these events.
- 2) At the beginning of your response, please identify a point of contact in the event Commission Staff has further inquiries based on your responses. Helpful information will include the contact's name, affiliation, telephone number, and email address.
- 3) Please identify the question number and, if applicable, the relevant subpart(s) above each provided response.
- 4) You must file your responses under Project No. 58622 through the Commission's Interchange. You can find instructions and FAQs concerning the Interchange on the Commission's website at <https://www.puc.texas.gov/industry/filings/>. Email Commission Central Records staff at [centralrecords@puc.texas.gov](mailto:centralrecords@puc.texas.gov) if additional assistance is required.
- 5) Because you will file your responses through the Commission's Interchange system, the public will have access to all your responses. Please **do not** include confidential, personal identification, proprietary, privileged, or otherwise sensitive information in your responses.

**PROJECT NO. 56822****COMMISSION STAFF'S FIRST REQUEST FOR INFORMATION  
TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS  
QUESTION NOS. LG 1-1 THROUGH 1-19**

- LG 1-1** Do you perform your own hurricane or major storm drills? If you do not, please provide a brief explanation of what your jurisdiction would need to start conducting these drills. If you do, please respond to the following questions:
- a) How often do you conduct a drill? When did you last conduct a hurricane or major storm drill?
  - b) Please describe the drill and provide information concerning the category of hurricane drilled and any conditions used in the drill.
  - c) Does your drill change? If so, how did your drill change from the last time you conducted a drill?
  - d) If you used one, please provide the name(s) of any third-party vendor used to assist or conduct the hurricane or major storm drill.
  - e) Please provide the name(s) of departments in your jurisdiction that participated or were invited to participate in the hurricane or major storm drill and describe their level of involvement with the drill.
  - f) Please provide the name(s) of other local governments and any local, community, or county organizations that participated or were invited to participate in the hurricane or major storm drill and describe their level of involvement with the drill.
  - g) Please provide the name(s) of any trade organization that participated or were invited to participate in the hurricane or major storm drill and describe their level of involvement with the drill.
  - h) Please provide the name(s) of any utility company that participated or were invited to participate in the hurricane or major storm drill and describe their level of involvement with the drill.
- LG 1-2** Did AEP, CenterPoint, Entergy, TNMP or other electric, water, or sewer utilities request your participation in their 2024 hurricane or major storm drill? If yes:
- a) Please provide the name(s) of the requesting utility.
  - b) Please provide the date of the drill.
  - c) Please provide information concerning the category of hurricane drilled and any conditions used in the drill.
  - d) Please describe in detail your role and level of participation in the hurricane or major storm drill. In your response, please indicate the role played by individual city or county services.

- e) Did you participate in a post-drill review with the organizing utility? If yes, please describe the post-drill review and what feedback you provided.
- LG 1-3** If known, please provide the date the Texas Department of Emergency management contacted you concerning the May 2024 Derecho and Hurricane Beryl.
- LG 1-4** If known, please provide the date your electric service provider contacted you concerning the May 2024 Derecho and Hurricane Beryl.
- LG 1-5** Were you contacted by any water or sewer utilities concerning Hurricane Beryl? If so, please identify the utilities and provide the date the utility(s) contacted you.
- LG 1-6** To the best of your ability, please provide a timeline of communications between local officials and the utility(s) identified in Staff 1-4 and Staff 1-5 concerning the May 2024 Derecho and Hurricane Beryl.
- LG 1-7** Do you consult or coordinate with utilities about storm hardening within your jurisdiction or help to identify utility infrastructure that needs to be repaired before the start of the hurricane season? If yes:
- a) Please identify the utilities you consulted or coordinated with in 2023 or 2024 and the approximate date you last consulted or coordinated with them.
- b) Please describe the extent of your consultation or coordination.
- c) How often do you consult with utilities about electric distribution and transmission equipment (e.g., powerlines, poles, reclosers, transformers) with regarding strategy or prioritization of repairs and replacement of equipment?
- LG 1-8** Please provide a list of local ordinances, protocols, or policies concerning transportation of heavy equipment through your jurisdiction.
- a) For each of the identified ordinances, protocols, or policies, what is the typical turn-around time from receipt of a request to issuance of a permit?
- b) Please describe, at a high level, the permitting process for the identified ordinances, protocols, or policies.
- c) For each identified ordinance, protocol, or policy, provide the length of time the obtained permit remains valid and enforceable.
- d) Did your jurisdiction waive compliance with any of these ordinances during either the May 2024 Derecho or Hurricane Beryl? If so, please identify which ordinances were waived and for how long the waivers remained in effect.
- LG 1-9** Please identify any specific issues that stand out to you concerning the deployment of mobile generation facilities during the May 2024 Derecho and Hurricane Beryl.

- LG 1-10** Please provide a list of local ordinances, protocols, or policies concerning vegetation management, including any restrictions on the size of utility easements or utility rights-of-way.
- LG 1-11** Please provide a description of any process by which an electric or telecommunications utility may petition the local government to remove dead or damaged trees or branches near, but not within, a utility easement or utility right-of-way.
- LG 1-12** Please provide a list of local ordinances, protocols, or policies that require a property owner to remove dead trees on their property.
- a) Does your jurisdiction have an individual or group that oversees any program related to these ordinances, protocols, or policies?
  - b) How often are properties inspected for compliance with the identified ordinances, protocols, or policies? Please include the date and zip codes for any inspections conducted from January 1, 2024 through June 30, 2024.
  - c) Do you coordinate with utilities about the results of these inspections? If yes, please indicate the last date and nature of such coordination that occurred before July 8, 2024.
- LG 1-13** Do you have a trained arborist on staff? If yes, please describe and define their duties before and after a major storm event.
- LG 1-14** Do you maintain a list of critical infrastructure (e.g., telecommunication systems, police stations, water or sewer facilities), medical and eldercare facilities (e.g., hospitals, in-patient treatment facilities, nursing homes, assisted living facilities), or community centers and organizations (e.g., churches, homeless shelters, schools, daycares) within your area? If yes:
- a) Did your jurisdiction share this information with TDEM or any utility(s) before, during, or in the aftermath of the May 2024 Derecho or Hurricane Beryl?
  - b) Did any utility request the information? If yes, please list which utility(s) requested this information and the date the information was requested.
- LG 1-15** Were you involved in any discussions with any utility(s) or TDEM concerning prioritizing restoration of critical infrastructure or critical care facilities for purposes of determining how mobile generation facilities would be deployed in the aftermath of the May 2024 Derecho or Hurricane Beryl? If yes:
- a) Please identify which entities participated in these discussions.
  - b) Please describe the discussion(s) with each of the entities.
  - c) Please state whether, in your opinion, the identified entities followed the guidance or guidelines you provided concerning the deployment of mobile generation facilities in the aftermath of the May 2024 Derecho or Hurricane Beryl.



- LG 1-16** Describe the level of communication between you and any utility(s) before, during, and in the aftermath of the May 2024 Derecho or Hurricane Beryl.
- LG 1-17** If known, please identify the percentage of homes and businesses in your area that have a smart electric meter connection.
- LG 1-18** If known, please identify the percentage of homes and businesses in your area that have a smart water meter connection.
- LG 1-19** Please provide any additional information that may be helpful to this investigation.