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Members of the Texas Senate Business & Commerce committee,

The deadly winter storms that slammed Texas last week impacted millions of lives and brought our energy grid to its knees. It is challenging to comprehend the full extent of our energy systems' failures and its consequences. This weather event exposed the deep, systemic issues within our energy infrastructure and the state's approach to providing energy to its residents.

The storm was a direct result of changing weather patterns due to the climate crisis, and the very energy sources fueling climate change failed us when they were most needed. Additionally, we must recognize that deregulation created the conditions that allowed for a failure of this magnitude. Any analysis of this issue must include the following:

- **Transparency and accountability from State representatives:** Texas state officials - Governor Greg Abbott, Lt. Governor Dan Patrick, Members of the Railroad Commission, and many more - have openly lied about the nature and extent of failures in our energy grid, pinning blame on alternative energy sources such as wind and solar. Elected officials must be transparent with the public about the deep failures of fossil fuel energy sources and how the deregulated system Texas legislators chose have created an environment where a disaster of this magnitude could take place.
- **People over profits:** We must restructure our state energy grid in a sustainable way that prioritizes the public good over energy profits. Texas should rejoin the national grid and power should be managed through public utilities that are accountable to the people they serve. Funds must also be invested to weatherize our systems to ensure it can handle the extreme weather conditions that will continue to assault Texas.
- **Transition toward 100% Renewable, Resilient Energy Systems:** As we rebuild, we can put people to work through jobs that help to ensure a more resilient future for our state and country. MWe can create millions of good union jobs in the process of transforming

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our energy infrastructure. Addressing climate change is essential to mitigating the impacts from future extreme storms like the one that hit Texas; we must do so by accelerating our transition away from our carbon-centric economy.

- **Prioritizing the most vulnerable communities:** This situation is untenable, especially for communities of color and working-class neighborhoods. These communities are unable to fully recover before the next man-made disaster due to a long history of environmental racism that has put them at greater risk of suffering the adverse impacts from disasters and with fewer resources to rebuild their lives. For too long, Texas decision-makers have treated them as expendable while giving corporations everything they want. We need leaders who are willing to accept the realities of climate change and take aggressive steps toward a more resilient, equitable and sustainable future.

To be clear, analysis alone will not facilitate the changes that are needed. We need leaders that have the courage to act. Our organization, Air Alliance Houston, asks that you approach your investigation into this issue with transparency and a willingness to not only analyze the root causes of these issues in their entirety but to also take bold and comprehensive action.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bakeyah Nelson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

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