

January 24, 2026

The Honorable Chris Wright
Secretary of Energy
United States Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585-1000

Re: Request for Emergency Order Under Section 202(c) of the Federal Power Act for Backup Generating Facilities

Dear Secretary Wright:

In response to your letter of January 22, 2026,¹ Electric Reliability Council of Texas, Inc. (“ERCOT”) respectfully requests that you issue an order under section 202(c) of the Federal Power Act authorizing ERCOT to direct the deployment of customer-owned backup generation facilities if needed to avoid or mitigate an Energy Emergency Alert (EEA) level 3 during the extreme winter weather event currently impacting Texas and other states.

ERCOT is the independent system operator designated by the Public Utility Commission of Texas to manage the operation and planning of the bulk power system that serves more than 27 million customers in the State of Texas. Under the framework established by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), ERCOT also serves as the Reliability Coordinator and Balancing Authority for the ERCOT region of Texas and is therefore responsible for overseeing the dispatch of generation to meet system demand at all times within the limits of the transmission system. In these roles, ERCOT also directs any actions that may be needed to avoid and mitigate emergency conditions that may arise from time to time.

Beginning today and extending over the next several days, Winter Storm Fern is expected to bring extremely cold temperatures and significant ice accumulations to much of the central and eastern United States, including the ERCOT region of Texas. This severely cold weather is expected to last through midday Tuesday. ERCOT’s latest forecasts indicate a projected demand of approximately 84,000 MW on Monday morning and approximately 81,000 MW on Tuesday morning, both exceeding ERCOT’s winter peak demand record of 80,560 set in February 2025. This extreme level of demand raises a significant risk of emergency conditions that could jeopardize electric reliability and public safety.

Allowing Reliability Coordinators and Balancing Authorities, including ERCOT, to direct customers with backup generation facilities to rely on power generated by those facilities rather than grid power under conditions of energy scarcity will help ERCOT avoid or mitigate the need to declare an EEA level 3, which would require firm load-shedding.

¹ Letter from Secretary of Energy Chris Wright to Reliability Coordinators and Balancing Authorities (Jan. 22, 2026), <https://www.energy.gov/documents/leveraging-backup-generation-facilities-during-energy-emergencies>.

ERCOT therefore requests that you issue an order, effective today, January 24, 2026, authorizing ERCOT to direct certain customers identified by the Department of Energy to ERCOT as having backup generation facilities to use those backup generation facilities instead of grid power during an Energy Emergency Alert (EEA) event only after ERCOT has deployed all available market services, except for frequency responsive services, but before any firm load interruption. ERCOT further requests that your order allow such use of backup generation notwithstanding any applicable environmental limitations under federal or state law. ERCOT requests that such order be entered as soon as possible today, January 24, 2026, and remain effective through 12:00 p.m. Central Standard Time (“CST”) on January 27, 2026.

ERCOT appreciates your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff if you require any additional information to act on this request.

Respectfully,

/s/ Pablo Vegas
Pablo Vegas
President and Chief Executive Officer
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