

State of Texas
House of Representatives



Charlie Geren

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Mr. Woody Rickerson
Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer
Electric Reliability Council of Texas
8000 Metropolis Drive, Building E, Suite 100
Austin, Texas 78744

Dear Mr. Rickerson:

As the author of House Bill 5066, which addressed the urgent need to extend transmission to the Permian Basin and areas of the state in which transmission capacity is insufficient, I am requesting additional information following your recent testimony before the Senate Business & Commerce Committee on the Electric Reliability Council of Texas' (ERCOT) development of a reliable transmission plan for our state. Your testimony raised several important points about ERCOT's reliability analyses, and the process that led to ERCOT's recommendation and the Public Utility Commission of Texas' (PUC) adoption of the Permian Basin Reliability Plan. In advance of the House State Affairs Committee's upcoming hearing on this topic, I respectfully request your written responses to the following questions:

- You testified that ERCOT builds its engineering models using metrics that include existing load, projected load, existing generation, and known future generation to identify reliability needs now over the next ten years. Please summarize the studies and analyses ERCOT performed to develop the reliability plans under House Bill 5066, and how ERCOT's assessment of the state's transmission needs has evolved since House Bill 5066 was implemented.
- You testified that ERCOT evaluated multiple load assumptions, including higher load growth based on information collected under House Bill 5066 (around 150 gigawatts) and a lower sensitivity analysis (around 120 gigawatts). According to your testimony, each scenario indicated a reliability need for the 765-kV transmission facilities by 2030. Please describe in greater detail the load data that ERCOT evaluated, including whether the need for 765-kV transmission lines depends upon projected data center development.
- You testified that ERCOT evaluated various transmission infrastructure options, including upgrades to existing 345-kV facilities, before recommending 765-kV transmission lines as the "optimal engineering option" for the Permian Basin Reliability Plan and the broader statewide Strategic Transmission Expansion Plan. Please describe the alternatives ERCOT evaluated and explain why ERCOT concluded that incremental upgrades to the existing transmission system would not be sufficient. In particular, please elaborate on your testimony that upgrading facilities would require taking existing transmission lines out of service, and explain the associated operational and reliability challenges.



- Please explain further your comments that the addition of thermal generation alone would not eliminate the need for the 765-kV transmission facilities.
- During your testimony, you briefly discussed transmission constraints in West Texas and other areas of the ERCOT system. You indicated that if load continues to grow in West Texas in particular, there may be periods in the near future when load there cannot be reliably served because the existing transmission infrastructure cannot import power into the region. Please explain the transmission constraints ERCOT has identified and the reliability impacts ERCOT anticipates.
- Finally, if one or more of the 765-kV transmission applications pending before the PUC were denied or delayed, what effect would that have on ERCOT's long-term transmission planning and its ability to serve forecasted load, including the projects advancing through ERCOT's Batch Zero interconnection process?

Thank you for your prompt response to these questions. I appreciate your continued work to ensure the reliability of the Texas electric grid.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charlie Geren", written in a cursive style.

Charlie Geren