



309 East 11th St., Suite 2 • Austin, Texas 78701 • 512.477.1155 • www.citizen.org

Date: April 8, 2025

To: Chairman Charles Schwertner and the Members of the Senate Committee on Business & Commerce.

CC: Sen. Phil King, Sen. César Blanco, Sen. Donna Campbell, Sen. Brandon Creighton, Sen. Nathan Johnson, Sen. Lois W. Kolkhorst, Sen. José Menéndez, Sen. Mayes Middleton, Sen. Robert Nichols, Sen. Judith Zaffirini
Via hand delivery and by email.

From: Kamil Cook (kcook@citizen.org) and Adrian Shelley (ashelley@citizen.org), Public Citizen, 512-477-1155

Re: **SB 2717 - Public Citizen testimony in support**

Dear Chairman Schwertner and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of 30,000 members and supporters in Texas, Public Citizen appreciates the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2717 relating to the creation of the Texas Energy Efficiency Council. We are in support of this bill because energy efficiency quickly and cheaply solves some of the most pressing issues our grid faces: the need to slow demand growth and to ensure that Texans are comfortable during bouts of extreme weather.

This bill will help Texans save money.

Energy efficiency upgrades help regular Texans save money. Whether it is replacing inefficient lightbulbs with LED's, replacing an old refrigerator with a newer one, or using a more efficient dishwasher, Texans can save hundreds to thousands of dollars in electricity bills. Simply replacing resistance heating with energy-efficient heat pumps can save the average Texan \$300 on their utility bill annually, according to the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE).¹ Homes with energy efficient appliances can be cooled or heated with less energy, which saves people money—especially those that are most vulnerable, like low-income communities and communities of color.

Energy efficiency upgrades and updated building codes can improve the filtration of a building which reduces the internal circulation of pollen and dust. This improves internal air quality, thus improving health outcomes and reducing the cost of hospital visits for Texans.

¹ See <https://www.aceee.org/press-release/2024/11/heat-pumps-would-save-many-texas-households-300-annually>



309 East 11th St., Suite 2 • Austin, Texas 78701 • 512.477.1155 • www.citizen.org

Energy efficient homes help people survive power outages.

One energy efficiency strategy, weatherization, provides public safety benefits as well. Weatherization in homes includes insulation, double-pane windows, weather stripping around doors, windows, and plumbing, and optimizing HVAC equipment. These energy efficient investments make a home more comfortable and safer.

Some power outages in Texas are caused by extreme weather events such as winter storms. When the electricity goes out at home, energy efficiency upgrades to the building envelope help make a home feel comfortable and remain at a livable temperature for longer.² This is a benefit that the Texas Energy Fund and other generation-only strategies cannot deliver. Texans are currently losing their lives to both extreme heat and cold when left without power.³ The Texas Energy Efficiency Council created by SB 2717 could help address this serious problem.

Texas needs stronger energy efficiency goals.

Of the states with energy efficiency goals, Texas ranks near the bottom.⁴ Years of weak goals means Texas has a significant opportunity with comparably little investment. Demand reduction strategies are cheaper than the gas investment attempted by the Texas Energy Fund. This is because the cheapest megawatt of electricity is the one that you don't buy.

Some projections have demand in ERCOT *tripling* by 2039.⁵ After nearly two years, the Texas Energy Fund hasn't generated any electricity for Texas. Cost concerns and supply chain constraints have delayed new gas generation. Gas turbine manufacturing has not increased in response to load growth. Every option should be on the table for reducing load, and energy efficiency is one of the cheapest and fastest ways to do that.

According to one ACEEE study, with \$1.6 billion of investment in high-efficiency heat pumps total over 15 years, ERCOT could see a 12 gigawatt winter peak demand reduction and savings of over \$15 billion. This is the equivalent of 40 new 300MW gas plants.⁶ This would offer massive savings and put more dollars into the pockets of Texans.

Please support SB 2717 and create the Texas Energy Efficiency Council.

² See <https://www.urbangreencouncil.org/baby-its-cold-inside/>

³ See <https://harcresearch.org/news/home-is-where-the-resilience-is-increased-home-weatherization-and-energy-efficiency-are-key-to-a-more-resilient-future-for-all-texans/>

⁴ See <https://www.aceee.org/state-policy/scorecard>

⁵ See https://www.ercot.com/files/docs/2025/01/24/2024_LTSA_Review_Jan2025_v1.0.pdf

⁶ See https://www.aceee.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/transforming_texas_-_how_heat_pumps_can_replace_electric_resistance_heat_reducing_costs_and_winter_power_peaks.pdf