

ANGIE CHEN BUTTON



The State of Texas
House of Representatives



February 4, 2011

Dear Friend:

Winter Storm

I hope everyone has managed to stay safe during the winter storm and that the worst of it is behind us. We have had several calls to our office concerning the rolling blackouts that took place across the state. According to Brian Lloyd, Executive Director of the Public Utility Commission of Texas:

[Tuesday night and through Wednesday afternoon], a large number of power plants in the Electric Reliability Council of Texas region (ERCOT) encountered issues predominately related to the cold weather. Some of these plants were on-line and tripped off due to equipment malfunctions. Others could not start because critical components were frozen. Others have encountered issues with the deliverability of natural gas fuel supplies. In total, more than 50 generation units, comprising more than 7,000 megawatts of capacity could not produce power. These outages occurred all around the state, and with all types of power plant owners; private, municipally owned utilities, and electric cooperative.

The loss of these plants, combined with the extremely cold weather that lead to record winter consumption of electricity, led to the condition that the supply of electricity could not keep up with demand, leading to the need for rolling outages in order to keep the whole grid from collapsing. El Paso Electric, which is outside ERCOT, encountered very similar problems and also had rolling outages.

While our attention is focused on the immediate emergency, the PUC will be conducting a complete review of this event once things are back to normal. We will be thoroughly reviewing ERCOT's actions, including the lack of advanced warning of the rolling outages, as well as the actions of all the power plant owners in order to ascertain why an unprecedented number of power plants appear to have been unprepared for the winter weather. "

Voter Integrity

This week I signed on as a co-author of H.B. 250. This bill is the House Companion to the Voter-ID legislation that passed last week in the Senate. The integrity of our voting system is of the utmost importance. An example of this can be seen in the contested seat for HD 48. This race was originally called for Rep. Donna Howard with a 12 vote margin. Her challenger, Dan Neil, claims that some of the votes cast for Rep. Howard should not have been counted. With a race this close, it shows how every vote counts and how the integrity of our system must be protected.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Bruce Sherbet for his 35-years of work in county government. Bruce recently resigned as the Dallas County Elections Administrator. I have always found Bruce to be a fair and honest public servant who served the public well regardless of political affiliation. His service to our county will be missed.

The State Budget

The Senate has already made committee assignments and the Senate Committee on Finance held hearings this week. Although extensive work on the budget has already taken place in the House, official committee assignments will not be made until next week. As soon as the assignments are made, the House Appropriations committee will start holding official hearings on the proposed budget that was laid out last month.

Friendly Faces from Home

I was happy to see some friendly faces from the district visit the capitol this week, including Steve Harris who came down from Richardson and visited with me at the National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors (NAIFA) Legislative briefing. Below are some photos of other constituents who made the trip to Austin to share information about issues that are important to them.



Representative Button with nurses from the Coalition for Advanced Practice Nurses, including constituents Sara Cahill, Barbara Gray, and Jennifer Pemberton (three ladies to the right of Representative Button).



Representative Button with Mariella Alvarado, Counselor at Dover Elementary School in Richardson, to her right, and Brona Hudson, Principal of Dover Elementary, to her left. Dover Elementary was recognized by the TEA as a 2010 Blue-Ribbon School. Representative Button prepared a resolution, HR 134, in honor of this wonderful achievement. I was also pleased to have RISD Board member Karen Ellis drop by the office.

General Land Office Save Texas History Essay Contest

The Texas General Land Office is holding a "Save Texas History Texas Travels" essay contest for Texas fourth and seventh graders. Public, private, and home schooled students can participate. Students can write an essay about a Texas town with historical significance or write an essay as if they were exploring early Texas for settlement. The essays will be judged on originality, organization, grammar, and accuracy. Eleven finalists and two grand finalists will be selected from each grade. The grand finalists will receive a two-day vacation in San Antonio, including flight, accommodations, and tickets for attractions. Winners and finalists will also be featured on the Save Texas History web site. The essays must be received by March 4, 2011. For more information on this essay contest visit www.savetexashistory.org.

It is a pleasure to serve as your State Representative. Please continue to communicate your views on issues that are important to you.

Sincerely,

Angie Chen Button

If you would like to be added or removed from this mailing, please e-mail
District12.Button@house.state.tx.us.