



Friends,

We are emerging from a week unlike any other in Texas. This storm packed a powerful punch as all of Texas' 254 counties were substantially and severely impacted. In fact, if early reports are true, when all is said and done this will end up being the costliest natural disaster in the history of our state, surpassing even Hurricane Harvey. Without question, lives and livelihoods have been turned upside down.

Many of you who are reading this message were without power for days. Many are now dealing with substantial repairs to your homes and places of business. The process of rebuilding and restoring, like this past week, will not be easy.

But I promise you this: We're going to get through it. And we're going to do so together.

As we begin to emerge from the storm and look to the coming days, I and my team are laser focused on three important fronts, and I want to detail those in this message.

(1) Serving You — Helping to Rebuild and Restore

(2) Fighting Against Energy Rate Hikes

(3) Advocating For Answers and Solutions

SERVING YOU

Right now, our immediate focus is on serving you. It's the best and most important part of my job as your State Representative. And just as we have done this past week, I and my team are happy and eager to come alongside of you and to offer whatever help, assistance and resources we possibly can to meet you at the point of your need.

Here are a few resources that could help you in the immediate days:

For a warming center near you, visit: <https://tdem.texas.gov/warming-center/>.

For food or bottled water assistance, visit: <https://ntfb.org/our-programs/get-food-assistance/>. This link will connect you with some incredible resources in our area, like Minnie's Food Pantry and Allen Community Outreach, among others.

For help with recovery and repairs, including info on insurance claims, tips to avoid scams and fraud, and how to report price gouging, visit: <https://www.tdi.texas.gov/consumer/storms/recoverytips.html>.

For those who might need a temporary place to stay, Expedia has set up a great Emergency Accommodations Portal with real-time information on available accommodations in our area. You can access that portal by visiting here: <https://www.expedia.com/lp/texas>.

Of course, I want to reiterate that I and my staff are here - always a phone call or e-mail away - to answer questions and provide assistance. And if we aren't able to directly assist or answer your question, we'll help you find someone who can.

FIGHTING AGAINST ENERGY RATE HIKES

Like you, I am increasingly concerned about reports of unreasonable and wrongful energy rate hikes as a result of this storm. I hear you and, to the extent I am able, I am fighting against those rate hikes on your behalf.

Just this morning I wrote a strong letter to the Public Utility Commission to express my disagreement with the decision of the PUC to authorize and allow ERCOT to permit rate hikes on Texans. As I stated in my letter, such a decision is not only misguided and wrong, it is shockingly tone-deaf and its timing could not be worse. Further, such an order is unnecessary and could have lasting negative effects on our state's economy.

This has been an extremely challenging year. Even before this week, many of you were already living paycheck to paycheck, struggling to pay your utility bills and now many more are struggling to repair the substantial damage to your own homes. Your immediate concerns, rightfully so, are feeding your families, restoring your livelihoods and rebuilding your lives. Instead of adding to those burdens, we must do everything we can to fight for you, to safeguard your hard-earned paychecks, and to give you the tools and resources you need to move forward.

I am pleased that Governor Abbott convened a meeting of lawmakers in Austin this afternoon to discuss this issue and to deliberate on how we can avoid unreasonable rate hikes on you and all Texans. While I am with you in the District today and will not be present at that meeting, I have communicated my concerns directly to the Governor's office and to my fellow legislators and I am confident and expectant we can make progress on your behalf in the coming days.

I will keep you posted accordingly and I'd ask that you continue to do the same, providing me information and feedback as you engage and communicate with your own energy providers in the days ahead.

ADVOCATING FOR ANSWERS AND SOLUTIONS

Tomorrow I will return to the Capitol and the process of getting answers and finding solutions will begin in earnest. There are tough questions that we need answers to: Why did this happen? What could we have done to better prepare? Who and what responsible entities and individuals must be held to account? How could we have more effectively communicated to the citizens of Texas - both before and during the storm - and equipped you to make informed decisions for your family?

As I mentioned in my message to you the other day, this process must not be political or personal. And it cannot become a futile exercise of finger-pointing or bureaucratic hot-potato. Instead, we must pursue honest answers and fight for real solutions, making the necessary investments and instituting the right policy reforms to ensure this never happens again in the State of Texas.

To aid in that important effort, I need to continue to hear from you and partner with me as I advocate on your behalf. Specifically, I want to offer you the opportunity to share your story, your feedback, your concerns, ideas and questions, in writing, to be entered in to the official record as we begin our legislative deliberations.

If you're interested in doing so, please send me an e-mail to my official account at jeff.leach@house.texas.gov. All e-mails received will be personally reviewed by me and my staff. And all e-mails received by midnight this Wednesday, February 24th, will be entered in to the record at the initial joint House hearing that will take place at the Capitol this Thursday.

As always, hearing from you is crucial as I continue to be your voice in the Texas House of Representatives. I invite, welcome and encourage you to do so.

IN CLOSING...

Texans are uniquely compassionate and kind and are fiercely resilient and tough. And as we always do in times of trial and crisis, we come together and emerge stronger. Yes, this week was cold and dark. And yes, the coming days will see new challenges of their own.

But I believe in you. I believe in us. And I believe a stronger, safer, brighter and more prosperous Texas, like the promise of a warm spring, is just on the horizon.

Your Friend and Advocate,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Leach". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jeff" and last name "Leach" clearly legible.

Jeff Leach

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