

Good morning, commissioners. My name is Kamil Cook, and I work with Public Citizen's Texas Office. I'm here to speak about Hurricane Beryl and CenterPoint.

What's been happening in Houston since Monday morning has been an absolute disaster, a disaster that could have been avoided. CenterPoint had days to prepare for Beryl's approach and even before that months and years of evidence of weak resiliency in their infrastructure.

With each new storm Texans are losing more and more confidence in CenterPoint. It seems like every year there is another storm that wreaks more havoc on the city than the last storm. I mean, at this point it is becoming a monthly thing. People are still recovering from the thunderstorms that knocked out power in May. The third-largest city in the country should not be plagued by resiliency issues like this.

What may be the most reprehensible, though, is the lack of communication with the many Texans who rely on CenterPoint to live. I get it. It is difficult to fully weatherize every wire and pole in Houston, but the kind of communication we've seen has been too low. Seventy-two social media posts do not replace a working outage map.

Why hadn't it been up on Monday? And why hadn't it been up before this storm? This lack of accountability to the people for something as pivotal to modern American life as electricity is a shame and the weakest and most vulnerable in our society will pay for this lack of accountability with their lives.

Y'all, commissioners, exist to protect the weakest and most vulnerable Texans from utility incompetence. Y'all have the power to ensure that reliability and resiliency standards are upheld, advanced, and ready. Y'all can ensure that homes in Texas are more energy efficient, that wires and poles in Sugar Land and Manchester are more resilient, and that CenterPoint is communicating to Texans in a clear and responsible way. Chairman Gleeson and all of y'all, I appreciate y'all's comments on the importance of communication.

I want to end by asking one question: If CenterPoint is not beholden to the public, to the average Texan seeking a better life, who is it beholden to? Thank you.