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**Concerned About Extreme Weather and the Power Grid,
Texas Voters Show Increasing Support for Future “Energy Expansion”**

One year after a devastating winter storm, new poll shows support for a wide-ranging approach to reliability and preparedness – and for using new federal funds to achieve it

[AUSTIN, TX, February 16, 2022] A year after Winter Storm Uri knocked out electricity and water across Texas, a new poll shows most voters share deep concerns about extreme weather and support an expanded approach to the state’s energy future and infrastructure challenges.

The fourth Texas Voter Poll, conducted by Texas 2036 shortly before the recent winter storm in which the state largely avoided blackouts and water outages, reflected significant concerns about the state’s energy infrastructure and Texas’ ability to adapt to changing future conditions.

The poll also showed widespread support for Texas’ energy leadership and a strong desire to extend this legacy into the 21st century through new forms of advanced energy generation, in part by investing federal infrastructure and COVID relief funding.

Among registered Texas voters:

- **53% are extremely or very concerned — and an additional 24% described themselves as somewhat concerned — about the extreme weather trends Texas faces.** Texas’ state climatologist, based at Texas A&M University, has projected that Texas will experience more 100-degree days, more extreme rainfall, more urban flooding, greater hurricane intensity and increased drought severity by 2036. 65% of Republican voters, 73% of Independent voters and 94% of Democratic voters expressed concern about these trends.
- **65% are very or extremely concerned — and another 23% are somewhat concerned — that given current trends, Texas will not be able to meet a significant amount of its future water needs, meaning some communities may lose access to water in an extreme drought.** This concern was shared by 82% of Republican voters, 87% of Independent voters and 95% of Democratic voters. In the aggregate, nearly nine out of every ten Texas voters are concerned about Texans’ access to water in the future.

- **Only 10% described themselves as “very confident” in Texas’ electric grid, while 24% said they were “not that confident” and 25% said they were “not at all confident.”**
- **And half of voters (51%) described themselves as extremely or very concerned that the state might not apply for federal infrastructure funds and, as a result, would fall behind other states in advanced energy technologies such as hydrogen, energy storage and carbon capture.** Another 24% are somewhat concerned about this possibility. Further, 72% — including 65% of Republicans, 71% of Independents and 81% of Democrats — agreed that Texas must accept and maximize federal infrastructure and COVID relief funding while ensuring the funds are spent wisely.

“No one who endured last year’s storm will ever forget it. It was much more than a major disruption, as lives were lost and others were put in jeopardy. It’s a hard, painful reminder to Texans that extreme weather increasingly threatens us all,” said A.J. Rodriguez, executive vice president of Texas 2036. “Texans want their leaders to prepare for the future — whatever it’s likely to bring. Those preparations should be based on data, sound science and strategies that keep all the options on the table. State leaders must use all available funding, including federal dollars, to make them happen.”

More than half (53%) of voters — including 50% of Republicans and 63% of Democrats — said they are willing to spend more to fortify the electric grid against extreme weather events. In reviewing the open-ended response, the median response of Texas voters was that they would spend about \$10 more per month to prepare the state’s infrastructure for extreme weather events. The partisan median breakdown showed Republican voters willing to spend \$5 more per month and Democratic voters \$15 more.

“Our state experienced a dozen extreme weather events last year. They cost Texas about \$26.3 billion and wreaked havoc on the lives of millions of Texans,” said Rob Orr, senior policy advisor at Texas 2036. “These are shared experiences, and they clearly left Texans more concerned about the future. Texans want energy and water infrastructure that is more reliable and better prepared for extreme weather.”

In addition, 72% of Texas voters believe the state should lead the nation in adopting new, cleaner forms of energy that grow the economy, create jobs and improve air quality — especially given the historic role that energy has played in our state’s history.

“Texans want to be the world leader on energy — that hasn’t changed, and it never will,” said Jeremy Mazur, senior policy advisor for Texas 2036. “But Texans know that the definition of leadership has expanded in the 21st century. It now means continuing to lead on oil and gas and nuclear power, certainly, but also on newer strategies such as

renewable and clean energy, hydrogen and geothermal power, carbon capture and technologies that are still in the lab.”

The Texas Voter Poll surveyed 1,001 registered voters between Jan. 19–26, 2022, about their attitudes regarding the present and future of Texas and their concerns about issues facing the state. It has a margin of error of $\pm 3.1\%$. The interviews were conducted via cell phones (44%), landline calls (21%) and online contacts (34%).

The survey covered a wide range of policy issues, including education and workforce, the state economy, crime and health care. To learn more, see <https://texas2036.org/poll/>. For more on the extreme weather trends mentioned above, see <https://texas2036.org/weather/>.

About Texas 2036

Texas 2036 is a nonprofit organization building long-term, data-driven strategies to secure Texas’ prosperity through our state’s bicentennial and beyond. We offer non-partisan ideas and modern solutions that are grounded in research and data on issues that matter most to all Texans. For more information, visit www.texas2036.org.

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