

Submitter: Ally Harris

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure: HB2990

My name is Ally Harris and I lived in Portland for a decade, moved to Texas for three years to support my partner in grad school, and now I am due back in Portland in a few weeks. I want to write about my experience living in small-town San Marcos, TX during Winter Storm Uri in 2021. During that time, my house lost power for 4 days, which may not seem that long, except our thermostat read 45 degrees and kept going lower and lower as the power continued to be out. It was so cold we spent most of our days buried under blankets and we could see our breath as our faces peeked out of the covers. We were so cold we felt sluggish and couldn't do much of anything. We were afraid for our cat, who is only eight pounds and didn't like to cuddle at the time. When we were extremely cold, we would put her in her carrier, take her to the car, and drive around aimlessly with the heat on. When we drove around, nothing was open except Burger King and gas stations where the lines were around the block. Luckily we are Portlanders at heart, so we were able to bring our camp stuff out and make meals with our camp equipment by the light of our headlights. Not everyone was so lucky as us. While this did not happen to me while living in Portland, I never ever want to experience something like this again and I thank everything that I had a car so that we had short periods to warm ourselves up. I think it's important for warming shelters to exist in close proximity of communities, especially where people may not be able to afford cars or other resources that will keep them warm and healthy. Let us please not be like Texas.