



April 14, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500

President Biden,

I am writing to follow up on my letter of Feb. 12, 2021. I did not anticipate that, within days of that letter, much of the Southern and Midwestern U.S. would be caught in the throes of a winter storm, starkly illuminating some of the concerns I expressed.

America is transfixed by the February events in Texas and the surrounding region. The prospect of rolling electricity blackouts shutting off heat and light when it is extremely cold outside understandably is unsettling to the American people. The events were very unsettling to me because I have spent most of my career in the electricity industry planning ways to prevent and mitigate such devastating impacts to the people and businesses who rely on power to be available when it is most needed.

What Texas experienced, I believe, was just a glimpse of a world without conventional resources, including natural gas, coal or nuclear. These resources are dispatchable or controllable. The electric grid and millions of people were at the mercy of the weather.

Texas' experience highlights the necessity of having a diverse mix of resources to equip grid operators with tools necessary to meet the grid's operational needs at all hours of the day and night, in all seasons of the year. Although no resource type operated 100 percent as expected, it is clear we saw a glimpse of operational challenges that can result if those grid operators do not have sufficient available generation resources that can be turned on when needed or ramped up and down when less-flexible resources are not available.

The Biden administration has made it clear that reducing carbon emissions from fossil plants is a central priority. You campaigned on a platform of decarbonizing the electric power industry by 2035. And, it is clear, the administration is focused on reducing carbon by transitioning to wind and solar resources.

As the leader of an electric cooperative responsible for providing the electricity that heats homes, lights offices and powers manufacturing and much more for 1.1 million Kentucky residents, I am worried

about a one-dimensional plan that does not adequately address reliability and cost. I believe we must provide reliable electric service, especially when lives will be at risk if we do not. I also believe we must take into account the cost of power for homes, schools, factories, businesses and others that depend on it.

America will transition to a low-carbon economy. I have no doubt of that. My cooperative is part of that transition, and we have a plan to get there. For the vast majority of American residents, the key issues are how quickly that transition will take place and how reliability and cost will be impacted.

For EKPC, quickly abandoning conventional power plants—plants that are dependable, cost-effective, well-maintained and environmentally compliant—during the transition to a low-carbon future will result in an electric grid that is much less reliable, and a grid that cannot cope when extended extreme temperatures drive higher energy use for heating and cooling. We need conventional generation to enable the transition without sacrificing reliability. Otherwise, our region could experience a scenario very similar to the one that played out in Southern and Midwestern U.S. in February.

In the early morning hours of Feb. 15, ERCOT came within minutes of experiencing major, irreversible damage to their electric grid. If grid operators had not acted quickly to shut off power temporarily for some Texans, then the damage to the grid may have left many more millions without power for weeks or even months afterward. Grid operators were in that predicament because they were out of options; there were no more resources to turn to, whether renewable, fossil or nuclear.

Electricity is no longer a luxury; it is a necessity. When temperatures plunge and people depend on electricity for heat, reliability is vitally important. In Texas, millions of people lost power for days. More than 80 deaths have been attributed to the winter storm and bitter cold, and millions of Americans experienced pain and suffering of monumental proportions.

I've spent a career working hard to prevent the type of situation that occurred in Texas. Like thousands of energy industry professionals, I understand the capabilities and limitations of various generating resources. With that knowledge, we plan and implement a portfolio of resources that we believe will generate power every moment of every day, even under conditions of extreme temperatures and weather. Try as we might, we cannot control when or whether the wind blows or the sun shines. Wind and solar are important contributors to a low-carbon future, but we cannot rely on them solely to achieve a reliable electric grid.

Utility-scale battery technology can mitigate the uncertainty to a limited extent. Policy-makers must understand and their planning must account for the fact that currently available battery technology is capable of providing just a few hours of energy in limited geographic areas. In Texas, it is simply not realistic to expect that utility batteries could have supplied millions of homes for several days; out of 86,000 megawatts (MW) of generation capacity (summer), ERCOT had just 225 MW of battery storage. Battery technology is advancing rapidly, but we cannot plan an electric grid based on technology that does not exist and, perhaps, will not exist for decades.

I suspect it will take months, maybe years, to sort out exactly what happened in Texas and why. But, for me, one over-riding lesson is clear as day—grid operators must have options, whether natural gas, coal,

nuclear, wind, solar, hydro, distributed generation, demand response, or energy storage. When the chips are down, all of those are important.

Texas' experience in February and California's experience last summer, which I detailed in my February letter, show that aggressively regulating conventional generation into retirement does not produce a resilient, reliable electric grid. Until America has good answers for how we will back up renewables, it is simply irresponsible to continue taking conventional plants out of service.

I again urge you to carefully consider how electric service reliability will be impacted as America moves to an electric grid increasingly dominated by renewable resources. This is an opportunity to prudently consider and establish policies that integrate renewable energy while protecting reliability. This winter has provided an instructive glimpse at the consequences—including pain, suffering and high costs Americans will face—if we do not get this right.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony 'Tony' Campbell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anthony "Tony" Campbell  
President & CEO

CC: U.S. Energy Cabinet Secretary Jennifer Granholm  
FERC Chairman Richard Glick  
Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell  
Senator Rand Paul  
Senator Joseph Manchin  
Congressman Andy Barr  
Congressman Hal Rogers  
Congressman Brett Guthrie  
Congressman Thomas Massie  
Congressman James Comer  
Congressman John Yarmuth  
Governor Andy Beshear  
Kentucky Senate President Robert Stivers  
Kentucky Energy and Environment Secretary Rebecca Goodman  
Kentucky PSC Chairman Michael Schmitt  
Kentucky PSC Vice-chairman Kent Chandler  
Kentucky PSC Commissioner Talina Mathews