

David L. Buhler
Council Member-District Six

SALT LAKE CITY CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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Mr. Richard Campbell, Chair
Ms. Constance White, Commissioner
Mr. Ted Boyer, Commissioner
Public Service Commission
P.O. Box 45585
Salt Lake City, Utah 84145-0585

Dear Ric, Connie and Ted:

I heard on the radio this morning that the Public Service Commission is going to look into the recent power outage that effected many residents of Salt Lake City and surrounding communities. I am writing to encourage you to do so. While the immediate cause was clearly weather related, it is fair to consider what steps can or should be taken to guard against such failures, and how Utah Power responded to their customers. The question has been raised as to whether or not there has been sufficient re-investment in infrastructure, and to what degree, if any, this was an infrastructure issue.

The storm that occurred Thursday and Friday December 25 and 26 was unusual in its intensity. And yet, particularly when we are not suffering a drought, snow storms are fairly common occurrences in Utah. Power outages following snow storms also seem to be a fairly regular occurrence. Is there nothing that can be done to prevent or minimize the extent of power failures as a result of snow storms? Are customers who have life-safety medical issues identified and given priority? The costs of prevention may be much less than the costs incurred by customers when power is interrupted, particularly for periods longer than 24 hours. Not to mention the costs of restoring power, including overtime, bringing in crews from out of state, etc.

I have heard from a number of constituents who experienced power outages, as I did personally, for nearly 72 hours. Some people were without power for even longer than that. There is concern that there is no way to reach anyone locally to discuss power outages, and that when an outage is reported it is not always recorded in their system. I had the experience personally of calling in our outage at 4:30 a.m. Friday morning, only to be told by a neighbor several hours later that when she called in and reached a "live person" she was told that they had no record of our situation. Apparently this was a fairly common experience. I have requested and expect to receive a full and detailed briefing from Utah Power on the outages that affected my constituents. And yet I recognize that

this is a matter over which local governments have little direct responsibility or control. I know that you, as the Public Service Commission, take very seriously your responsibility to ensure that Utahns receive quality, reliable, utility service at a fair price. I encourage you to make this issue a priority, and would appreciate hearing from you regarding the results of your inquiry.

Thank you for your continued service to the people of Utah.

Sincerely,



David L. Buhler
Salt Lake City Council Member
District Six

DLB/lw

cc: Mayor Anderson
City Council Members
Klare Bachman, Utah Department of Commerce
Julie Orchard, Public Service Commission
Bill Landels, PacifiCorp
Gina Creeze, Utah Power