

February 15, 2011

Chairman Carona and honorable members of the Senate Committee on Business and Commerce,

I was at Parkland Memorial Hospital when the rolling blackout occurred. Parkland was on "code yellow" Level 2 because of staffing concerns; however, the lack of sufficient notification pushed Parkland to Level 3. At Level 3, operating rooms and even patient transfers from other trauma centers that were emergencies, not elective, were shut down.

Parkland has a large capacity on our diesel generators, but they weren't up when the blackouts began because ERCOT gave insufficient notice. Even with a 30 minute notification, Parkland could have avoided the escalation of disaster codes and the down time in the operating rooms and laboratories.

As a result of this, Parkland made the decision to go to generators preemptively during last week's cold snap several hours before ERCOT's projected peak demand time window. I am concerned both by the decision to blackout our hospitals and with the lack of warning. Communication must be improved before this happens again and hospitals should not be included in the blackouts.

Sincerely,

Clay Lewis Jenkins  
Dallas County Judge