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U.S. NEWS

Texas power grid president and CEO fired for winter storm outages

By **JOSEPH WILKINSON**
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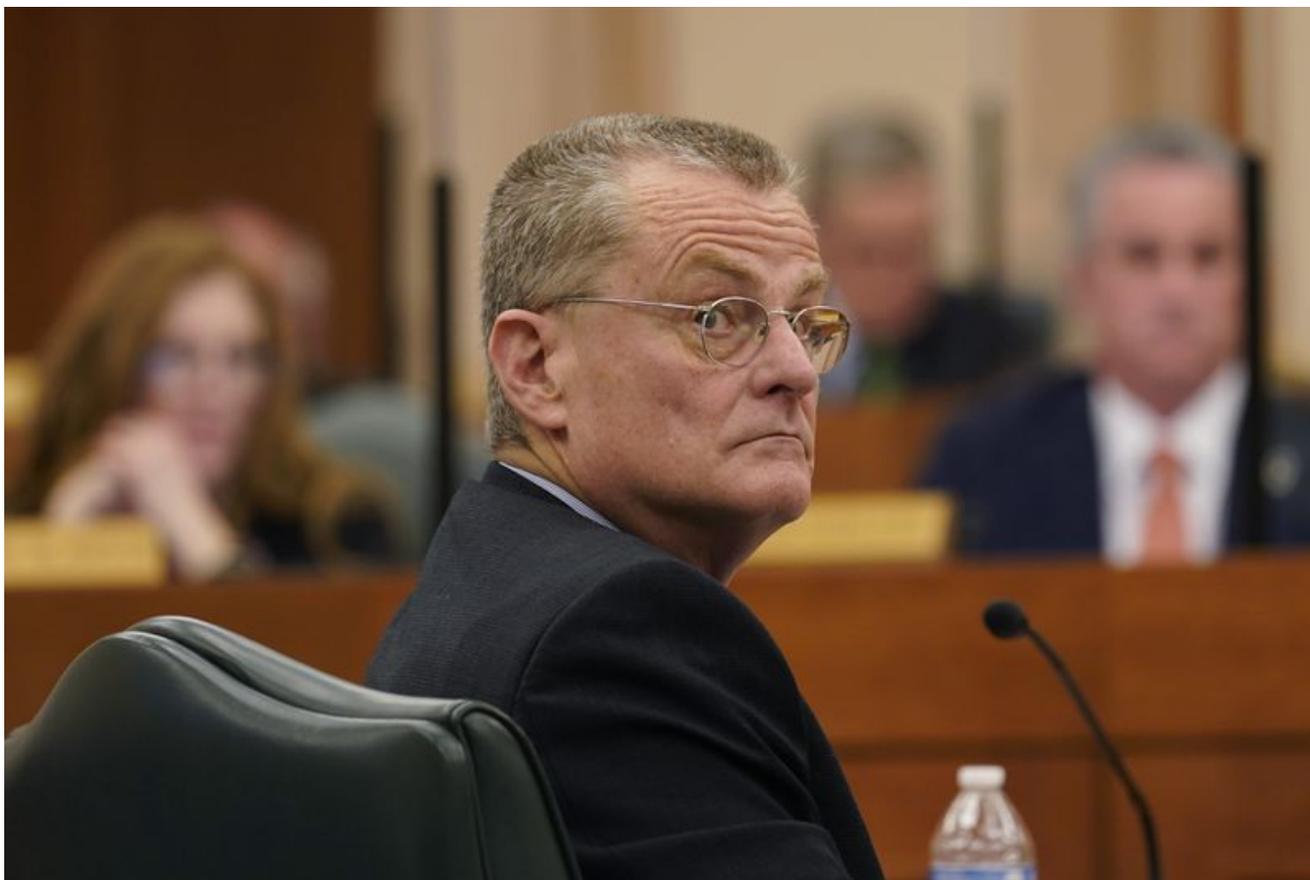
It's a cold world.

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The leader of the Electric Reliability Council of Texas was fired Wednesday night, weeks after much of the state lost power during a winter storm.

ERCOT's board of directors gave President and CEO Bill Magness a 60-day termination notice, Houston CBS affiliate KHOU [reported](#). The board will immediately begin searching for Magness' replacement.

More than 50 deaths have been linked to the storm, which [devastated](#) the unprepared state, knocking out power and water for millions of people beginning Valentine's Day. Texas is the only state in the lower 48 with a power grid largely disconnected from the rest of the country.



Bill Magness, president and CEO of the Electric Reliability Council of Texas, testifies Feb. 25 in Austin as the Committees on State Affairs and Energy Resources hold a joint public hearing to consider the factors that led to statewide electrical blackouts. (Eric Gay/AP)

Five members of ERCOT's board of directors [resigned](#) a week after the storm. Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick called for Magness' resignation Monday, the Texas Tribune [reported](#).

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Patrick, Magness and Gov. Greg Abbott have been among the Texas leaders passing the buck for the state's disastrous response to less than a foot of snow. ERCOT was forced to order controlled blackouts beginning Feb. 15 to keep the entire grid from collapsing.

A 1990 report from the Public Utilities Commission of Texas pointed out several problems with Texas' power grid that could be exposed in a winter storm. Three decades later, those problems became deadly.

"When the person in charge says, 'Oh, by the way, you need to winterize your pipes,' you should actually do that," energy expert Robert McCullough said. "The word stupid comes to mind."

Public Utilities Commission chair DeAnn Walker resigned Monday and was replaced Wednesday by Arthur D'Andrea, Austin NBC affiliate KVUE [reported](#). The PUC oversees ERCOT.

Joseph Wilkinson is a breaking news reporter at the New York Daily News. He is from Pittsburgh and was previously an intern at Sports Illustrated.

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