

Our mission is to serve Texas by our stewardship of natural resources and the environment, our concern for personal and community safety, and our support of enhanced development and economic vitality for the benefit of Texans.

RRC Response to Winter Storm Heather

The new year started with extremely cold weather from Winter Storm Heather, which brought prolonged sub-freezing temperatures across the state. Thanks to the reforms passed by the legislature and implemented by the Railroad Commission, the numbers show that there was ample natural gas supply to help the state's electricity supply chain and keep Texans safe.

The RRC's mission during weather emergencies is to ensure gas supply flows for home heating and the Texas electricity grid to protect Texans. During the recent freeze, the gas supply performed as expected, and no major disruptions were reported throughout the production process, pipeline transportation system, or underground gas storage - all key components to the gas supply chain. Any production fluctuations were within normal operational range.

Beginning in early December, Critical Infrastructure Division inspectors spread across the state to ensure natural gas facilities on the state's electricity supply chain map were weatherized and in compliance with RRC's weatherization rules. Prior to the winter storm's arrival, all of what are known as Tier One facilities had already been inspected, in addition to ongoing inspections of other facilities on the map. Tier One facilities are gas processing plants, underground gas storage facilities, pipelines that directly connect to electricity generation plants, and oil and gas leases that produce more than 5 million cubic feet of gas per day.

Another important layer in preparing for harsh weather is the amount of natural gas in underground storage in Texas. This is gas that can be utilized in case it's needed during an emergency. At the end of November, which was the typical end of the injection season for winter, there was approximately 488.8 billion cubic feet of gas in storage, a five percent increase compared to the end of November 2022 and the highest amount in six years. The infrastructure for gas storage and withdrawal capacity has grown significantly in recent years, which is a boon to protecting residents in a growing state.

Before and during Winter Storm Heather the RRC was in contact with operators and partner agencies such as the Public Utility Commission, ERCOT and TxDOT to help fix any spot issues that occurred during the freeze, from clearing iced roads to restoring localized power outages at some facilities.

