

TRII: What TPPF Gets Wrong on 765-kV, Time and Again

Explaining Texas transmission needs and correcting the record on two Texas Public Policy Foundation papers

AUSTIN, TX, UNITED STATES, May 28, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Texans for Responsible Infrastructure Investment](#) (TRII) today released a fact-check of two recent [Texas Public Policy Foundation](#) (TPPF) papers on transmission policy: a January 2026 paper, "The Explosion of Transmission Costs in ERCOT," and a May 2026 brief on the Texas 765-kilovolt (kV) project. Read together, the two papers recycle the same prescription — delay, reconsider, modify — applied to the Permian Basin Reliability Plan and Strategic Transmission Expansion Plan (STEP) that ERCOT, and the Public Utility Commission (PUCT) have already approved.

"TPPF has now published two papers in five months that describe a Texas that does not exist: A Texas where the alternatives have not been examined, where a 305-to-3 legislative mandate is somehow a runaway bureaucratic program, and oblivious to the critical need for new transmission to the Permian Basin," said Bill Lauderback, Executive Chair of TRII. "The public record refutes all of that. Texans deserve a fact-based conversation about the grid that powers their lives — not a recycled prescription to delay, reconsider, and modify."

Mischaracterizing the real drivers of demand. Permian oil and gas activity is the primary driver of the first 765 kV transmission lines under review at the PUCT, not data centers or renewables export. The Permian Basin has averaged 11 percent annual peak demand growth for a decade — observed, not forecast — and the Permian Basin Reliability Plan attributes more than half of the near-term need for new transmission to oil and gas. Pump jacks, compression, water-handling, and electrification are filling up the existing 345-kV system and the ability to grow energy



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*Bill Lauderback, Executive
Chair of TRII*

production without new transmission lines importing power to the region is increasingly limited. Make no mistake — even without a single new data center, Texas would still need the Permian Basin Reliability Plan’s major new high-voltage transmission, as oil and gas, manufacturing, and population growth alone represent the largest grid expansion in state history.

Reliability Needs are Here, Now. West Texas is already experiencing periods when available generation in the area does not fully keep pace with demand, placing greater

strain on the system and increasing the likelihood of curtailment and potential load shedding events. And with our interconnected grid, a failure in one area has the potential to ripple across the system. Interconnection timelines for new customers have also extended as capacity constraints persist. Pump jacks, compression, water-handling, and electrification are filling up the existing 345-kV system.

The review TPPF wants has already happened. The PUCT approved the Permian Basin Reliability Plan in April 2025 after two years of public input, reliability studies, and environmental analysis. ERCOT evaluated alternatives and found that serving 2038 Permian load with 345-kV would require roughly 1,676 additional miles of new line; a 500-kV alternative, about 1,255. Adding local gas generation was studied too — the existing 345-kV system is already full, and Permian gas supply infrastructure would need major investment. The 765-kV plan requires fewer corridors and less cumulative right-of-way, not more, than the lower-voltage options the May TPPF brief implies would be gentler on landowners.

The reforms TPPF wants are already underway. Both papers ask for cost-allocation reform, load-forecasting modernization, and queue improvements before the build proceeds. TRII agrees with the need for this review, and all three are in motion at the PUCT under SB 6 (2025). Pausing now does not create flexibility; it pushes increases costs, creates reliability risks and delays critical economic benefits.

Half the story and half the facts on cost. TPPF’s analysis has repeatedly attacked CREZ as if it were a simple matter of adding costs to bills, rather than a system intended to deliver cheaper generation. But TPPF’s analysis does not account for the benefits of reduced energy costs to customers resulting from this added transmission (projected by ERCOT to be roughly \$2 billion every year). More fundamentally, CREZ was a different transmission plan as compared to the PRBP and STEP, both of which will enable new customers to connect to the power grid, thereby spreading grid costs over more customers.

The Legislature’s overwhelming support was not “controversial.” In 2023, the Texas Legislature approved HB 5066 with overwhelming bipartisan support, which directed ERCOT and the PUCT

to develop and implement this program. Out of 181 Texas legislators, only three voted against the measure at any stage, and Governor Abbott signed it into law. That plan is now being implemented based on that statutory guidance and years of technical analysis. Calling it controversial misrepresents the record and the plan's foundation of broad support.

"The choice in front of Texas is not whether to build," Lauderback said. "It is whether to build the grid Texas needs now, at the right voltage, one time — or to keep patching a 345-kV system that ERCOT has already shown cannot meet the load that is here today, much less the load coming tomorrow. Pausing now does not buy time for better analysis. It hands the next decade of Texas growth to other states and sends the bill for the catch-up to every Texan with an electric meter."

The full TRII analysis, "What TTPF Gets Wrong on 765-kV, Time and Again," is available at textansforresponsibleinfrastructureinvestment.com.

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About Texans for Responsible Infrastructure Investment (TRII)

Texans for Responsible Infrastructure Investment (TRII) is a non-partisan, statewide coalition of Texans advocating for the electric grid investments Texas needs to remain reliable, affordable, and economically competitive. TRII's work is grounded in independent research and third-party expertise, and is dedicated to advancing an honest, fact-based public conversation about the future of the Texas grid.

Learn more at <https://TexansForResponsibleInfrastructureInvestment.com>.

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Mindy Noonan

Texans for Responsible Infrastructure Investment

+1 214-236-4676

[email us here](#)

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