

Severe winter storm kills at least 37 and cuts power to millions in U.S.

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Severe winter storm kills 23 and cuts power in U.S.

Houston, February 17 (RHC)-- At least 37 people have been killed and millions remain without power as a major winter storm sweeps across large swaths of the United States, bringing record-breaking cold and snow. An overwhelmed and underprepared power grid in Texas plunged millions into freezing cold and

darkness. Hundreds of thousands also lost power across parts of Appalachia, as well as in Oregon.

Texas Republican Governor Greg Abbott took to Fox News Tuesday to blame renewable energy sources for his state's blackouts, saying the Green New Deal would be "deadly" for the United States. His comments contradicted Texas's own energy department, which said the outages were due to "frozen instruments at natural gas, coal and even nuclear facilities."

Congressmember Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez tweeted: "The infrastructure failures in Texas are quite literally what happens when you don't pursue a Green New Deal." Texas set up its own power grid, ERCOT, in the 1930s to avoid federal regulation.

Prisoners in Texas, including 1,000 women at the Fort Worth federal medical prison, reported having no heat. In Matamoros, Mexico, which sits on the border with Brownsville, Texas, around 1,000 asylum seekers who were denied entry to the U.S. as part of Trump's "Remain in Mexico" policy were forced to face the subfreezing temperatures inside low-grade tents.

The winter storm also disrupted states' COVID-19 vaccination programs, stalling deliveries and shutting down vaccine sites. In Harris County, Texas, health officials rushed to distribute thousands of vaccine doses after storage freezers lost power.

President Joe Biden held a town hall hosted by CNN in Milwaukee Tuesday evening, where he was questioned by host Anderson Cooper about vaccine availability.

Anderson Cooper: "When is every American who wants it going to be able to get a vaccine?"

President Joe Biden: "By the end of July of this year. We have — when we came into office, there was only 50 million doses that were available. We have now — by the end of July, we'll have over 600 million doses, enough to vaccinate every single American."

President Biden urged people to support the \$1.9 trillion coronavirus stimulus package that House Democrats are working to finalize. A House vote is expected at the end of next week.

Meanwhile, the Biden administration extended the federal moratorium on foreclosures through the end of June. Biden also extended the window to request mortgage forbearance, as well as six months of additional forbearance for homeowners who enroll by the end of June.

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