

DRAFT

Resolution Acknowledging Impacts of the February 2021 Texas Winter Power Outage on People with Disabilities

WHEREAS the February 2021 Texas winter power outage adversely impacted people with disabilities;

WHEREAS the pre-existing conditions of people with disabilities were either exacerbated by the extreme cold or a prolonged lack of access to necessary resources;

WHEREAS local media documented specific burdens this winter storm particularly imposed upon local people with disabilities such as needing to use car batteries to attempt to keep essential medical equipment properly and fully running;

WHEREAS the winter storm also created numerous specific resource barriers for the homeless community, several of whom have disabilities;

WHEREAS several individuals froze to death from hypothermia during the winter storm and area shelters which were usually capable of providing essential social services had also lacked sufficient winter insulation;

WHEREAS an extended lack of functioning and accessible toilets throughout the City immediately following the post-storm power outage posed specific access, mobility and hygiene challenges for several people with disabilities;

WHEREAS a prolonged lack of easy and immediate local access to clean water resources impacts both medication dosing and hydration to properly manage chronic disabilities;

WHEREAS because of a combination of poverty, gentrification, and lack of accessibility, people with disabilities have limited resources to effectively withstand both the immediate and secondary effects of this and other natural disasters;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities is recommending that the City of Austin go on record acknowledging that ableism is a real, profound, and serious problem in our City which must be fully acknowledged in order to promote and advance equity.