



# Next Century Cities



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# Agenda

Lessons from the Lone Star State

Texas & Network Resilience

The Texas Death Star Law

Recommendations

Questions?

# Broadband Makes US Better:

**Lessons from the  
Lone Star State**

By Corian Zacher and Brian Donoghue



# Texas & Network Resilience

- Winter Storm Uri covered 80% of Texas in snow.
- 208 Peak Power Outages left 369,918 wireless and 34,868 wireline users disconnected.
- In areas where electrical grids could not keep up many providers were forced to rely on backup generators
- Due to the freezing temperatures many improperly stored fuel supplies gelatinized, making them unusable.



# TEXAS

## STATEWIDE

Population: **30,029,572**

Households without a computer: **6.1%**

Households without Internet: **13.1%**

Persons in Poverty: **14.2%**

## MONT BELVIEU CITY

Population: **8,946**

Households without a computer: **1.8%**

Households without Internet: **7.8%**

Persons in Poverty: **9.2%**

## SAN ANTONIO CITY

Population: **1,472,909**

Households without a computer: **6.7%**

Households without Internet: **15.2%**

Persons in Poverty: **17.6%**

## GAINESVILLE CITY

Population: **17,912**

Households without a computer: **18.3%**

Households without Internet: **29.3%**

Persons in Poverty: **23.1%**

## AUSTIN CITY

Population: **974,447**

Households without a computer: **3.5%**

Households without Internet: **8.8%**

Persons in Poverty: **12.5%**

## PHARR CITY

Population: **80,179**

Households without a computer: **12.4%**

Households without Internet: **35.6%**

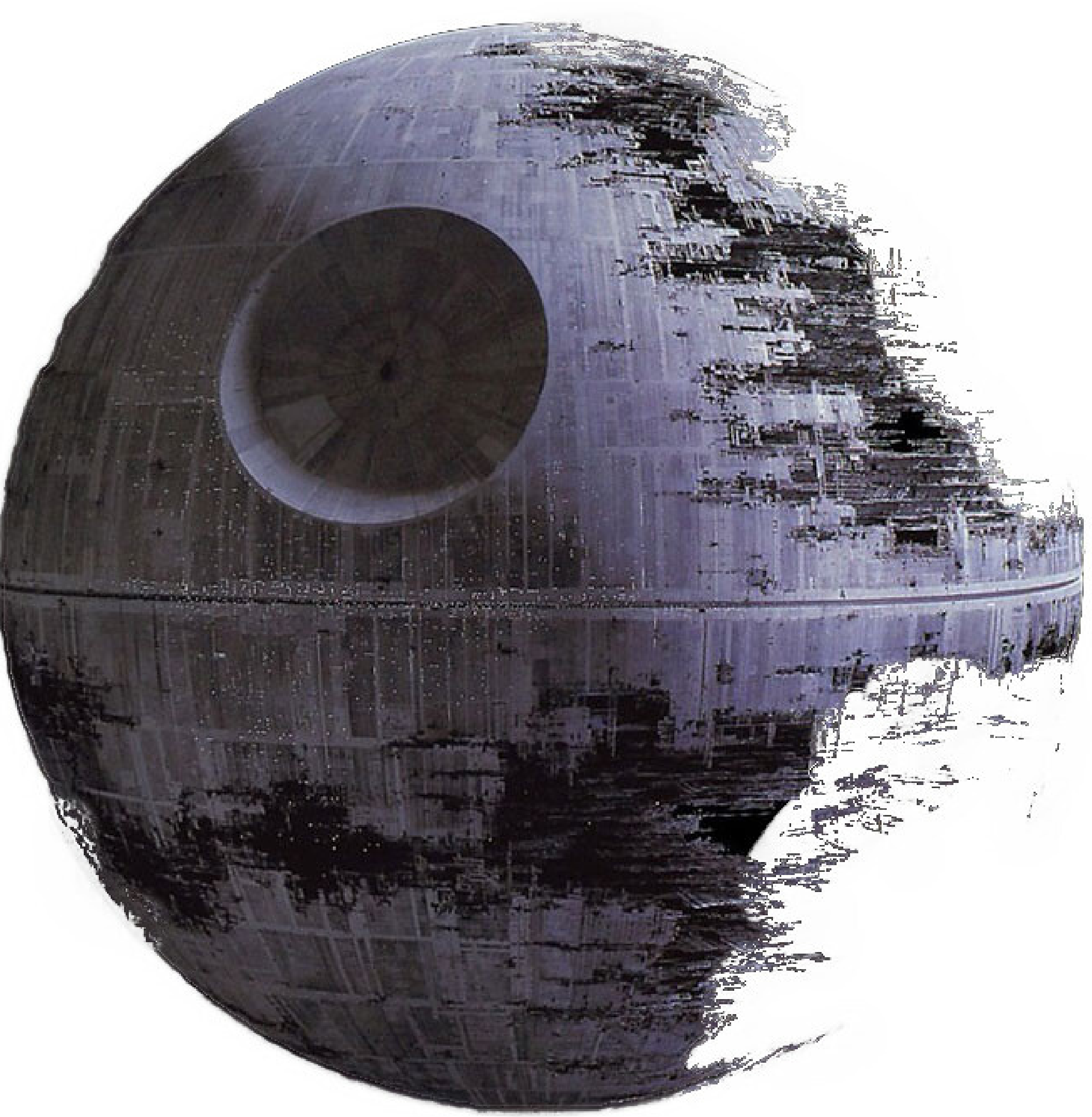
Persons in Poverty: **32.5%**

*Data from US Census Bureau. Population estimates from July 1, 2022.  
Computer and Internet Use and Poverty data from American Community Survey (ACS), 5-Year Estimates (2021).*



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RESEARCH BY NEXT CENTURY CITIES  
SEPTEMBER 2023



# TEXAS DEATH STAR LAW

- *Went into effect on Sept. 1, 2023*
- *Restricts local governments from preempts local governments from adopting local ordinances, orders, and rules that restrict businesses more than existing state law*
- *Lawsuits from the Cities of Houston and San Antonio*

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**An important, recurring theme has been the reminder that though high-speed Internet may once have been a luxury, it is now a necessity. Texans need reliable, high-speed connectivity for public health, safety, education and modern agriculture.**

-Glenn Hegar, Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts

# Recommendations

<b>State Legislators</b>	<b>Local Officials</b>	<b>Nonprofit Leaders</b>	<b>Community</b>
Expand local autonomy	Gather feedback from residents	Explore overlaps with existing issues	Seek volunteer opportunities
Coordinate with local leaders	Record local broadband needs	Identify local adoption barriers	Raise awareness in your network
Support existing community-serving programs	Partner with regional and state allies	Join local broadband coalitions	Encourage local officials to prioritize broadband for all



# Recommendations For Federal Policymakers:

1. Build Flexibility into programs that allows local leaders to tailor solutions to residents' needs.
2. Ensure clarifying documentation explains what is and is not allowable under various federal programs.
3. Community insight provides the clearest measure of need. Create opportunities for this work to be done to enhance federal programs.
4. Support municipal efforts to hold federal and state grant holders responsible for completing grant obligations in a reasonable and timely manner.



# Next Century Cities



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**Thank you!**

Please keep in touch!

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