June 3, 2021

The Honorable Senator John Cornyn
United States Senate
517 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Alejandro Padilla
United States Senate
112 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Cornyn and Padilla:

AARP, on behalf of our 38 million members and all older Americans nationwide, is pleased to support S. 1432, the POWER ON Act. We appreciate your willingness to work on a bipartisan basis on the important issue of energy resilience, particularly given that older adults are often disproportionately impacted by disasters.

AARP supports efforts to improve the resilience of our energy infrastructure to avoid future power blackouts like those which recently occurred in Texas, California, and other states. In the winter storm in Texas this year, it is estimated that about five million Texans age 50+ lost power, with a loss of power of 42 hours on average in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area. An estimated 25 percent of the 150 people who died in the area were older adults. While the need to invest in resilience extends beyond hardening our electrical grid, AARP acknowledges the importance of this effort in order to secure the safety and well-being of older adults. To ensure that funds are distributed fairly, transparently and efficiently, we encourage you to consider how state utility regulators could have a role in developing the required plan to govern the allocation of the grants. We also urge you to consider how the technologies and approaches funded under Section 3 would in particular benefit older adults.

While more is needed to protect people of all ages, including older adults, from future disasters, this legislation is an important start given the critical importance of reliable energy for all. Grants for activities, technologies, equipment, and hardening measures to enable the electric grid to better withstand the effects of extreme weather, wildfires, or any other natural disaster will be essential to strengthen existing infrastructure and ultimately deliver a more reliable and resilient energy system.

Again, we appreciate your bipartisan efforts and commitment. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Danielle Arigoni, Director of Livable Communities on our Government Affairs team (darigoni@aarp.org, 202-434-6097). Thank you again for your leadership on this vital issue.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Cristina Martin Firvida
Vice President
Financial Security & Livable Communities
Government Affairs