

For immediate release

Climate disinformation spreading on Facebook during Texas freeze

Facebook is being used to spread disinformation about the underlying cause of power outages in Texas by groups promoting the use of fossil fuels, an analysis by InfluenceMap shows.

The Texas Public Policy Foundation, which has more than 300,000 followers of Facebook, is using paid advertising to blame 'green' energy for the state's current problems.

For example, *this ad* states that people should 'Thank Fossil Fuels' for keeping them warm. In *another ad*, the Foundation says Texas has "closed reliable fossil fuel electric generation and replaced it with wind projects that failed". There are several other examples.

However, according to *Dan Woodfin from the Electric Reliability Council of Texas*, which operates Texas's power grid, the shut down of wind turbines is the least significant factor in the power blackouts. He also said low natural gas pressure has been an issue.

Even though Facebook requires ads relating to environmental politics to be labelled as 'political or issue' ads, these ads have not been. As such, it is not possible to obtain data on who they were targeted at or how much was spent.

"Yet again, this shows that Facebook is not doing enough to prevent its platform being used to spread disinformation relating to climate change," InfluenceMap analyst Jake Carbone said.

"We have also seen Facebook fail to tag a number of climate related ads as 'political or issue' ads recently, which is a concerning trend. It means the extent of potential climate disinformation is likely to be much more significant on Facebook advertising than we can assess."

The social media giant *announced* today that it will start to direct some users in the UK to its Climate Science Information Centre by adding labels to climate-related posts.

An InfluenceMap *report* released in October revealed the extent to which climate science disinformation is spread on Facebook. It found that 51 advertisements running during the first half of 2020 were viewed about 8 million times during that six-month period.

That analysis showed such ads were most heavily distributed in Wyoming and Texas.

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About InfluenceMap

InfluenceMap is a London-based think tank providing data driven analysis to investors, corporations and the media on issues related to energy and climate change. Our metrics for measuring corporate influence over climate policy

are in use by investors, including the global Climate Action 100+ investor engagement process. Our content has been covered widely in global media and is used by campaign groups.