



**Dog in the Hunt:**

**March 3, 2016**

# PUC Vets \$17 Billion Deal of Huge Abbott Donor

**G**ubernatorial appointees to the Public Utility Commission are vetting today a brazen bid by one of Governor Abbott’s largest donors to buy bankrupt behemoth Energy Future Holding’s Corp.’s valuable Oncor Electric Delivery Co. for \$17 billion.

Critics have urged the Public Utility Commissioners to reject the proposal led by Dallas billionaire Ray Hunt’s Hunt Consolidated, Inc. The chief objection is that Hunt would park Oncor’s vast electric-transmission assets in a tax-sheltered real estate investment trust and divert the millions of dollars that ratepayers have been paying for federal taxes into the pockets of the deal’s investors.<sup>1</sup>

Fleeing ratepayers for phantom taxes has sparked outrage from consumer groups such as AARP and the Steering Committee of Cities Served by Oncor. Less predictable is the opposition of ex-Gov. Rick Perry, who took \$290,000 in campaign cash from Ray Hunt. In a January *Dallas Morning News* Op-Ed, Perry said he erred in backing Energy Future’s Holding’s \$45 billion buyout of the former TXU Corp. and argued that Hunt’s scheme involving “hundreds of millions of dollars in non-existent income tax expenses” would exacerbate the damage.

Perry’s position on the Hunt deal cannot be lost on the three current Public Utility Commissioners. After all, Perry promoted all three of them from his gubernatorial staff to their current posts. Yet the commissioners also must be attuned to Gov. Abbott, who has not taken a public position on the deal. Last September Abbott reappointed PUC Chair Donna Nelson. The other two commissioners serve, to some degree, at his pleasure. They would have a tough time staying put if Abbott called for their resignations.

At the same time it’s hard for Abbott to ignore Hunt. Ray Hunt has given far more to Abbott’s young gubernatorial campaign than he gave to Perry throughout his 13-year gubernatorial reign. Hunt has given the current governor \$550,000 just since Abbott launched his gubernatorial bid in 2013. Abbott got a whopping \$250,000 Hunt check last June, just two months after Energy Future’s bankruptcy filing.<sup>2</sup>

## Gov. Abbott’s Ray-Hunt Habit

Date	Amount
6/29/2015	\$250,000
7/31/2014	\$100,000
6/24/2014	\$100,000
11/21/2013	\$100,000
6/26/2013	\$100,000
12/6/2012	\$50,000
6/20/2012	\$50,000
4/3/2012	\$2,110
6/27/2011	\$50,000
6/30/2006	\$10,000
6/28/2004	\$10,000
8/6/2003	\$10,000
10/31/2002	\$25,000
7/25/2002	\$7,500
2/11/2002	\$7,500
6/26/2001	\$15,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$887,110</b>

## Abbott's Top Gubernatorial Contributors (7/14/13 through 12/31/2015)

Amount	Contributor	Company
\$1,200,000	Peter & Julianna Holt	Holt Co's/SA Spurs
\$1,000,000	A Robert L & Mary Albritton	Railroad Controls, Ltd.
\$900,000	Harold C Simmons	Contran Corp.
\$705,000	Kelcy L Warren	Energy Transfer Partners
\$678,942	Syed Javid Anwar	Midland Energy, Inc.
\$657,705	T. Dan & Debra Friedkin	Gulf States Toyota
\$651,261	Jeffery D Hildebrand	Hilcorp Energy Co.
\$650,000	Richard D & Nancy Kinder	Kinder Morgan Energy
\$576,100	Trevor D Rees-Jones	Chief Oil & Gas, LLC
<b>\$550,000</b>	<b>Ray L. Hunt</b>	<b>Hunt Consolidated, Inc.</b>

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Other investors in the deal include Anchorage Capital Group, LLC, Avenue Capital Group and BlackRock Financial Management.

<sup>2</sup> Hunt's efforts to acquire Oncor predate the 2007 TXU Corp. buyout. See "Sale of Oncor Might be a Powerful Draw," *Dallas Morning News*, March 4, 2014.