

# THE CAT RESOURCE CENTER

## Gulf Coast Derecho & Severe Weather Outbreak

May 15-18, 2023



Number of Hail Reports: **125, 13**  
greater than 2"

Impacted States: **KS, TX, OK**



Number of Tornado Reports: **14**

States Impacted: **TX, LA, GA**



Number of Wind Reports: **322,**  
16 above 75 mph

Impacted States: **TX, OK, KS,**  
**LA, MS, AL, GA, FL**

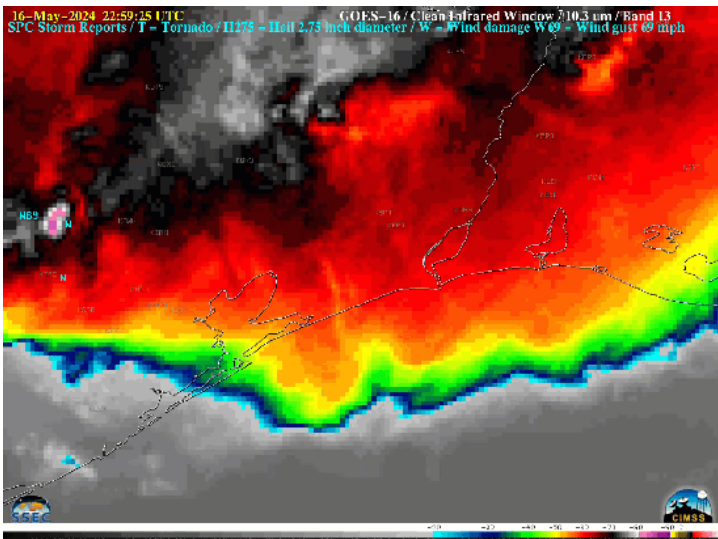


Highest SPC Categorical Risk: **Enhanced (3 out of 5)**

Impacted Metro Areas:  
**Houston, TX, New Orleans, LA**

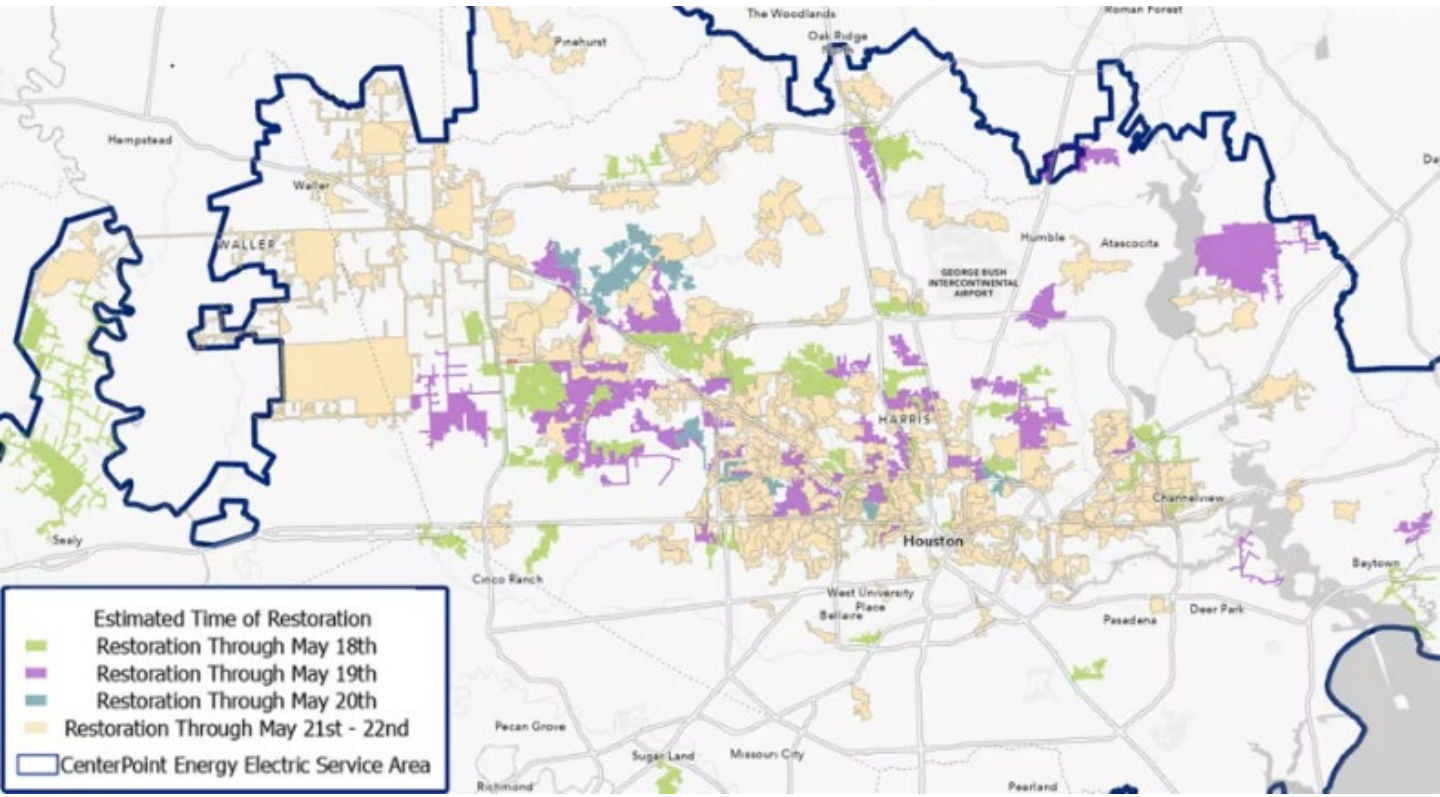
### Event Headlines

- Severe thunderstorm activity affected portions of the Southern Plains and Northern Gulf States over a multi-day period from May 15-18. Heavily clustered wind reports along with significant hail and three confirmed EF-1 tornadoes have been reported. In particular, significant damaging wind gusts estimated up to 100 mph affected the Houston Metro area Thursday May 16, leaving pockets of substantial damage to structures in portions of the city. Houston officials state the magnitude of winds and associated damage is the worst the city has seen in 25 years. Further east, a wind gust of 84 mph was reported in New Orleans, LA at the Lakefront Airport.
- Peak power outages exceeded 900,000 customers on Friday, with over half a million customers still without power on Sunday May 19th. Extreme winds destroyed multiple transmission towers causing infrastructure damage that will prolong recovery.
- The Gulf Coast derecho is the latest event in a 2024 season featuring well above average severe thunderstorm activity across the US. 820 reported tornadoes through May 19th is 33% above average. Wind reports are also 15% above the year-to-date average. In contrast to the last several season of elevated hail activity, year-to-date hail storm counts are the least anomalous, running 6% above average.
- Today's report includes an analysis detailing the top ten largest Severe Convective Storm economic losses (inflation adjusted), when losses were contributed from the Southern Plains and northern Gulf Coast states. Three of the top ten largest losses transpired in 2023. Six of the top ten losses in this region were significantly influenced by large tornado outbreaks and associated losses; this event had little loss contribution from tornado activity and was predominantly straight line wind driven damage.

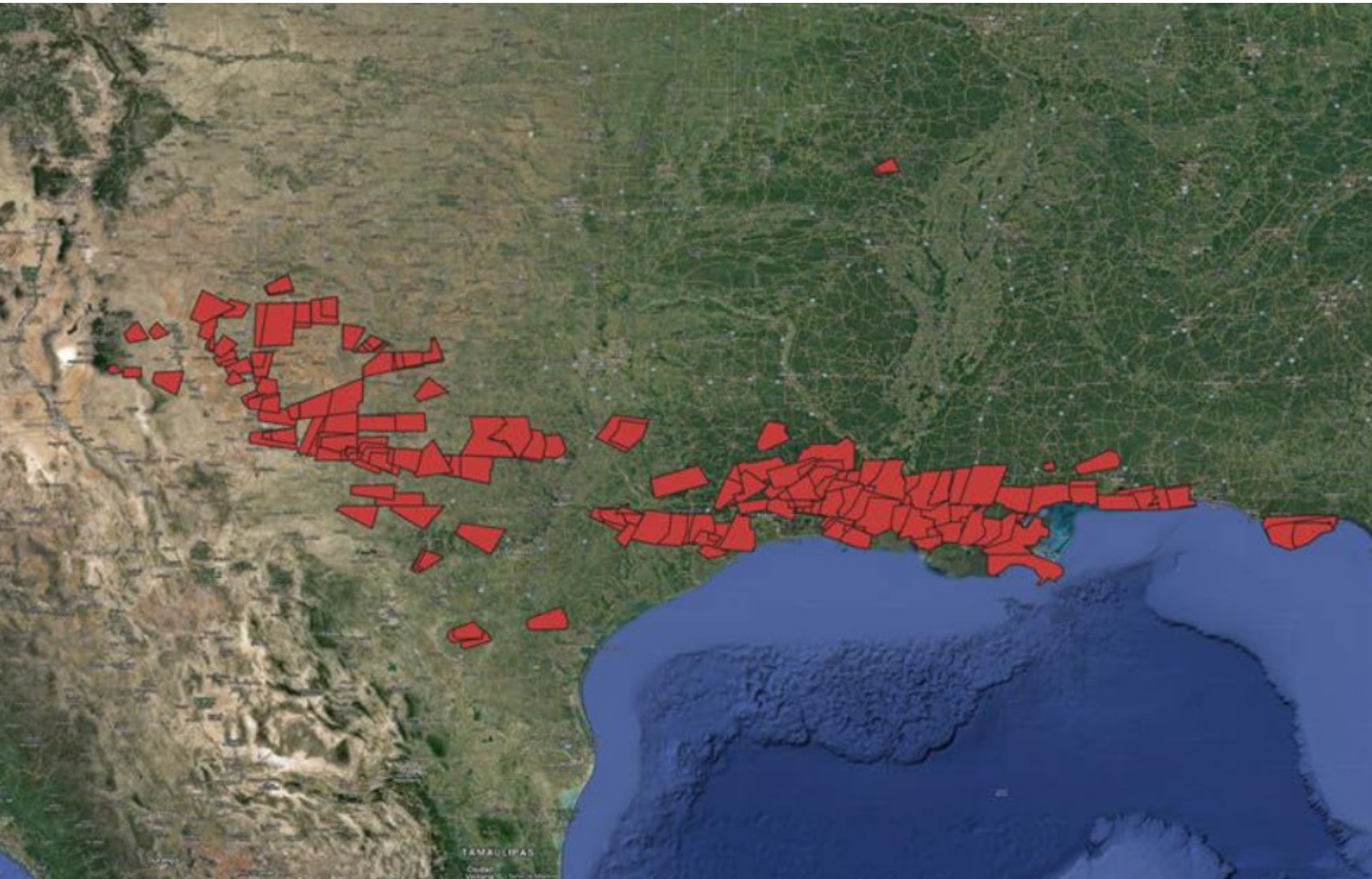


Satellite loop and storm reports as the derecho progressed through the Houston metro region.  
Source: University of Wisconsin/CIMSS

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Power outage restoration schedule. Source: CenterPoint Energy



Severe thunderstorm and tornado warnings issued for the event. Sources: Iowa Mesonet, NWS.

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Storm Name	CPI Adjusted Economic Loss (\$B)	Fatalities
Tuscaloosa Tornado Outbreak (April 2011)	14.2	321
Joplin Tornado Outbreak (May 2011)	12.6	177
South Plains Severe Weather (May 1995)	11.3	32
Early May 2003 Tornado Outbreak (May 2003)	7.1	51
Southern and Eastern Severe Weather (March 2023)	6.1	13
Central Tornado Outbreak and Eastern Severe Weather (March 2023)	5.8	33
Rockies, Central and Northeast Tornadoes and Severe Weather (May 2019)	5.6	3
Midwest/Ohio Valley Hail and Tornadoes (April 2001)	5.5	3
Rockies Hail Storms and Central and Eastern Severe Weather (June 2023)	5.4	8
Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas Tornadoes and Severe Weather (May 2010)	4.8	3

Top ten largest Severe Convective Storm economic loss events nationally, that included loss from states in the Southern Plains and northern Gulf Coast region. Note, three of the top ten transpired in 2023. Source: NOAA Billion Dollar Database.

## Additional Links

- [NOAA Storm Prediction Center](#)
- [National Weather Service Houston/Galveston](#)
- [NOAA Billion Dollar Database](#)
- [City of Houston Office of Emergency Management](#)
- [CenterPoint Energy Outage Tracker for Houston](#)

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