

COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION  
HURRICANE SANDY POWER OUTAGES

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Pages 1 through 130

Fernwood Resort  
Eduardian Room  
East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania

Thursday, November 29, 2012

Met, pursuant to notice at 4:00 p.m.

BEFORE: SENATOR LISA BAKER  
REPRESENTATIVE MARIO SCAVELLO  
REPRESENTATIVE ROSEMARY BROWN  
ROBERT POWELSON, PUC Chairman  
WAYNE GARDNER, PUC Commissioner  
TIMOTHY BAUGHMAN, Deputy Direct for operations  
MICHAEL JORAN, Met-Ed president  
DAVID BONENBERGER, PPL Vice President of  
Distribution Operations  
ED ORTIZ, Pike County Light & Power  
AILEEN KOLVENBACH, manager, Public Affairs

Commonwealth Reporting Company, Inc.  
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Camp Hill, Pennsylvania 17011

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1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 SENATOR BAKER: Good afternoon. I'd like  
3 to welcome you to our community input session. The  
4 purpose of our forum today is to provide an opportunity  
5 for representatives from the Public Utility Commission,  
6 the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency and our  
7 electric companies, as well as local officials to  
8 listen to the concerns of our communities and to hear  
9 suggestions for improvement as we move forward.

10 There are information booths in the back.  
11 And I would like to thank the companies for providing  
12 information about the storm event for customers to go  
13 back and ask their own individual questions.

14 Our comments today will be limited  
15 because of time. And we would ask that you try to keep  
16 them to a three to five minute range. They will be a  
17 first-come, first-serve basis and related to segments  
18 that are impacted.

19 First I would like to acknowledge the  
20 presence of several individuals who are here in the  
21 room.

22 The chairman of the Pennsylvania public  
23 Utility commission, Robert Powelson. He just stepped  
24 out. He'll be right back in. Commissioner Wayne  
25 Gardner of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission.

1 Tim Baughman, who is the deputy director of operations  
2 for the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency.

3 From Met-Ed, Mike Joran is the president,  
4 and he's accompanied by a number of individuals from  
5 the company.

6 From PPL, Dave Bonenberger, the vice  
7 president of distribution operations. And from Pike  
8 County Power and Light, Ed Ortiz, VP of customer  
9 service, and Aileen Kolvenbach, manager of public  
10 affairs.

11 I'm also joined today by my colleagues,  
12 Representative Rosemary Brown and Representative Mario  
13 Scavello. And Brian Langan is here from Senator Pat  
14 Toomey's office. He's the Northeast regional manager.

15 I would like to offer a couple of  
16 introductory comments before we begin the hearing and  
17 the input session.

18 We all know that this area was hard hit  
19 by Irene and Lee last year and then by Sandy just a  
20 couple of weeks ago.

21 And despite some of the improvements of  
22 planning and preparation that were undertaken in the  
23 wake of last year's two-punch disaster, there were some  
24 deficiencies that still surfaced again this time.

25 Given the concerns, the questions and

1 suggestions that quickly came pouring in from all  
2 directions, I felt it was very important to have state  
3 officials here in this community to hear these  
4 thoughtful and emotional expressions firsthand.

5 As chair of the Veterans' Affairs and  
6 Emergency Preparedness Committee, with jurisdiction  
7 over emergency preparedness, I have an intense interest  
8 of getting answers and arriving at solutions, so do my  
9 colleagues.

10 And I'm very pleased to acknowledge  
11 Representative Brown and Scavello for their direct  
12 involvement in helping to plan this, as well as I'd  
13 like to acknowledge, Fran Cleaver, who is the executive  
14 director of our Senate Consumer Protection and  
15 Professional Licensure Committee, as well as Diane  
16 McNaughton who is the executive director of the Senate  
17 Committee.

18 Our goal is to exchange as much  
19 information as practical and legally possible. So, our  
20 presentations, you will notice, are divided into two  
21 parts. The first featuring those acting in an official  
22 capacity, and the second will be the affected  
23 customers.

24 One up-front caution is in order, because  
25 of the quasi jurisdictional role of the PUC, Commission

1 chairman Powelson is limited to commenting about the  
2 regulatory process, rather than addressing specific  
3 situations or speculating about forthcoming actions.

4 So, for those who are here presenting, a  
5 lack of a direct response does not mean that you failed  
6 to register your point with the Chairman.

7 Mr. Chairman, your presence and that of  
8 your colleague displays a great respect for the rights  
9 of our customers, and we appreciate your responsiveness  
10 and your leadership.

11 Before we begin the discussions of  
12 problems and complaints, we should also acknowledge and  
13 express our gratitude for the long and demanding and  
14 stressful hours and days put in by our emergency  
15 responders and the utility crews under what we all know  
16 were miserable conditions, their efforts to save lives  
17 and prevent even greater hardships from being  
18 experienced.

19 I want to thank the companies, Met-Ed,  
20 PPL and Pike County Power and Light for attending and  
21 getting ready for last -- getting ready for Sandy.

22 We had two advantages, the lessons  
23 learned from last years' storms and the advanced  
24 warning of the threat that Sandy posed.

25 What will be determined is how well those

1 holding positions of responsibility apply to those  
2 advantages.

3 The public perception is that some  
4 companies and officials responded and performed better  
5 than others.

6 People want to know why that was and what  
7 can be done. A lot of what we will hear will be about  
8 better, more accurate communication, primarily from  
9 companies to customers and the media.

10 But there are additional areas warranting  
11 a look, such as having power companies convey accurate  
12 information to shelters about the progress on power  
13 restoration.

14 And when the problem involves downed  
15 trees or power lines in combination, local governments  
16 or even state agencies can effectively help if there is  
17 a coordination with the utility crews.

18 Part of the public understanding may  
19 require us being more aware of choices companies, all  
20 among available alternatives, what arrangements have  
21 been approved by regulators and what standards of  
22 performance companies are held to and whether there are  
23 sanctions for underperformance.

24 The General Assembly is also reviewing  
25 the statute that governs emergency preparedness in the

1 Commonwealth. We can learn much from the effectiveness  
2 of the interactions between our local, county and state  
3 officials, as well as here in this region, our  
4 community associations, so as we modernize a law that  
5 was put on the books prior to 9/11.

6 So, at this time, I want to thank you for  
7 your participation and your attendance. I would like  
8 to ask Chairman Powelson to come forward to offer some  
9 comments on behalf of the Commission. Thank you,  
10 Chairman Powelson.

11 CHAIRMAN POWELSON: Thank you, Senator  
12 Baker and members of the General Assembly. First, I  
13 want to take this opportunity, I'm joined with my  
14 colleague, Commissioner Wayne Gardner, to be with you  
15 all during the next three hours, to hear from you on  
16 really some of the issues that impacted this community.

17 And let me just say to you, I want to  
18 first start off by praising the work of the  
19 Pennsylvania Emergency Management Organization,  
20 Pennsylvania National Guard, the Pennsylvania State  
21 Police and the thousands of men and women that stepped  
22 up to support the restoration effort post-hurricane  
23 Sandy.

24 Just by the sheer magnitude of this  
25 storm, we had over 1.8 million customers that were

1 without power. I'm proud to say that 90 percent of  
2 those customers were restored between Tuesday and  
3 Saturday.

4 I recognize some of you in the room were  
5 beyond the 90 percent restoration, and that's why we're  
6 here. I'm not saying it's a foolproof method. I don't  
7 want to give anybody a false sense of hope that after  
8 this event and with all the hardening that will be  
9 done, that we can promise you you'll be restored in 24  
10 to 48 hours, when a weather event like this comes  
11 through. We know that's not the case.

12 But my colleague and I are here to  
13 listen. Our technical staff is here. I want to thank  
14 Darren Gill, Jennifer Kocher and Tom Bean from the  
15 Commission who are with us here today.

16 This was a massive storm. And for the  
17 record, Hurricane Sandy is the biggest single task the  
18 utility industry has ever faced.

19 Crews from as far west as California, as  
20 far south as Texas had come to the Northeast to provide  
21 mutual assistance in helping get power restored.

22 More homes and businesses lost power as a  
23 result of Sandy than any other storm in history. I  
24 also think it's important to mention that through the  
25 efforts of FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management

1 Agency, over 636 tons of equipment were shipped in  
2 between Philadelphia, New York, and New Jersey, to help  
3 with the storm damage relief effort along the Eastern  
4 seaboard.

5 Over 65,000 line and transmission  
6 workers, along with tree resources, assessors, network  
7 personnel, substation experts were on the ground,  
8 clearing the way for power to get restored here in the  
9 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

10 Now, grant it, not all 65,000 were here.  
11 In Pennsylvania, we had over 3,000 mutual assistance  
12 workers come in to the state from outside of our region  
13 to help our incumbent utilities with this massive  
14 restoration effort.

15 Now, I recognize that there were some  
16 things that worked very well post-Irene, post-tropical  
17 Storm Lee and post the winter storm that hit. One of  
18 the things that we're very proud of this is a first  
19 time in a post-weather related event, we were able to  
20 deploy the use of social media to keep you updated on  
21 progress.

22 I know you're going to sense or share  
23 with us some of your frustrations with estimated times  
24 of restoration. We've heard that. It's been a  
25 consistent message to us. And we'll hear a little bit

1 more from our utilities today.

2           Again, there were things that were done  
3 well and things that need to be improved on. We  
4 recognize that.

5           We're here today to listen. We ask that  
6 you be respectful in your comments. We have a lot of  
7 work that needs to be done, and my colleague and I,  
8 along with Darren and others at the Commission, along  
9 with the Pennsylvania State Senate that held a hearing  
10 about two weeks ago to bring us all together, along  
11 with today's event.

12           And on January 10th, the Public Utility  
13 Commission will be holding a forum bringing together  
14 all of our utilities.

15           Now, we're here today, believe it or not,  
16 to talk about electric distribution companies. But I  
17 want you to know, we had water companies,  
18 telecommunications infrastructure, gas utility  
19 infrastructure that was impacted by this storm.

20           And I hate to compare us in a sense to  
21 New Jersey or New York, one thing we're lucky about was  
22 we did not face storm surge here in Pennsylvania.

23           As this storm was 250 miles off the  
24 Atlantic Coast, original track was for this storm to  
25 come up the Delaware Bay into the Delaware River, which

1 would have wreaked havoc for many parts of  
2 Pennsylvania. That was one silver lining that really  
3 helped us with the restoration effort.

4 So, today, Senator Baker, we are honored  
5 to be here. And we want to hear from every one of you  
6 as an impacted ratepayer. And we appreciate the  
7 opportunity to participate. And, again, we appreciate  
8 you being here. Thank you very much.

9 SENATOR BAKER: Thank you, Chairman. We  
10 are going to, as I mentioned, do it in segments. And  
11 the first segment will be for our federal and state  
12 elected officials to offer remarks and comments.

13 So, Representative Rosemary Brown will be  
14 asked to comment. You may use the microphone there or  
15 the one here.

16 REPRESENTATIVE ROSEMARY BROWN: Make it  
17 easy. First of all, Senator Baker, thank you for  
18 organizing the details of this hearing and all the  
19 utility companies and the PUC for coming out here today  
20 to be interactive with their customers and many who are  
21 my constituents.

22 And going through this storm was actually  
23 my second storm or third storm, I should say, since  
24 I've been in office.

25 And this, as was mentioned earlier, was

1 by far, even worse than last year. One of the things,  
2 you know, when you're a state representative, we get a  
3 tremendous amount of communication from our  
4 constituents.

5 And I have heard many, many things from  
6 the communication issues with the utility companies,  
7 honesty, being able to get through on the phone, seeing  
8 trucks on the side of the road, which I know we  
9 discussed a little bit earlier.

10 All these different types of scenarios  
11 that create a perception to the people on the efforts  
12 by our utility companies.

13 And it was a tremendous storm. We know  
14 that. So, I think Senator Baker did a very good job of  
15 recapping all of the many issues.

16 But what I hope to happen here today is,  
17 the constituents, I know there are many of my  
18 constituents here, be very honest and professional with  
19 their statements to the utility company, very clear and  
20 concise.

21 And I look forward to these companies  
22 taking this information, because these storms are here  
23 to stay. They're getting bigger, and I think we're  
24 going to have to continue to deal with this.

25 So, we need to be better prepared. We

1 need to be preventive and be able to respond more  
2 efficiently and possibly in a more professional manner.

3 So, I thank the utility companies for  
4 taking this information and for utilizing it to create,  
5 which I know that they have been speaking about, is  
6 new, updated initiatives. Things that will make it  
7 better for the people and for their customers.

8 So, I thank you all who are going to  
9 testify today. And I thank you for your communication  
10 to my office. Thank you.

11 SENATOR BAKER: Representative Mario  
12 Scavello, one of our co-hosts for today's forum. Thank  
13 you, Mario.

14 REPRESENTATIVE MARIO SCAVELLO: Thank  
15 you, Senator, for putting this event together. It's  
16 very important. I first want to start with really  
17 congratulating in Monroe, and I'm sure you had a great  
18 system up in Pike as well, but my office and  
19 Representative Brown's office was out of power for a  
20 full week.

21 So, we operated basically out of the 911  
22 center. And to see the professionalism that we have in  
23 Monroe was just amazing 24/7, in putting everything  
24 together, the communications and also the folks in each  
25 one of the Municipalities that spearhead their own, you

1 know, emergency management within their municipalities,  
2 the communication that was there.

3 We've had one of the worst storms,  
4 actually in 9/11, it was the worst storm that ever hit  
5 in Monroe, 61,000 customers out. So you multiply that  
6 by 2, 122,000 people. Our population is 170. So You  
7 can imagine the impact that we had.

8 I personally think that one company did a  
9 great job and the other company did not. And I'm  
10 really looking to hear what their issues were and what  
11 their problems are. And, hopefully, it doesn't happen  
12 again. And that's what we need to do, communicate that  
13 out there, to have the answers so that we don't run  
14 through this again. Thank you.

15 MS. MCNAUGHTON: Many of you have signed  
16 in. I think you've signed in. Still not on? I was  
17 going to ask you all to talk in to the microphone.  
18 When it's not working, it doesn't matter anyway.

19 As you can see, we have a  
20 transcriptionist up here. So when you approach the  
21 microphone, now that it's working, we ask you to please  
22 restate your name again and your township or borough of  
23 residence.

24 Many of you have signed in. Hopefully,  
25 we've captured everybody here who wants to speak.

1 Please forgive this in front of me.

2 So, I'm going to start calling you up one  
3 by one. Before we move into the category of county and  
4 municipal-elected officials, are there any federal or  
5 state officials that wanted to say anything?

6 I know we had some representatives from  
7 the agencies. Anybody else who wanted to speak? Okay.

8 We're going to move then into county and  
9 municipality-elected officials. Please forgive me if I  
10 don't pronounce your name properly.

11 Start with Vinny Accordino from the  
12 Milford Borough, just approach the mic. Thank you.

13 MR. ACCORDINO: Thank you. Good  
14 afternoon. Vinny Accordino, councilman, Milford  
15 Borough.

16 My main job in the borough is the  
17 infrastructure, streets, lights, making sure all the  
18 storm systems are working and everything is intact.

19 And we were mostly on top of it. We had  
20 plenty advance on the news of this coming storm.  
21 The severity of it, I guess maybe a lot of people  
22 looked at it from the last one that we had the  
23 following year, it could have maybe rode this one out  
24 the same way. Didn't turn out that way.

25 What I kind of didn't see out there was

1 the presence of a lot of the supervisions of the people  
2 that really have the oversight of the big pockets of  
3 lights that might be out in an area, and especially out  
4 in the field.

5 Now, that's where I spend most of my  
6 time, is out in the field, working with the fire  
7 department, if they're out there, emergency management.  
8 Now, all of that was working well.

9 What I didn't see was somebody that was  
10 in close proximity to where you can get ahold of say,  
11 listen, we have this problem over there. This is  
12 what's happening over there and maybe you can pass it  
13 on and get that information up to your counterparts and  
14 see that maybe attend to it in maybe a different  
15 fashion or quicker fashion.

16 But that's what I just seem to not see  
17 the presence of. Okay. That's about it. Thank you.

18 MS. MCNAUGHTON: May I have Tom Ryan,  
19 please, from Delaware Township?

20 MR. RYAN: That was quick. I'm here to  
21 comment on Delaware Township, Tommy Ryan. I'm the  
22 chairman of Delaware Board of Supervisors, Delaware  
23 Township. I think I might take another path.

24 I want my rates reduced. But besides  
25 that, I think that my statement is directed to Met-Ed.

1 We were a hundred percent out, hundred percent  
2 affected.

3 8,000 residents, 5,054 homes. We had  
4 massive destruction with trees. And I am probably --  
5 I've lived through the wrecked snows of '74 to '76,  
6 Lee, Irene, the other storms, all the Noreasters.

7 From my perspective, being an elected  
8 official, from my first year as an elected official, I  
9 felt that Met-Ed did a good job. I think they were  
10 well-prepared.

11 I understand the infrastructure, I think,  
12 and that is what gave me a little bit of an edge. I  
13 understood what the process was.

14 But we were able to communicate that to  
15 our residents, our EOC in Pike County communicated with  
16 us. We were able to -- I was able to. And I know  
17 there are some other questions to that.

18 But my emergency management director, Mr.  
19 Bodecker, was able to communicate with them. Listen,  
20 we didn't agree with the EOC, but we communicated.

21 I was able to have direct communications with  
22 the Met-Ed representative at the EOC. And then many --  
23 our EOC closed on Tuesday. Tuesday evening it closed.

24 At that point is when we started the  
25 trip. It was, okay, where are we now? But then we

1 began the conference calls, and we began to get updated  
2 on the conference calls, which were very effective.

3           What we did is, we put up a map. We  
4 identified the trouble points. We sent out 5,000  
5 pieces of literature to our people. We were able to  
6 communicate.

7           We got some complaints, absolutely. But  
8 I think my biggest failing was when -- we have major  
9 thoroughfare. 739 comes through and Silver Lake comes  
10 through, go to major communities.

11           The detour is impossible. You're stuck.  
12 You're trapped. So we had a major tree down on Silver  
13 Lake road, wrapped in primaries.

14           That is an issue. Because what happens  
15 is, we let Met-Ed know or we let EOC know, EOC notifies  
16 Met-Ed. But no one comes out. They're busy. And I  
17 understand they're busy doing other things.

18           But in the meantime, I've got a situation  
19 where the State Police were called, because no one came  
20 out. We have to, I think, in my opinion, identify  
21 priority areas no matter what the conditions are. If  
22 the power is out, it's out, but at least come out and  
23 test the lines.

24           If you test the lines, we, as a township,  
25 have no problem cutting the trees. They love to get

1 chain saws going, these guys.

2 My other problem was, once we had no  
3 response with the tree cutting or the identification of  
4 light -- I had major roads shut down in the course of  
5 it.

6 But once we identified those, I wound up  
7 -- I was fortunate to get a National Guard, 32 troopers  
8 in. I was fortunate enough to get that through EOC.  
9 But the deal was, we still couldn't keep the roads  
10 closed because people were driving on the roads that  
11 were absolutely dangerous.

12 And they were throwing the signs. The  
13 unique part of this storm is, they were able to get out  
14 the next day. We had no rain. So, they were out.  
15 They were going to the stores. They were doing  
16 whatever they do.

17 And guess what? Driving under trees,  
18 doing what they do. Next thing I have a community  
19 blocked in, with primaries wrapped around a wire. No  
20 access to the community. No ins, no outs.

21 People came out on their own, started  
22 cutting trees. I have one guy decided to take it on  
23 himself on Park Road. We had a tree down. You could  
24 drive under it. But we had the National Guard. The  
25 National Guard was there. Drove through the National

1 Guard.

2 Took out his chainsaw and started cutting  
3 this 2 foot, 65-foot tall pine in pieces. When I got  
4 called from the National Guard, they told me to get up  
5 there. It went up.

6 It winds up he cut two pieces on the  
7 bottom. I walked in. He just cut the last piece. The  
8 tree swung. Now I had 40 feet of pine tree hanging in  
9 the wires and he's standing there looking at it.

10 I said, what are you going to do now? He  
11 said, I'm going rip it down. I said really? How are  
12 you going to get up there, first of all? Secondly,  
13 you're going to rip the poles with it?

14 That's where the failing is. Once we get  
15 the civilians on the street, we can't control them.  
16 And they start ripping and tearing.

17 Listen, I understand what they're doing.  
18 But that's where the failing, I think, is. We have to  
19 identify those positions. Let us do the work. I mean,  
20 our township was more than willing to get out there  
21 with chainsaws and start whacking.

22 We just need Met-Ed out there to say,  
23 hey, these trees are okay to cut. The same thing with  
24 the substation. We were able to communicate -- I had  
25 13 trucks from Indiana, sitting on Dooley Road.

1 All I got phone calls about, got 13  
2 trucks on Dooley Road. But I understood that we had to  
3 get a Met-Ed person up there to go through the  
4 substation first. And let them know that, hey, it's  
5 safe to go in here. It's okay.

6 You know, that person had to be a Met-Ed  
7 person. We were able to communicate that to people.  
8 That's the information we were able to communicate.

9 So, from my perspective, there was a  
10 couple of holes. But in readiness, I think Met-Ed was  
11 ready for this, I think more so than any other storm  
12 they've gone through. But those are the little holes  
13 that were missing.

14 Once the EOC closes, the communications  
15 becomes deep. That's when the problem begins. So,  
16 local communications from Met-Ed, once an EOC is  
17 closed, is key, because we can get the information out.

18 Centralized county EOC cannot touch the  
19 residents. I can touch every one of my residents. So,  
20 I appreciate your time. I appreciate you coming here.  
21 Thank you, Senator Baker, Representative Brown, Mario,  
22 as always. Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

23 MS. MCNAUGHTON: Paul Menditto from  
24 Lehman Township.

25 MR. MENDITTO: Paul Menditto, Lehman

1 Township Supervisor. Okay. There were a couple of  
2 things that I think were done well and a couple things  
3 that were not done well.

4 The first thing was the conference calls  
5 that Met-Ed set up. Unfortunately, with Lehman  
6 Township, we were completely out of communication for  
7 several days. We had no phones, no cell, no internet,  
8 as well as no power.

9 We have a large stand-by generator for  
10 our township building, so we had power. But we had no  
11 other way to communicate.

12 So, we were not aware of -- in Lehman  
13 Township, of the conference calls. I happen to find  
14 out from Tom Ryan from Delaware on Friday night. So I  
15 hear the conference calls on Friday, Saturday and  
16 Sunday.

17 I think, going forward, one of the things  
18 might be, when we have a large storm coming is send out  
19 the e-mail with the information about the conference  
20 calls ahead of time. So, that way, we know, if we are  
21 where we are and, you know, if we can get phone  
22 service, we can get in on the conference call. We'll  
23 already have the access codes and all that stuff. So,  
24 that was good.

25 A couple of things that, you know, I have

1 to say that I agree with Representative Scavello that  
2 it sounded like PPL was better prepared than Met-Ed.

3 I'm saying that based on the fact it  
4 seemed like PPL had their customers up and running more  
5 quickly than Met-Ed did.

6 Okay. And, you know, I know this is  
7 judicial and I know this is testimony. But most of  
8 what I'm saying and going to say is hearsay. But as a  
9 representative of people, I have to bring my peoples'  
10 concerns to you. So, these are the concerns of the  
11 people.

12 Okay. Also, it seemed like we needed to  
13 move the manpower that Met-Ed had allocated, whether it  
14 was their own or people that came in from out of state,  
15 we needed to move them further north a little more  
16 quickly.

17 One of the things on the conference call  
18 was we heard on each call, how the allocation of  
19 manpower was.

20 And it was usually quite small in Pike  
21 County. Okay. And I understand, we are a small  
22 county. But we do have the same problems that other  
23 people have when power is out.

24 And we also had major thoroughfares that  
25 were, you know, impassable. And, you know, trees are

1 down, wires are in the trees. And I'm hearing things  
2 that, you know, we have to get wires out of the trees  
3 before we can cut the trees.

4 But Met-Ed was saying, we need to get the  
5 trees out of the way so we can get to the wires.  
6 And I know that it goes back and forth.

7 You know, it's classic he said, she said  
8 type of situation. These are the things that I hear.  
9 The other thing is, it seemed to me, from things I  
10 heard, that PPL was out fixing while Met-Ed was  
11 assessing.

12 Okay. I heard from a lot of people,  
13 we're assessing, we're assessing, we're assessing. I  
14 know that there were people who had pole numbers and  
15 things like that. Went to the EOC, you know, and the  
16 Met-Ed representative was there.

17 He said, we're going to do our own  
18 assessment. We don't want the pole numbers from  
19 anybody. Is that true? Is that not true? I don't  
20 know.

21 Again, these are the things that I heard,  
22 and I'm bringing the concerns here. Okay. And that's  
23 pretty much my comments. I know it was an unusual  
24 storm.

25 I like the slideshow that Met-Ed was

1 showing in the back. It certainly was an eye opener on  
2 how you get some of those lines set back up in areas  
3 where you couldn't get any vehicles, everything had to  
4 be done by hand.

5 You know, so, I appreciate what Met-Ed  
6 did do. I appreciate the PUC coming down and listening  
7 to our comments.

8 Senator Baker, thank you so much for  
9 setting this up. And, of course, to the men and women  
10 that worked night and day in the dark, in the -- in bad  
11 weather in the cold and the wind. Our heart goes out  
12 to them for all the good work that they did.

13 So, okay, thank you very much.

14 MS. MCNAUGHTON: Mitchell Marcus from  
15 Middle Smithfield Township.

16 MR. MARCUS: Good afternoon, ladies and  
17 gentlemen. We have all three supervisors representing  
18 our township.

19 So each one of us is going to talk a  
20 little bit about the concerns that we have that  
21 basically falls under responsibility. This way, so we  
22 can keep it short, right to the point and help  
23 expedite.

24 First of all, thank everybody for  
25 allowing us to be here and for being here yourselves.

1 Thank you, Senator for orchestrating this.  
2 Representative Brown and Representative Scavello for  
3 being here and everybody else.

4 One of the concerns that we have heard  
5 from customers is basically dealing with Met-Ed's  
6 response to customers who needed -- who had requested  
7 written responses to Met-Ed that required, by their  
8 insurance companies, to provide the exact cause of loss  
9 -- power loss that they sustained in order for the  
10 insurance company to provide coverage information, so  
11 they can determine whether you have coverage or not.

12 The response that was given to the Met-Ed  
13 customers who request this information was they  
14 received a generic letter that basically did not  
15 provide the exact details of loss that was needed for  
16 the insurance carrier to determine whether they deemed  
17 coverage or not.

18 What they got instead was when they  
19 called you up, why can't I get this information? They  
20 were told that in order for them to receive this  
21 information, they would have to provide a subpoena and  
22 then Met-Ed would provide such information.

23 It's kind of drastic when people need  
24 help. My suggestion going forward is just to provide  
25 these people their information because it delays the

1 claim process.

2 If you ever see this firsthand, it's kind  
3 of heart breaking. People are panic stricken and need  
4 help. The insurance companies are willing to help.  
5 But without that determination, they can't for the  
6 contract. So, we ask that, going forward, to take that  
7 into consideration.

8 On an upside, I would like to acknowledge  
9 the wonderful work that Duke Energy provided,  
10 professionalism and courtesy, coming up here all the  
11 way from North Carolina to help us.

12 And also thank the hundreds of thousands  
13 of workers out there, risking their lives, working in  
14 the inclement weather doing the excellent job they did  
15 to help in this situation. Thank you for your time.

16 MS. MCNAUGHTON: John Sivick of Lehman  
17 Township, please.

18 MR. SIVICK: Good afternoon. John  
19 Sivick, Lehman Township Chairman, roadmaster. Fourteen  
20 months ago when I was questioned by the paper and the  
21 words weren't put into writing, I would have  
22 complimented Met-Ed with working with me, my road crew,  
23 my fire department, ambulance corp. in the last two  
24 storms that we had.

25 But in this storm, they dropped the ball.

1 There was no communications. Grant it, as Paul stated,  
2 we had problems with communications for a few days.

3 But anywhere from the 3rd to the 10th day  
4 on, it was almost no communications. People I was able  
5 to reach out to through the help of Senator Brown or  
6 Rosemary Brown and Senator Baker were almost  
7 non-existing.

8 In previous -- I've been involved in at  
9 least four severe storms in our township as a  
10 supervisor for 18 years and road master for that long.  
11 We always had communication. And communications is the  
12 biggest part where we are able to move ahead and notify  
13 the public what's going on. Let them understand how  
14 Met-Ed was working to put large numbers of people back  
15 in to service as quickly as possible. It didn't happen  
16 this time.

17 And I can stand there and tell you that I  
18 understood the philosophy of putting a thousand people  
19 back in service in a three-hour period because my house  
20 is the last house to get service in Saw Creek, no  
21 matter what storm it is.

22 I was without power for every storm for  
23 the last four storms for at least 7 to 10 days. So, as  
24 supervisor and resident of Saw Creek, and even the  
25 township, I understand. But this particular time they

1 definitely dropped the ball.

2           It could have been better. We could have  
3 communicated better, especially when we had the  
4 opportunity to community. The people that I was able  
5 to reach out to weren't successful. I don't know what  
6 the philosophy was this time.

7           My residents, just like Mr. Ryan had 13  
8 trucks in his township. I had more than that, but they  
9 weren't working in my township. I realized that some  
10 of the power stations were affected. Shawnee Power  
11 Station and other ones that fed my township and my  
12 residents and Middle Smithfield residents.

13           However, even when you needed trees  
14 removed from lines, for some reason, they changed the  
15 way they did business for the storm. and we couldn't  
16 adjust to it because of communications.

17           They were sending the tree companies out  
18 to determine where the poles are down. Well, in past  
19 storms, the fire department or the township were able  
20 to communicate with them and give them pole numbers and  
21 give an idea where the lines are down, especially on  
22 major roads.

23           I had every road in my township blocked  
24 for at least three days, two of them were state roads.  
25 So, it wasn't hard to determine if you said, you know,

1 State Route 201 was blocked at a certain mile marker,  
2 you know, through a series. Or State Route 2003 was  
3 blocked for 7 miles from 01 to 402, and it was  
4 ex-amount of trees, you know, they could understand  
5 that.

6 They can go to a map and say, that's six  
7 miles of road and leads to wherever. But the  
8 communication wasn't there this time.

9 And any effort to get us back on-line, it  
10 wasn't there. We still have trees on lines. Thank God  
11 I believe almost all of them aren't on power lines but  
12 there are still trees on Verizon lines and Blue Ridge  
13 cable lines that need to be removed.

14 And that's a problem too. You can drive  
15 many of these roads around here, and I don't know why  
16 the utilities don't do it, but they tell the residents  
17 about trees on line. We see a big tree on the line.  
18 Don't worry about it. We'll take care of it when the  
19 line breaks. I've heard that for 20 years.

20 That shouldn't be the philosophy.  
21 Maintenance is being compromised for dollars and cents.  
22 The best way to save money is to do maintenance. But I  
23 don't worry about the storm. I wish I had better  
24 accolades for Met-Ed, but they dropped the ball this  
25 time.

1 I'd really like to set up some type of  
2 meeting with the township officials to give our private  
3 communities -- five major private communities. So, to  
4 communicate with them is the utmost importance.

5 And one of the great thing is, is out of  
6 the five major communities, three of us are  
7 supervisors. So we know how to get in contact with our  
8 community associations and get the word out to the fire  
9 department and ambulance corps as well.

10 So, if we can meet with Met-Ed and look  
11 at Lehman Township and try to determine what areas  
12 where private communities are fed, the people would  
13 better understand what they're experiencing.

14 And the only good thing is, it's not 32  
15 degrees outside or they're not freezing. And we've had  
16 people that ran out of oxygen during the storm. And  
17 some of our employees were able to get there before the  
18 ambulance corp. to show them how to put their oxygen  
19 tanks back on.

20 I had to build a road from Mount Laurel  
21 to Tamiment because we had responses, which State Route  
22 2003 was closed. So, we build the road in the middle  
23 of the storm so the ambulance could go and respond to  
24 four calls. This is what we were doing.

25 I almost lost three guys. Big trees

1 falling down in the middle of building that road. So  
2 this is what we had to do.

3 So, I would hope that a lot of positive  
4 communication comes from this. And we would appreciate  
5 your support. Thank you.

6 MS. MCNAUGHTON: Mike Dwyer, Middle  
7 Smithfield Township.

8 MR. DWYER: Good afternoon. Mike Dwyer  
9 from Middle Smithfield Township, township supervisor  
10 and public works director.

11 Prior to Hurricane Sandy, our public  
12 works crew spent a significant amount of time trimming  
13 trees and brush throughout the township.

14 When the storm hit on October 29th,  
15 Middle Smithfield Township had an emergency management  
16 plan in full operations.

17 We already had our public works employees  
18 deployed in various locations throughout the township.  
19 We had vehicles ready on all four corners in  
20 anticipation of the clean-up effort that was going to  
21 ensue.

22 On Tuesday, our public works was out in  
23 full force. And we had the majority of our roads open.  
24 And the roads that couldn't be open were because the  
25 trees and limbs were on power lines.

1                   However, we didn't have a contact person  
2 to relay the information to where these trees were down  
3 and specifically what lines we were concerned about.

4                   Without question, the workers from all  
5 the utility companies, including those from outside the  
6 region, performed a difficult task during difficult  
7 conditions.

8                   It's my professional opinion that the  
9 workers should be commended for their hard work. My  
10 concern or complaint, if you will, is the lack of  
11 communication and coordination among the utility  
12 companies and the township officials.

13                   Each official emergency management  
14 coordinator, fire, ambulance, supervisor, and public  
15 worker was available to put a plan into effect.

16                   Having been communicated with, we could  
17 have assisted in many locations and had the roads open  
18 that much sooner for the safety of our residents.

19                   Not until the end of the week, around  
20 November 2nd, were we asked by the workers from the  
21 outside utility company if they could park their trucks  
22 in our facility overnight. We gladly allowed them full  
23 access to our township building.

24                   It's my belief that there was, on the  
25 part of the utility companies, a lack of preventive

1 maintenance.

2 In the spring and fall, coordinated  
3 preventive maintenance program should be accomplished  
4 with each township. This would include access to  
5 remote poles and lines.

6 Middle Smithfield Township stands ready  
7 to partner with all the utility providers to accomplish  
8 this maintenance. Thank you.

9 MS. MCNAUGHTON: Annette Atkinson, Middle  
10 Smithfield Township.

11 MS. ATKINSON: Good afternoon. Thank  
12 you. Annette Atkinson, Middle Smithfield Township  
13 supervisor and administrative director.

14 Before Storm Sandy hit, the township  
15 prepared the emergency management coordinator storm  
16 center.

17 We made provisions ourselves for  
18 providing for our residents, bottled water, supplies.  
19 We planned to turn the banquet hall and golf clubhouse  
20 facilities into a relief center where residents could  
21 come and warm up.

22 So it was a warming station. It was a  
23 charging station, so they could charge up their  
24 devices. They could get bottled water, ice, meals  
25 ready to eat.

1           But what our residents needed most of all  
2 was information. That was the one thing we couldn't  
3 give them. I was constantly getting calls about downed  
4 trees and questions about power restoration. I'm sure  
5 you're familiar with that.

6           Those calls escalated the longer the wait  
7 was and the colder it got. I had senior citizens in  
8 houses that were 52 degrees.

9           What I heard from residents was that they  
10 wanted to know what the schedule was for the power  
11 restoration, what areas would be up when. And I  
12 realize that it's difficult to come up with such a  
13 schedule and such a time frame.

14           But what they really wanted was the  
15 information. When our residents reported down trees,  
16 our public works department was quick to remove them.  
17 Mike was on the spot with them.

18           But we had no direct line, as he said, to  
19 utility companies. We had no one to report pole  
20 numbers or things to.

21           When our residents reported the down  
22 trees on the wires, they then became upset when those  
23 trees just sat there for days. They were frustrated.

24           One area in Upper Lakewood Road was so  
25 bad with trees on wires that the school district called

1 me as the township supervisor because the school buses  
2 couldn't get through safely. That was 10 days after  
3 the storm.

4 The tree was half cleared but half of it  
5 wasn't there. So, I told them to call the utility  
6 company. They asked me for the number and I said,  
7 you'll have to use the Yellow Pages, just like we did,  
8 because we have no direct line to the utility company.

9 Middle Smithfield Township had the most  
10 residents facing the longest wait for the power  
11 restoration.

12 We never knew what the scope of work was  
13 on a day-to-day basis or why some trees were left  
14 hanging and others were not.

15 We asked when power would be restored to  
16 hundreds of Middle Smithfield residents still out. And  
17 Met-Ed responded not to us but to the Pocono Record.

18 A representative said, well, we  
19 publicized before the storm that the customers could be  
20 without power for 7 to 10 days and that customers  
21 should prepare.

22 Well, you know, that's not an answer.  
23 That's a retort. That's not information. When the  
24 township repeatedly called Met-Ed, we never got a call  
25 back.

1                   We had to hear from a reporter what  
2 Met-Ed's response was to our request for generators or  
3 hotel rooms for at-risk residents.

4                   The township supervisors deserve the  
5 same, if not more, access to the utility companies as  
6 the press has. So, that would be my comment as far as  
7 how you can improve.

8                   The shame of it is, we could have helped  
9 Met-Ed disseminate information as well as manage your  
10 customers' expectations. Your customers are our  
11 residents. Township supervisors are the most  
12 accessible form of government that you can possibly  
13 have.

14                   We could have helped you manage your own  
15 customers' expectations, but we were never enlisted by  
16 you to do that.

17                   The suggestion for Met-Ed and all  
18 utilities, that includes cable and phone, is to include  
19 local government in the process.

20                   We had no liaison from a utility company.  
21 I mean, thank goodness Mike talked to the lineman. Him  
22 doing that, saved that company -- saved Duke Energy  
23 four hours of commuting a day, just being able to park  
24 at our township building.

25                   That was four hours a day they were able

1 to work to restore power rather than commute. That's a  
2 valuable thing.

3 Township supervisors are in the trenches  
4 every single day. We could have helped Met-Ed by  
5 reporting specific downed wires and their severity, if  
6 only we had a contact number to do so. And we could  
7 have disseminated information for you faster on behalf  
8 of Met-Ed or any utility directly to your customers, if  
9 only we were included in the process.

10 So, we stand ready to work with you.

11 Thank you.

12 MS. MCNAUGHTON: Pike County Commissioner  
13 Matt Osterberg.

14 MR. OSTERBERG: Thank you all for coming  
15 here to hear our concerns. I'm representing Pike  
16 County here, and I just want to give you an update on  
17 where we fell in with this storm.

18 In October, we opened up a brand new  
19 emergency center. And it worked out very well. In  
20 that center, we have a basement for 40 seats. Power  
21 companies were there. National Guard were there.  
22 Pennsylvania State Police, a Met-Ed rep was there. And  
23 that worked out very well because it was able to help  
24 us spread the information that we needed to get to the  
25 townships that you're hearing tonight.

1           But, more importantly, what I hear here  
2 tonight from the municipality leaders is the lack of  
3 communication and knowledge of who they are and the  
4 power companies that represent them.

5           And I'll tell you my previous job before  
6 being county commissioner. I was borough president of  
7 Milford.

8           A number of years ago, we had some issues  
9 up there with our local power company, which is Orange  
10 and Rockland. We felt the same way. We didn't know  
11 who to talk to when we had a power outage.

12           We had lots of misinformation and never  
13 got any responses. What happened was, I believe the  
14 PUC formed this, they put together an advisory board.

15           The advisory board is made up of  
16 municipal leaders from that part of Pike County  
17 represented by Orange and Rockland.

18           What that has done with this Hurricane  
19 Sandy is that those representatives up there know who  
20 to talk to in the utility. And they have their cell  
21 phone numbers. They have their home numbers. So, this  
22 is information that can be used whether there's an  
23 emergency. Or if it's just a local event, you know, if  
24 a tree goes down on a side street or whatever, the  
25 representative knows who to call.

1                   Otherwise, you dial those 800 numbers,  
2 you don't get any place. And we all know that. So, I  
3 think it's important that the PUC look at the example.  
4 And the Orange and Rockland representatives are here  
5 and ask them how it all works but it works very well.

6                   And I think Delaware, Lehman, Middle  
7 Smithfield, all of those municipalities are saying the  
8 same thing. They didn't know who to talk to. They  
9 don't have any numbers, and there's no one there to  
10 represent them to get the answers that they need.

11                   So, that's all I need to share with you.  
12 But I think it's very important that you move ahead on  
13 that and not just suggest it, I think as you did with  
14 Orange and Rockland, you made it a mandatory part of  
15 their facility.

16                   And now they're a very integral part of  
17 that part of Pike County and also in the community.  
18 they're represented on EDA, the Chamber of Commerces,  
19 lots of places where people have contact with the  
20 power.

21                   They are part of the community. They  
22 should be more than somebody servicing and taking our  
23 money every month, what most people think power  
24 companies do. They need to help us.

25                   MS. MCNAUGHTON: This is the last

1 municipal or county official that I have on the sign-in  
2 sheet. Is there anyone present who was not able to  
3 sign in who was a municipal or county leader who would  
4 like to address the room?

5 If not, we're gonna move on to the  
6 emergency management response. I would like to call  
7 up, please, Guy Miller from Monroe County Emergency  
8 Management Agency.

9 MR. MILLER: Good evening, everyone.  
10 those of you who don't know me, I'm Guy Miller,  
11 director of emergency management from Monroe County.  
12 Life-long resident of Monroe County. Been involved in  
13 emergency services for 25 years.

14 What I'm going to do is talk about two  
15 things tonight. One is the storm itself and how we  
16 respond within Monroe County.

17 The second thing is, how emergency  
18 response works in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.  
19 Because I think it's very clear, if you listen to some  
20 of the comments, people are not clear on how that  
21 works.

22 So, let me start off with our impact from  
23 Monroe County on this storm. And this is a  
24 presentation that I made to FEMA in trying to get a  
25 disaster declaration for the county in trying to plead

1 our case for the impact.

2 Nineteen municipalities in Monroe County  
3 declared a disaster for Superstorm Sandy. One borough  
4 did not. Mount Pocono Borough did not declare a  
5 disaster, but 19 out of 20 declared.

6 The impact on Monroe County. Monroe  
7 County Emergency Operations Center, which Pike County  
8 also has one, was activated for eight days.

9 It had a total of 1,080 hours of time  
10 spent in the emergency operations center. 80 percent  
11 of that time was volunteers. 80 percent of the time  
12 was volunteers. Please remember that, because I'm  
13 going to come back to that in a minute.

14 Also participating in this emergency  
15 operation center for us was our local fire police, who  
16 had to provide us security at our emergency operations  
17 center.

18 Like Lee and Irene, we had to provide  
19 security for the power company because of residents and  
20 citizens that were irate about the power outages.

21 We also had that happen this time in our  
22 emergency operations center. My life was threatened  
23 once.

24 The sheriff's department was there, Boy  
25 Scouts, Girl Scouts. You name it, they were this. The

1 agencies involved in our EOC, we had the National Guard  
2 as a representative. Met-Ed had a representative in  
3 there. PPL had one in there. Both from Scavello's and  
4 Brown's office helped us out during the week.

5 PEMA was in our office. Pocono Raceway  
6 sent down their management team to help me out, the  
7 EOC. The Office of the Aging, the Amateur Radio Club  
8 operators were in there.

9 Northeast Search and Rescue provided us  
10 leadership and provided us very valuable resources at  
11 our shelters for animals, pets and shelters.

12 East Penn Search and Rescue who also  
13 helped us with swiftwater rescue, if we were going to  
14 need that. Our county commissioners were in there.  
15 Voter registration, as you know, it was a national  
16 election. It was quite an issue.

17 Red Cross was there. And, yes, we had  
18 the Pocono Record, not in our EOC, but in our joint  
19 information center helping us communicate to the  
20 public.

21 Now, there was a lot of numbers thrown  
22 around. The actual numbers are very hard to gather,  
23 but this is what we presented.

24 Approximately 75,000 customers were  
25 without power over eight days in Monroe County. And I

1 know there was other counties involved. I only  
2 represent Monroe.

3 It was estimated that approximately 60  
4 percent of the customers without power had extensive  
5 food loss.

6 Now, it's very hard to determine what  
7 that amount is. But we actually worked out our formula  
8 ourselves. So we said that based on an estimate of  
9 50,000 customers, out of power by day 3, the  
10 approximate food loss in Monroe County was 10 million,  
11 \$500,000.00.

12 And that's figured on a refrigerator or  
13 freezer full of food at around \$300.00 at today's  
14 prices, give or take either way. We can argue all day  
15 about that. But that's a real serious impact that  
16 we'll never get back.

17 School districts. All four school  
18 districts in Monroe County were closed for five days.  
19 That included 35 school buildings and approximately  
20 35,000 students missed school for that week, not to  
21 mention the impact on the parents and everything else  
22 that was going on.

23 East Stroudsburg University canceled  
24 classes and activities for two days. And Northampton  
25 Community College canceled their classes and activities

1 for one day.

2 We also had three American Red Cross  
3 shelters set up. And understand when it comes to  
4 shelters, that we, in emergency management, recognize  
5 the American Red Cross as our shelter providers.

6 They can help us get shelters together.  
7 It's more than just setting up a church or a clubhouse  
8 as a shelter. We have to account for people coming in.  
9 We have to make sure in today's society that we don't  
10 have pedophiles coming in. We have children in there.

11 It's very, very important that a shelter  
12 is set up a proper way. One of the things we vowed to  
13 do is get volunteers for Red Cross and build more  
14 shelters.

15 At East Stroudsburg University, we had  
16 the first mega shelter set up for 500 people in  
17 anticipation for those folks maybe coming from New York  
18 and New Jersey.

19 My concern was our own residents first.  
20 And, yes, the shelter was opened up for them. East  
21 Stroudsburg High School South was opened up as a  
22 shelter, and Pocono High School West as opened up as  
23 shelter.

24 We had three warming stations opened up.  
25 East Stroudsburg University obviously was a warming

1 station. The difference between the warming station  
2 and a shelter is a warming station allows for meals, to  
3 get warm, take a shower, take a break from what's going  
4 on but you can't stay overnight. The shelter, you're  
5 allowed to stay overnight.

6 So, we had East Stroudsburg University,  
7 Pocono Mountain High School West, and Pleasant Valley  
8 High School was also opened up as a warming station.

9 One of the things we experienced, and I  
10 think some of us in this room experienced this for the  
11 first time and, for me, it was quite perplexing in the  
12 beginning.

13 Approximately 10 gasoline spills since  
14 reported during 10/30 to 11/4, involving large  
15 quantities of gas and diesel that were being  
16 inappropriately contained and transported.

17 We all saw the lines in the gas stations.  
18 I can tell you I had phone calls with local law  
19 enforcement agency in the county. We were very close  
20 to a civil disorder issue within this county.  
21 Something I've never experienced before. And quite  
22 honestly, glad it didn't happen, because it was very,  
23 very difficult to get our arms around this.

24 Two fueling stations actually ran out of  
25 fuel and gasoline and delayed in receiving shipments.

1 But we were very, very concerned with this.

2 We've also asked the State Police to get  
3 involved a little more than our local folks that there  
4 is laws what kind of containers you can use to  
5 transport fuels.

6 And we made that very clear to our  
7 residents on the Facebook page, Pocono Record and  
8 through other media outlets that there are proper ways  
9 to transport fuel. Very, very big concern now.

10 I just -- and I don't typically like to  
11 do this, I want to correct Mario for a minute, but he  
12 was in my emergency operations not 911. The 911 center  
13 is upstairs. It is a public safety center, if you  
14 would.

15 I wanted to clear it up. Thank you. I  
16 appreciate your kind words.

17 The call volume for that three-day  
18 period, and I'm not the director for that center, Gary  
19 Hoffman is, but he asked me to convey this.

20 Our law enforcement calls for three-day  
21 period was up 48 percent. Our emergency and medical  
22 service calls was up 81 percent. And the real one, the  
23 fire calls was up 200 percent, over that three-day  
24 period.

25 And we all know what the fire service

1 does for us in Monroe County. And, yes, they are all  
2 volunteers.

3 But one thing we experienced this time  
4 around that we never experienced before, and I heard  
5 one other person talk about this, was the safety of our  
6 responders.

7 At one point during the storm, we pulled  
8 them off the streets. It was unsafe for responders to  
9 be out there. It was unsafe for PennDOT to be out  
10 there during the storm.

11 We pulled them. And I've gotten some  
12 nasty calls about that. But quite honestly, if I had  
13 to do it again tomorrow, I would do it again tomorrow.  
14 Those people are just as important as anybody else  
15 that's out there.

16 So that's something that we never  
17 experienced before, that I can remember in Monroe  
18 County, of actually having not to respond to something,  
19 unless it was ultimately a life and death situation,  
20 they just were not out to respond.

21 The last impact piece I'll finish up with  
22 is is the actual report that we sent in to FEMA on  
23 property damages.

24 We had four single family homes  
25 destroyed. 15 with major damage. 61 with minor damage.

1 119 were affected. And one was in inaccessible to get  
2 to.

3 Those are the type of numbers that go to  
4 FEMA to try to determine whether we're going to get any  
5 kind of disaster recovery from the storm.

6 A lot is talked about lessons learned.  
7 And, obviously, as director emergency manager of the  
8 county, I can tell you, we learned a lot of things.

9 We were not -- I'm here to tell you, my  
10 office was not as prepared as we would like to have  
11 been for a storm of this magnitude.

12 We were scrambling. We were playing  
13 catch-up. Mario and Rosemary will tell you, it was an  
14 exhausting first three days just trying to get our arms  
15 around the size and the magnitude of this storm.

16 We reached out to every one of our  
17 municipal leaders every single day for three days on a  
18 conference call, trying to relay information to them  
19 and also letting them know that if they had issues, to  
20 let us know and we can communicate them in.

21 Not everybody was on the call every day.  
22 Near the end, they were dropping off more than I would  
23 have liked to have seen.

24 But moving forward in the future, our  
25 office will focus on better preparedness and planning

1 practices for identifying our critical infrastructure,  
2 like fueling stations, grocery stores and pharmacies.

3 With this at the focus, this will allow  
4 our community to recover quicker by providing the  
5 commodities to regain normal daily activities.

6 I don't think we'll be able to continue  
7 just to give out food and water and things like that.

8 We're going to need to make sure that  
9 those resources are available are open and the roads  
10 are open that we can get our folks in our community to  
11 those.

12 We will continue to focus with the local  
13 municipalities, including first-responders, public  
14 works to help us identify critical road closures so  
15 that we can relay the information to those agencies to  
16 correct the problem.

17 We had a lot of people in the emergency  
18 operation center, and we had a lot of roads closed.  
19 But we did not have a great system to track those.

20 We thought we did. We found some holes  
21 in that system, so we're here to tell you we're going  
22 to do better at that next time so we can get the roads  
23 open and get the folks that need the information to get  
24 those open.

25 PennDOT was in our EOC for two days and

1 we were able to get a lot of information to them, had a  
2 lot of municipal roads that were just devastated.

3           Lastly, we would like all residents to  
4 consider their neighbors in the next disaster.  
5 Reaching out to your neighbors will not only help them,  
6 but may also provide you with the needs you have that  
7 may be just next door to you.

8           Our volunteer organizations are also a  
9 very large part of our response and recover operations  
10 and emergency management.

11           The Red Cross is the prime supply of  
12 shelters. As I said before, services for the county  
13 and shelter services require people. So anything that  
14 our residents can do to help would be appreciated.

15           And all I can say is, volunteer today if  
16 you can. We cannot open up a shelter without  
17 volunteers. And we will not open up a shelter without  
18 it being opened properly.

19           The last thing I will talk about, and  
20 Senator Baker asked me to talk a little bit about this,  
21 and that is something called Title 35, which is our  
22 bible to respond to disasters.

23           It's currently getting ready to be  
24 rewritten. But I don't think it will change. The fact  
25 is, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, everything

1 starts at the lowest level of government. That is the  
2 municipalities.

3 When the municipalities become  
4 overwhelmed, they come to the county. When they  
5 become overwhelmed, they go to the state. That's the  
6 way it worked this time. We have a lot to do to make  
7 that better. Trust me. Really do.

8 I had municipalities, I couldn't get on a  
9 phone call. I had other ones like Middle Smithfield,  
10 right there, ready to go to help us any way they could.

11 So, we need to do a lot of work that way.  
12 But understand that calling -- excuse me, Mario and  
13 Rosemary, calling them individually about your power  
14 may satisfy you. But it will not get the job done.

15 You must communicate that to the  
16 utilities. And if the municipalities have that  
17 information, they need to get it us so we can get it to  
18 the utilities because they were in our EOC.

19 It's very, very important that we get  
20 this information to them so they can restore the power  
21 and get it back to where it needs to be.

22 That's really all I have. Questions?  
23 That's all I have.

24 MS. MCNAUGHTON: Director Miller is the  
25 only emergency management official I have on the

1 sign-in sheet.

2 Are there any other emergency management  
3 officials who would like to speak that did not have an  
4 opportunity to sign in on the sheet?

5 Okay. Looks good. We're trying to keep  
6 on time here. We have quite an extensive list of  
7 public comments and also business and community  
8 association comments.

9 Remind everybody to try to keep your  
10 comments to 3 to 5 minutes. And so the business leader  
11 and community association section, first on the list is  
12 Carl Wilgus, the executive director of the Pocono  
13 Mountains Business Bureau.

14 MR. WILGUS: Yes. Thank you very much.  
15 Applause at the end, not the beginning, please.

16 First allow me to thank you Senator Baker  
17 for encouraging this meeting to take place and,  
18 obviously, Representative Scavello and Representative  
19 Brown for being here, along with the PUC.

20 My name is Carl Wilgus. I am a resident  
21 of Middle Smithfield Township and the president and CEO  
22 of the Pocono Mountain Visitors' Bureau, which makes me  
23 both a residential and business customer of Met-Ed.

24 Focus the majority of my comments on  
25 issues related to business interruptions resulting from

1 Hurricane Sandy. And what I can only characterize as  
2 lack of service response by Met-Ed.

3 In the past 14 months, this is their  
4 third time we've experienced service interruptions from  
5 our utility companies.

6 And based on the commonly-held belief  
7 that these environmental-evident events, whether they  
8 be earthquakes, hurricanes and/or noreasters, they are  
9 going to be a more common occurrence.

10 Changes are needed and necessary if we're  
11 going to enjoy a stable, more reliable power grid. It  
12 appears to me that the aging infrastructure of the  
13 above-ground electric wires, through densely forested,  
14 rural areas can only be categorized as prescription for  
15 disaster.

16 Then when you add to what appears to be a  
17 concerted effort on the part of the utilities to cut  
18 back and reduce appropriate and necessary routine  
19 right-of-way maintenance, one can only be led to the  
20 logical conclusion that these disruptions will continue  
21 to happen.

22 What does it take and when will the  
23 utility companies finally come to the awareness that  
24 underground transmission lines are not only needed but  
25 necessary.

1                   Yes. Additional cost come with  
2 underground transmission. But the cumulative effect of  
3 these extended periods of service interruptions also  
4 carry a high price.

5                   The status quo just does not work. Now,  
6 I must admit that I'm not a professional when it comes  
7 to the utility companies.

8                   But based upon the performance of Met-Ed,  
9 I question their professionalism and their commitment  
10 to their customers.

11                  The hospitality and tourism industry of  
12 the Pocono Mountains is the largest employer and number  
13 one revenue producers.

14                  We saw last year with Hurricane Irene and  
15 Tropical Storm Lee, and again last month with Hurricane  
16 Sandy, extended power outages resulting in substantial  
17 business interruptions.

18                  These interruptions not only affected  
19 visitors but the very facilities providing relief from  
20 the storm for residents of Northeast Pennsylvania, as  
21 well as displaced residents from New Jersey and New  
22 York.

23                  Our ability to provide that relief  
24 required our facilities to have power. Unfortunately,  
25 this was not the case. We could have housed literally

1 thousands more needy people but unfortunately had to  
2 turn them away because the lights were not on.

3 This current system is just unacceptable  
4 and certainly unnecessary. I would tell you from my  
5 observations and discussion with many of our more than  
6 500 plus members, it seems that PPL learned its lesson  
7 from Irene and Lee.

8 But somehow, Met-Ed still did not receive  
9 the message. At the very least, one would think that  
10 Met-Ed could have done a competent job communicating to  
11 his customer base regarding the status of outage and  
12 resumption of service. As a residential customer, I  
13 witnessed this firsthand.

14 On Monday night, October 29th, I lost my  
15 residential power around 5:45. Within 10 minutes,  
16 called the Met-Ed 800 number to report the outage. At  
17 which time, I was placed in the automatic prompt  
18 system, eventually leaving a voice mail message.

19 At 11:30 p.m. that night, I received a  
20 call from a Met-Ed customer service operator informing  
21 me that my call would be monitored.

22 After introducing herself, the customer  
23 service agent asked a series of questions; such as, do  
24 you have wires down on the ground? Did you see any  
25 sparking or fires? Do you have any trees, downed

1 wires? Do you know of any blown transmitters?

2 At the end of her questioning was my  
3 opportunity to simply ask for an estimate of when I  
4 might expect the power to be restored.

5 Her response was something to the effect,  
6 that a lot of people were out of power and that no  
7 estimate was available.

8 The clincher to the absurdity of this  
9 conversation then came when she asked if I was  
10 satisfied with the phone call.

11 My response was, what should I be  
12 satisfied with, the fact that you called me at 11:30 at  
13 night, that you were unable to provide any information  
14 to me?

15 She asked me the same question three  
16 times. Three times, to which I said, why should I be  
17 pleased by this phone call? I finally hung up. I was  
18 left with a -- to summarize, that, for some reason,  
19 Met-Ed customer satisfaction rating was more related to  
20 the level of satisfaction with the phone call, phone  
21 conversation than with anything else.

22 Now, if, in fact, that's the case, I  
23 would highly encourage the PUC to direct Met-Ed to  
24 re-evaluate both the customer service communication  
25 policy, as well as the customer service rating system

1 that they imply, because what they did was more  
2 infuriating than helpful.

3 And I would encourage you to work with  
4 all the utilities to help them understand the value and  
5 importance of having power both for the economic impact  
6 for the businesses to the state and the people that  
7 they employ.

8 I thank you for your time and appreciate  
9 the opportunity to come before you.

10 MS. MCNAUGHTON: James Ertle from  
11 Fernwood.

12 MR. ERTLE: I want to first thank  
13 everybody for coming to Fernwood. I'm happy to host  
14 the event tonight.

15 Did want to discuss a couple topics of  
16 what we experienced in the business world. There are  
17 several businesses that I have. I have the Big Daddy's  
18 Family Barbeque on 611, serviced by PPL.

19 I have the Comfort Inn in Bartonsville.  
20 That is serviced by Met-Ed. We also have Ertle Subaru  
21 located on 611 and Fernwood up here on 209.

22 Again, I would probably go back to a lot  
23 of the communication that you've already received.  
24 Communication was terrible.

25 You know, luckily, I have a cell phone

1 with a lot of contacts to get back-door information.  
2 You literally had to know employees through the utility  
3 companies to get any accuracy of where they're even  
4 working at.

5 And knowing where they're working at  
6 didn't always make you happy. But at least you knew,  
7 waiting to tell a hundred employees, should they come,  
8 should they clean rooms. Do they have power to vacuum  
9 the rooms.

10 We were down for literally a week at the  
11 Comfort inn at Bartonsville. From Monday at 6:00, we  
12 lost power. We didn't receive power back until I  
13 believe the afternoon on that following Sunday.

14 It was about 4 or 500 residents that we  
15 could have put in place. The Giant is also on that  
16 same grid in Bartonsville. They were a distribution  
17 point for Met-Ed customers to receive water and ice,  
18 but they had no power. They were out of water and ice  
19 within two hours.

20 So, again, the grocery stores, the  
21 hotels, we're acting as unofficial shelters. You know,  
22 I have a 20,000 square foot facility next door, the  
23 event center. I'd be more than happy to open it up as  
24 a shelter.

25 But we do need some reliability. We need

1 some assistance to, you know, know that we're going to  
2 be able to open these shelters.

3 We already have employees in place. You  
4 know, we don't need to pull for volunteers or worry if  
5 there's volunteers available. And we're out there to  
6 help our community.

7 We are seeing these storms come up more  
8 and more often. And, yeah, you know, you want to look  
9 towards our residents.

10 But you look at New Jersey and New York  
11 with the storm surges, you know, they talk about global  
12 warming, sea levels coming up. Are we going to be the  
13 unofficial shelter for New York and New Jersey  
14 residents, which is going to put more of a strain.

15 I was housing crews that were going in to  
16 Long Island. Bartonsville, once we did get the power  
17 back up, my staff was getting up at 4:30 in the morning  
18 to make sure that the crews had a hot breakfast and off  
19 to work and bagged lunches that they could pick up.

20 We are going to have more of that demand,  
21 I believe, in the Poconos, as we see these storms come  
22 in and we do need to be more prepared.

23 On the management level, and I wish  
24 PennDOT was here, unofficially talked to PennDOT and a  
25 couple of their employees. And they were turned away

1 by the utility companies to assist in cutting down the  
2 lines.

3 They needed direction from the utility  
4 companies to make sure that they weren't going to have  
5 a power surge kickback, that the lines were dead.

6 And, unfortunately, I don't know that all  
7 the guidance was -- you know, people that were familiar  
8 with the area, through the utility companies, almost  
9 having a globalization of the utility companies to cut  
10 down expenses and that.

11 I understand that from a business  
12 standpoint. But you need some local representatives to  
13 be sending these employees out to the places that they  
14 need to get to.

15 You need to have some people that know  
16 the area because you miss one street in the Poconos and  
17 that's 2000 residences. That's a whole development  
18 that you missed.

19 So, I think it did take PPL, I believe  
20 had the trucks earlier than Met-Ed. I think Met-Ed's  
21 boots-on-the-ground got here a couple days after PPL.

22 I believe PPL took a day or two to really  
23 decide that, hey, it didn't make sense to be sending  
24 people, you know, the workload out from Scranton, they  
25 needed to bring it back to Tannersville.

1 I believe that happened a day after, once  
2 they saw that the work wasn't getting distributed  
3 properly.

4 Again, for the severity of the storm, you  
5 know, both companies we should be thankful that we do  
6 have power. But Could it be better? Yeah, it could be  
7 much better.

8 Are the storms going to get worse? Yes,  
9 they are going to get worse. And we do need -- you  
10 know, you have the business community here. You have  
11 PennDOT. You have these different groups.

12 You know, we're all willing to work,  
13 especially in the time of need to get up and going.  
14 The communication aspect as well, out in Kunkletown, we  
15 didn't have a cell tower.

16 I believe the power went out. I don't  
17 believe it had a backup generator. So, luckily, I  
18 still had a landline to my house. And I pulled out the  
19 old phone and stick it in the wall and at least I had a  
20 landline to communicate.

21 But the most frustrating aspect is no  
22 communication. Not know what your next move is because  
23 we are very dependent on, you know, electricity. And  
24 we need to be a little bit more independent, have a  
25 better game plan in place, because it's going to happen

1 again. There's no question that's going to happen  
2 again.

3 Are we going to get underground lines?  
4 No, that's not going to happen. Are the trees growing  
5 in near the lines? Even if we cut sixty feet back from  
6 the lines, there's, 70, 80 foot trees just waiting to  
7 fall on it.

8 We had the perfect storm. We had rain  
9 that saturated the soil. That soil took all the pine  
10 trees that is a very low root system. We had high  
11 winds. It was a perfect storm, you know, that the  
12 utility companies don't want to experience.

13 We have to learn from this storm. Again,  
14 please, help us on the business side. You know, like I  
15 said, there were 500 residents I could have put up.

16 There's nothing more embarrassing, more  
17 frustrating than seeing that come and go. Plus the  
18 financial impact, that was being pointed out. You  
19 know, call the insurance company.

20 I have business interruption. I pay a  
21 lot on insurance. Well, your deductible has a 48-hour  
22 period of time that you're out of power. Okay. I'm  
23 into day six without power. Oh, but that's an outside  
24 utility company, so you're not covered by that.

25 If it was something on your property,

1 then you're covered. So, again, we take it on the  
2 chin. You know, we do need assistance.

3 I don't know if there's a way that, you  
4 know, we can be assured as an unofficial center, where  
5 we can house a lot of individuals to make sure that you  
6 know, Number 1, we not only get priority but we can get  
7 some backup assistance.

8 Is there some grant monies to get up some  
9 backup generators? These generators are expensive to,  
10 you know, power a grocery store or a hotel. You're  
11 probably easily in to six figures, probably talking  
12 150, \$200,000.00 for these generators.

13 Again, I'm only 150 feet from PPL. Is  
14 there a way to put a switching panel on it, to switch a  
15 power off, depending on who has the power at the time,  
16 so we can still have the residents.

17 Again, I want to thank PPL and Met-Ed.  
18 It was a terrible storm. I talked to several people  
19 that were, you know, in Ocean Side, Long Island. They  
20 were crying out my desk. They lost everything. So, we  
21 should be thankful.

22 But those residents moved up to the  
23 Poconos that weekend. They walked away from the house  
24 that they lost everything.

25 They lost their cars. And I believe

1 we're going to see movement coming over this summer  
2 from New Jersey and New York. And we just need to be  
3 prepared for our residents as well as other states that  
4 are going to be in the time of need. Thank you.

5 MS. MCNAUGHTON: Martha Loomis from  
6 Josephine's Fleur-De-Lis.

7 MS. LOOMIS: Hi. I'm Martha Loomis. I  
8 am one of the co-owners of Josephine's Fleur-De-Lis in  
9 Stroudsburg, 6th and Main in Stroudsburg.

10 We use Met-Ed. And every other store --  
11 I don't know if you know this, but every other store in  
12 Stroudsburg uses PPL. And every other store uses  
13 Met-Ed.

14 All of the stores in Stroudsburg, all the  
15 businesses in Stroudsburg that use PPL lost one day of  
16 electricity. Every store that used Met-Ed lost a week.

17 Why is this? This also occurred, and I'm  
18 speaking on behalf of our store, our employees and our  
19 customers who are inconvenienced by this outage.

20 I'm also speaking on behalf of all of  
21 other businesses affected and all the other residents.  
22 I came to work every day, hoping that the electricity  
23 was on.

24 My -- the security system wasn't working.  
25 I was worried about that situation. I came in. I had

1 to pay bills in the dark. Dunkelberger's on one side  
2 and 14 Karat Gold on the other side were open. This  
3 went on for a week.

4 Why is that? PPL was up in one day.  
5 Met-Ed, one week. They use the same wires. Don't  
6 they?

7 I have an insurance policy. I had  
8 business continuation. I filed a claim. I had to get  
9 some information. The information I needed was the  
10 duration and the cause of the power outage.

11 I call the rep. I was told and I gave a  
12 piece of paper about when the outage occurred. I  
13 asked, how could I get the duration? And how could I  
14 get the cause of the outage in writing?

15 I was, told my insurance representative  
16 would have to file a subpoena. How silly. Now, my rep  
17 did call. Did not have to file a subpoena. Got the  
18 information and the duration and was told that the  
19 wires -- that the outage was caused by the trees  
20 falling on the wires.

21 The wires had -- the trees having been  
22 taking off and the wires having to be replaced or  
23 fixed, that no substation or transmission was damaged.

24 So, that was the requirement of my  
25 continuation was one of the substations or the

1 transmissions had to be damaged.

2           The representative really thought that  
3 the answer was very vague, perhaps not accurate. I  
4 asked, why would they be so vague? And my  
5 representative postured that perhaps they were worried  
6 -- Met-Ed was worried about liability. Hence, I have  
7 no coverage.

8           I asked again, if it was caused by trees  
9 falling on wires, wires having to be fixed and the  
10 wires going in to Stroudsburg are the ones that are by  
11 PPL and Met-Ed are the same wires and the PPL customers  
12 had electricity one day and Met-Ed customers had to  
13 wait a week, why is this?

14           I would love to have an answer. Thank  
15 you for your time.

16           MS. MCNAUGHTON: Denise Depeza.

17           MS. DEPEZA: Good afternoon. Denise  
18 Depeza. Pocono Country Place. I'm the executive  
19 director there. But I also live at Pine Ridge, so I  
20 have two separate issues. It's like night and day.

21           At Pocono Country Place, most of our  
22 residents lost power for a very short period of time.  
23 There was one section that was out. The problem there  
24 is, we had no information to share with those  
25 residents.

1                   We have the capability to be shelters but  
2 we are not approved as yet. So, we could only offer  
3 heating and power up.

4                   Residents want to know, in this age of  
5 technology, why they couldn't receive e-mail or text  
6 messages, why there isn't a local number where they can  
7 call for information. The 800 number was not providing  
8 information for them. So, that's a Pocono Country  
9 Place.

10                   Now, for where I live in Pine Ridge, I  
11 was without power for almost a week. I got power back  
12 on the Friday. My concern was, I could not reach  
13 anyone to get information. My community leader did not  
14 assist me.

15                   There was an ad in the Pocono Record that  
16 said that my community was a shelter. And it was not.  
17 Public safety had to omit for you on an as-needed  
18 basis, so I had to call someone and then wait for them  
19 to open it.

20                   I was freezing. My sinuses went crazy.  
21 I had doctor bills and everything. Everything was  
22 frozen.

23                   My thing is, why was Mount Pocono, their  
24 power was restored? And that's PPL. And we have  
25 Met-Ed up here and, again, we had no power. No way to

1 communicate. No way to get an answer.

2           When you call, they would put you on over  
3 to this recording. And the recording said your power  
4 would be back. I'm calling on Tuesday, Wednesday.  
5 Your power would be back on Wednesday of the next week.  
6 It puts you in a panic, because there's nowhere for you  
7 to go. All the hotels are booked from New Jersey and  
8 New York. It was just a total mess.

9           And my thing is, yes, we need  
10 communication. In business, we knew it is important.  
11 Same thing with residents, we just need the  
12 information. If we have the information, there  
13 wouldn't be panic and prepare to at least to wait.

14           I think, with Sandy, everyone was  
15 surprised. This storm turned out to be a real monster,  
16 more than anyone could have anticipated.

17           We do have blessings to be grateful for.  
18 New York was hit horribly, terribly. I received some  
19 pictures this week by e-mail. And I was shocked at the  
20 state of Atlantic City and Staten Island. I've seen it  
21 visually. Seeing Battery Park under water, and it was  
22 the fireman fighting with water up to their chest and  
23 everything.

24           So, we have a lot to be grateful for.  
25 Still, in the Poconos, we need to get some

1 communication. That's the most important thing. Thank  
2 you.

3 MS. MONAUGHTON: Mike Campea from Cherry  
4 Ridge Road? How about Ron Trimble, please. Is he  
5 still here?

6 MR. TRIMBLE: First of all, let me thank  
7 all of you for coming and the elected representatives  
8 showing their continued support.

9 Want to get very specific. I'm on the  
10 board of directors for a long time with a large 2,800  
11 home community in both Middle Smithfield and Lehman  
12 Township.

13 One section of our community was out of  
14 power for two days. Another section was out for seven,  
15 some eight. Now, that's about three-quarters of the  
16 community was out for a week.

17 The research that I've been able to do  
18 points to a substation called the Shawnee substation,  
19 which is not near Shawnee. It's off 209 near the  
20 Pocono Palace, a few miles from here.

21 We've had four rememberable storms in the  
22 last year and a half. Three of them have caused power  
23 outages that I can remember. I'm not sure about the  
24 first one.

25 And each one tends to get worse. And

1 each one has been blamed on the same substation, which  
2 has its lines running through the woods from somewhere  
3 in Shawnee to our area here.

4 It affects Middle Smithfield. It affects  
5 Lehman. And I would guesstimate, and it's only a  
6 guess, we're talking 4 to 5,000 houses that were out of  
7 power. And it's always because of the same area.

8 And what I'm requesting is that something  
9 specifically be looked at in order to rectify that. We  
10 can talk about Met-Ed, and they've been talked about a  
11 great deal.

12 We can do all the pontificating we want  
13 about the state and system and everything else. This  
14 particular area has one boog-a-boo. And it seems to be  
15 that substation.

16 And if it's trees, I don't care how tall  
17 the trees around it are. Cut the trees back far enough  
18 so they can't do this to us anymore.

19 I mean, we have all the problem like  
20 every other place. Might not have as many people. But  
21 we've got the indigent. We've got the children. All  
22 the rest of the things, including a lot of hills that  
23 require grinder pumps to get our waste, our sewage up  
24 in to the mains and the treatment plants.

25 Mine were overflowing at the end of the

1 second day because of a couple of grandchildren that  
2 would not cooperate.

3 I'm quite sure that after a week, a lot  
4 of people in Saw Creek and the surrounding areas were  
5 having a lot worst problems.

6 And what I would hope is that we can  
7 learn from things that have happened in the past and  
8 that we can improve going forward.

9 Saw Creek is now contemplating having its  
10 own, because we've got a large recreational facility,  
11 having its own emergency shelter so we can do for  
12 ourselves a little bit better.

13 And whether or not that comes to  
14 fruition, it's besides the point. But we definitely  
15 need it. Heard it a thousand times tonight, we need  
16 better communication from the people we rely on.

17 Definitely some maintenance to keep the  
18 same problems from happening each time the storm  
19 decides to come this way. Thank you for being here.

20 MS. MCNAUGHTON: Pete Derrenbacher.

21 MR. DERRENBACHER: Thank you. Thank you  
22 again. Thank you, Senator Baker. Thank you, Rosemary.  
23 Thank you, Mario. Appreciate you getting this  
24 together.

25 First, I live in the community, as Ron

1 just indicated, Saw Creek Estates. We lost our power  
2 late Monday afternoon, October 29th. Approximately  
3 half the homes had their power restored early Wednesday  
4 evening on the 31st, while the remainder, including  
5 myself, did not have power restored until late Sunday  
6 night, November 4th.

7           Clearly, no one can prevent such events  
8 such as these. But I must say, Met-Ed experienced  
9 significant issues which must be resolved.

10           First, communication was totally  
11 inadequate. I called every day, oftentimes just  
12 getting an automated prompting system. When I spoke to  
13 staff, they had no idea what the problem was or when it  
14 could be resolved.

15           It was really frustrating because I was  
16 getting seven or eight robo-calls a day from my good  
17 friends, Clint Eastwood, Colin Powell, Newt Gingrich,  
18 all advising me who to vote for.

19           I was thinking, I wish that Met-Ed would  
20 call the RNC or DNC to find out the system they're  
21 using so I can get a robo-message back. So that was  
22 clearly frustrating.

23           To the extent homeowners had information,  
24 if I knew my service was going to be out a week, I  
25 would have left town. Clearly, you keep thinking,

1 within an hour, the lights will go back on.

2 Secondly, the condition of the lines and  
3 the poles in this area shows much neglect. There's no  
4 aggressive tree trimming in effect, with trees and tree  
5 limbs interfering with lines.

6 And it's so obvious, because I know one  
7 of the studies that was done by the PUC Commission, 95  
8 percent through Hurricane Irene, as I recall, the  
9 transmission lines, only five percent of the time was  
10 there a problem with transmission lines.

11 95 percent of the time, there's trouble  
12 with the distribution. And it's obvious the issue is  
13 the trees. That's the one common denominator.

14 Third, although there was significant  
15 assets brought in from out of state, most were  
16 standing, waiting for orders and direction. And I  
17 literally spoke to people because I was at Muller's  
18 Diner and they were at Muller's Diner and they were  
19 basically waiting for orders, waiting for directions.

20 And, I mean, there was dozens of trucks  
21 at different locations. Got to know a lot of people  
22 from North Carolina and Duke Power. Great people.  
23 Great people.

24 The thing I want to mention, some  
25 suggestions. First, I know the PUC Commission. And I

1 have a copy of the electric service reliability in  
2 Pennsylvania, 2011. I guess that was commissioned  
3 after Hurricane Irene.

4 The one thing it provides liability  
5 performance measures, as well as statistical utility  
6 performance that of utilities operating within a state.

7 Unfortunately, the performance data is  
8 provided by the utility. So, obviously, you got the  
9 fox in the hen house.

10 So, one of the suggestions I have is the  
11 PUC commission an audit that's independent of the  
12 utilities and, actually, particularly in areas like  
13 ours.

14 The second thing is, I believe the PUC  
15 should grade the utilities. And to the extent the  
16 utilities seeks rate increases, a lower grade would  
17 negate an increase or lower the increase that the  
18 utility could ask for. This would motivate the  
19 utilities to perform. I mean, this is, again, for the  
20 ratepayer.

21 The communication notification process  
22 needs to be addressed. Timely updates have to be more  
23 -- that was a big problem.

24 Also, I think we should look at the power  
25 outages by region. I mean, clearly, in more rural

1 areas, such as the Poconos, more aggressive tree  
2 trimming and pole replacement needs to be done since,  
3 when outages occur, large populated areas are addressed  
4 first, which is understandable. But that means we're  
5 always at the back of the bus.

6 So, I do believe that. And, also I  
7 believe you'll see that, in the utility study, the ---  
8 where it's FERC mandated, that the transmission towers,  
9 we've got 150-foot minimum clearance.

10 We've all experienced that area. We had  
11 that issue a few years ago with the transmission lines.  
12 They wanted to clear back over 200 foot.

13 If you go and look at the transmission  
14 lines around here, you'll see there's plenty of space.  
15 No trees near them. In fact, if you have a little pine  
16 tree, it's taken away. I think there has to be a more  
17 dynamic approach to how to do the tree trimming.

18 And, lastly, one of the things I don't  
19 understand is why the utilities are not required to pay  
20 the ratepayer for every day that they are without  
21 power.

22 It was ironic, because I had, Friday, one  
23 of my cable boxes. I went to the cable office. I  
24 didn't even ask. And they gave me a credit of seven  
25 days on my bill. Why? Because I guess the service

1 wasn't available.

2                   So, those are some of the things I think  
3 clearly we could do. And the I ask the PUC  
4 specifically, I saw in Value Line, where First Energy,  
5 which is the holding company for Met-Ed, is basically  
6 estimating a half-a-billion-dollar loss, about 500  
7 million of which 95 percent of it, they want to either  
8 capitalize or bring to future years.

9                   And I would ask, seriously, that to the  
10 extent they come with rate requests, that that not be  
11 included in any rate request that they ask for. Thank  
12 you.

13                   MS. MCNAUGHTON: Bill Montgomery, please.

14                   MR. MONTGOMERY: Good evening. I want to  
15 thank you all for coming, distinguished guests, Senator  
16 Baker for bringing this together, Rosemary Brown and  
17 Representative Scavello.

18                   My name is Bill Montgomery. I'm the  
19 president of the Board of Directors of Saw Creek  
20 Estates. A lot of what I would have said was pretty  
21 much spoken about by the previous gentleman who lives  
22 in Saw Creek.

23                   Just to give a little background, I've  
24 lived in Saw Creek 25 years full time and seen all the  
25 storms that we've had through the years.

1                   This was, obviously, one of the worst  
2 situations. We were lucky enough, in two days' time,  
3 to get powered back to a certain segment of our  
4 association, which I was part of. Thank God.

5                   At that time, we were able to open up the  
6 shower facilities, charging phones. Close to 400  
7 people took advantage of taking showers in our Mill  
8 Pond Section of our community.

9                   I felt that my responsibility needs to be  
10 down at the members' service office every day to try to  
11 fuel questions from homeowners and try to get  
12 information to them about what was going on.

13                   It was close to impossible. We had our  
14 own problems, which we recognize are our responsibility  
15 as a gated community.

16                   After Irene last year, we took certain  
17 steps to improve our responses. And we feel we were  
18 very successful.

19                   Now, with Sandy, we see that we did have  
20 to go back to the drawing table and possibly look at  
21 other avenues what we have to do. But taking care of  
22 our residents, like Mr. Trimble alluded to, over 2,800  
23 homes, is a great responsibility.

24                   And in all the days that I was down at  
25 the members' service office, we had no communication.

1 There was no internet, cell phone was sporadic.

2 Our own phone system was down. So, it  
3 was very, very difficult to disseminate information to  
4 our homeowners, either the full-time people that lived  
5 there and a great many people that have second homes in  
6 Saw Creek trying to find out if their home was okay,  
7 hit by a tree and so on and so forth. So, it was next  
8 to impossible.

9 On the first Friday after the storm,  
10 along with the general manager who will be speaking  
11 shortly, I attended the emergency meeting at the Lehman  
12 Township supervisors' building.

13 It was attended by all the local  
14 communities; Pine Ridge, Tamiment, so on and so forth.  
15 I believe a Met-Ed representative was invited but did  
16 not show up. And the frustration was quite evident at  
17 that meeting.

18 Some had power in certain sections. Some  
19 did not. But, in general, I'll just echo with the  
20 supervisors that had spoken, Mr. Sivick and Mr.  
21 Menditto.

22 Communication. Before a storm hits, we  
23 have to have a system in place that we can, you know,  
24 if we don't have internet or don't have phone systems,  
25 how can we get information out to homeowners and so on

1 and so forth.

2 That's, basically, what I hope that we  
3 can work with Met-Ed, which is the primary supplier of  
4 our electricity in Saw Creek. More than willing to  
5 work with them to set up systems and so on and so  
6 forth, because we want to be able to deal with these  
7 situations in a much better way. Thank you for your  
8 time.

9 MS. MCNAUGHTON: next is Joseph Doe.

10 MR. DOE: Very brief. Thank you for the  
11 opportunity to be here today. Two comments, basically,  
12 I would like everybody in the room to consider what  
13 would have happened if a good neighbor like Turkey Hill  
14 hadn't had their generator going and supplying everyone  
15 with gasoline and the ability to buy fresh food and  
16 things like that.

17 They put the design into the building of  
18 that facility and gave us all an oasis in this desert  
19 that we were without power.

20 The other thing is, I was one of the  
21 fortunate ones within the Saw Creek community that got  
22 the power back after two days. And I went and looked  
23 on the website for Met-Ed to try to find out some  
24 information.

25 And it's devoid of information. It had

1 numbers of people that would be on-line or off-line.  
2 But didn't give any sense of when anything would  
3 happen, what the issues were.

4 And I just think that there could be a  
5 vast improvement that would deliver information to  
6 everybody who had internet service that could then  
7 relay information. And I think that should be made a  
8 priority. Thank you very much.

9 MS. MCNAUGHTON: Thomas Soden of  
10 Greenwich Drive.

11 MR. SODEN: Good evening. Thank you very  
12 much for showing up and being here. I don't know. It  
13 seems like some things happen for a reason.

14 And what happened is probably to get us  
15 closer together and work with one another. And I know  
16 Rosemary Brown and Lisa Baker, they've been working on  
17 that.

18 And I'm involved with Ron and Pete  
19 Derrenbacher, Bill Montgomery. Saw Creek is always up  
20 there, upfront doing it. Seems like an awful lot of  
21 power is going by you, but that's another issue.

22 I mean, what I've been looking at as a  
23 board member, as a committee member, as somebody living  
24 in Saw Creek, just one or two issues that we can just  
25 -- just as suggestion to take a look at.

1                   And one of them is Saw Creek is supplied  
2 with electric power from more than one substation. The  
3 back part of Saw Creek is fed from a nearby substation  
4 that I believe is located on Church Lane or Bushkill  
5 Falls Road.

6                   Power was restored to the back area of  
7 Saw Creek after two days. I'm one of the people after  
8 two days, I got the power.

9                   The west side of Saw Creek and other  
10 local areas outside of Saw Creek are fed from the  
11 substation located further away.

12                   And after both hurricane Irene and Sandy,  
13 a large area of Saw Creek was without power for a week.

14                   In the event of future bad weather  
15 conditions, would an additional substation, closer to  
16 our community of 3,000 homes, prevent this type of  
17 power outage from happening?

18                   Now, 3,000 homes, you're talking over  
19 10,000 people. We might be bigger than East  
20 Stroudsburg. I don't have the statistics on that. But  
21 we're pretty close to it.

22                   We come up here, retired. It's not on my  
23 list, something I wanted to say. I'm not going to say  
24 forever. There's a lot of seniors.

25                   We come up here looking at what's going

1 on. And we really feel for the dollar you layout and  
2 the dollar you get back, it's not there. It's not  
3 happening.

4 I'm glad this kind of happened to get  
5 everybody, because a lot of people, they don't talk to  
6 communities and there's a lot of communities up here.

7 The other thing I learned from the  
8 gentleman behind me is after a storm, you take a ride,  
9 and you take a look around. And I'm one of them people  
10 for the community.

11 And Met-Ed should perform better  
12 maintenance of clearing trees and branches from around  
13 powerlines on the road, a mess over here. Even before  
14 this last storm, there was maintenance that should have  
15 been addressed both inside and outside the communities.

16 You can visually see that some trees are  
17 even leaning on the powerlines and should be removed.  
18 And also there's poles that should be looked at and  
19 replaced.

20 Just one guy looking around and this is  
21 what I saw. You can see there are poles that are in  
22 very bad shape and that should be replaced instead of  
23 being supported by temporary supports.

24 Now, I could understand a temporary  
25 support between Irene and Sandy. I'm not saying, this

1 has been a bad storm. But what about them months in  
2 between, you know, taking a look at what we got here.  
3 You really have to take a look at it.

4 And I'm not -- it's called maintenance.  
5 And we're heavy on it in the community I'm in. And if  
6 they hadn't replaced roads, they hadn't replaced  
7 bridges in Saw Creek, giving you an update in what we  
8 do, water, we wouldn't have made it.

9 And that's what a community is doing.  
10 And it's not easy, and you're talking about heavy  
11 dollars. But you have to do it in your community, so  
12 that we don't float away.

13 Okay. If scheduled maintenance was  
14 performed by Met-Ed, there would be less of a chance of  
15 damage to powerlines and poles during bad weather. It  
16 was said by many people, I'm repeating myself, but it's  
17 my turn, so I'm going to get up here and do what I got  
18 to do.

19 It's not looked at. It's not done. What  
20 are we going to do? Shut down the Poconos? You came  
21 close to shutting it down.

22 We're hurting as it is for a lot of areas  
23 and looking at the politicians, looking at some  
24 professional people I'm looking at here. And we're  
25 willing to work with you. We need your help. We have

1 ideas too.

2                   Okay. Trees and poles maintenance should  
3 be a Met-Ed priority before and not just after a storm.  
4 This should be part of the service we receive as paying  
5 Met-Ed customers. Thank you very much. Thanks for  
6 your time.

7                   MS. MCNAUGHTON: Patrick Reagle, please.

8                   MR. REAGLE: Good evening. My name is  
9 Patrick Reagle, and I live in Stroud Township. I'm a  
10 professional property manager, and I represent  
11 thousands of people.

12                   And I'm here on behalf of those people  
13 who, like me, are concerned about the number and the  
14 duration of the power outages in our area.

15                   I'd like to thank Senator Baker and those  
16 who organized the meeting to discuss this problem. My  
17 goal in being here is to try to lend whatever  
18 assistance is necessary to help develop solutions to  
19 resolve this serious problem.

20                   We need not only to hold utility  
21 providers accountable, but we also need to help develop  
22 solutions to improve their efficiencies to restore  
23 power during outages.

24                   I believe our local leaders must work  
25 together in developing those solutions. And I'm

1 hopeful that this forum will be a productive beginning  
2 of much needed improvement.

3 I'm hearing tonight a lot of the same,  
4 which is, lack of communication is the theme.  
5 And it seems to be the root of a lot of the problems.

6 As a community manager and member of the  
7 Stroud Township Planning Commission, I communicate  
8 regularly with our local municipality leaders. It's  
9 safe to say that we share the belief that better  
10 communication between utility workers and community  
11 leaders would be a great start to improving response  
12 time.

13 Utility workers, particularly those who  
14 have come from outside our area to assist in  
15 restoration efforts would benefit greatly from valuable  
16 information offered by folks who are familiar with this  
17 area, like county municipal management services, for  
18 example.

19 County and municipal resources are  
20 already in place. Why not utilize these systems more  
21 efficiently and more thoroughly to better assist  
22 utility responders?

23 They're a valuable information source  
24 that could benefit utility companies. The key for  
25 utility providers is to have better access to this

1 information, service can be restored more quickly and  
2 more efficiently.

3 With properly-established communication  
4 channels, vital information can be provided, such as  
5 location of downed trees and wires and also response to  
6 well-known troubled areas based on past outages.

7 The time currently spent on recon and  
8 identifying problems could be instead used for power  
9 restoration, reducing the time needed to get folks back  
10 in power.

11 It would allow utility personnel to focus  
12 more time on what they do best, which is, restoring  
13 power.

14 GPS services should be mandatory for all  
15 utility workers. It becomes a very inexpensive  
16 technology. Most folks have it with the Smart Phone.

17 Particularly compared with the time  
18 wasted by workers unable to find problem areas in an  
19 unfamiliar community, utility providers should be able  
20 to direct all of their resources, including those  
21 called in from outside the area, and we all know there  
22 was many, using GPS coordinates to pinpoint problem  
23 areas like downed wires and damaged infrastructure.

24 In observing the post-storm efforts of  
25 restoring power in my area, I frequently witnessed

1 large contingents of utility workers who were gathered  
2 together waiting idly for direction.

3 I witnessed this on more than one  
4 occasion. And the downtime was significant. A dozen  
5 or more trucks sitting together, waiting for directions  
6 on the fourth day of the power outage is evident to me  
7 of a less than efficient resource management, not to  
8 mention, the frustration of a customer who does not  
9 have power witnessing this.

10 My belief is that better communication  
11 will help management do a more efficient job and allow  
12 linemen to do what they do best, maximize their time  
13 spent restoring power.

14 Please let me know how we can work  
15 together to improve your response. Our residents and  
16 your customers deserve all our efforts to improve the  
17 status quo.

18 Let's work together, and let's get it  
19 done. Thank you.

20 MS. MCNAUGHTON: David Martin.

21 MR. MARTIN: Good evening. Let me add my  
22 thanks to all the previous speakers, Senator Baker and  
23 Representative Brown, thanks to all of you for being  
24 here to hear our concerns.

25 My name is David Martin. I'm the general

1 manager for Saw Creek Estates. I'm also a resident of  
2 Delaware Township, so I was doubly affected both at  
3 home and at work by the outage.

4 I can keep my remarks brief, since a lot  
5 of the points I wanted to make had already been  
6 eloquently stated previously.

7 But one thing I would like to touch on  
8 and expand on some of the comments of Mr. Derrenbacher  
9 when he referred to PUC study of electric service  
10 reliability in Pennsylvania.

11 That study, I believe, was published or  
12 at least released in September of this year, a couple  
13 months ago.

14 And in looking through the data with  
15 regard to Met-Ed, since I'm a Met-Ed customer both at  
16 home and at work, one thing that stood out was some of  
17 the indexes that are used to measure electric service  
18 reliability, key among those is the customer average  
19 interruption duration index.

20 That index has been on the rise steadily,  
21 meaning longer and longer duration outages since 2008.  
22 And the data, I should point out, if it's not already  
23 obvious, did not include this most recent storm. So I  
24 suspect that duration index will show even worse  
25 results following incorporation of the statistics from

1 Hurricane Sandy.

2 So, while the durations are getting  
3 longer and longer, at the same time, there's another  
4 index that's called the system average interruption  
5 frequency index. And that's been dramatically  
6 improved, quite honestly, to give credit where credit  
7 is due, over that same period, since 2008.

8 So we're seeing fewer interruptions. But  
9 the interruptions that we do see are getting longer and  
10 longer and longer.

11 We recognize that according to the  
12 standards and benchmarks set by a Commission, that  
13 Met-Ed performance meets those standards, meets the  
14 standards that are set for electric service  
15 reliability.

16 And we applaud the PUC's work in  
17 establishing those standards. But standards and  
18 benchmarks mean very little to individual ratepayers  
19 whose real-life experience has been longer and longer  
20 delays in service restorations. That's just the fact  
21 of life for the ratepayers.

22 And the dichotomy between the increased  
23 duration and the reduced frequency seems to suggest  
24 that perhaps Met-Ed's attention and resources have been  
25 shifted too far towards reducing the frequency of

1 outages, much to the detriment of ratepayers in rural  
2 or remote areas. Those areas that are most adversely  
3 affected and lowest, quite honestly, it would appear on  
4 the restoration priority list.

5 Tree maintenance, trimming of trees and  
6 so forth, as Mr. Derrenbacher also alluded to, it seems  
7 to be the most frequently cited in this report for  
8 reasons for outages, whether long or short duration.

9 What struck me as odd, it says -- I'm  
10 trying to think of the exact wording in the report.  
11 Refer you back to the report. It was unpreventable  
12 tree occurrence. I don't know what that means. I'm  
13 really not sure what that means. I'll go back myself  
14 and see if there's a definition of that somewhere. But  
15 that struck me as odd.

16 Trees, obviously, are a problem for  
17 powerlines in Pike County being that, you know, being  
18 the topography that it is.

19 So we would ask that the appropriate PUC  
20 staff examine Met-Ed's current infrastructure  
21 improvement and their inspection and maintenance plans  
22 from a geographic and population density perspective to  
23 determine whether or not perhaps rural and remote  
24 customers are being disproportionately affected in  
25 light of these recent storms.

1           In addition, as I understand them, the  
2 electric service reliability benchmarks that were  
3 established by the PUC were developed to ensure that  
4 service reliability was maintained following the  
5 restructure and deregulation of the market.

6           They were derived through the utility  
7 company's historical reliability statistics occurring  
8 between 1994 to 1998. And those historical ratings set  
9 the bar for future reliability assessments.

10           I would suggest that setting the bar at a  
11 historical level from 1994 to 1998 is perhaps not the  
12 best approach, if our goal is to improve the  
13 reliability of the electric service.

14           And if that is, in fact, our goal, the  
15 bar should be set higher than some reliability standard  
16 from more than a decade ago. And, again, as Mr.  
17 Derrenbacher pointed out, using the hen and the fox and  
18 the hen house analogy, using data from the utility.

19           So I would also second a call for an  
20 independent audit by the PUC. Finally, much has been  
21 said about communications during prolonged outages.

22           Obviously, it's a serious problem. We  
23 recognize that it involves not just the utility company  
24 but communications infrastructure.

25           And though that may be outside the

1 purview of the PUC, I would urge our elected officials  
2 and perhaps the PUC, to the extent that the PUC  
3 requires enhanced methods of communication from the  
4 utilities, you could perhaps, I presume, reach out to  
5 state and federal agencies that do have some  
6 jurisdiction over the communication companies and  
7 partner with them in finding ways to further strengthen  
8 the communications infrastructure.

9 Our experience at Saw Creek has been  
10 within about 24 to 36 hours of a power outage, we lose  
11 our landline service, our cell phone service and our  
12 internet service. So it becomes quite a burden to try  
13 to communicate under those circumstances.

14 So you can be sure that we'll be  
15 following the actions of the PUC. And we have, in the  
16 past, been very active and pre-active of the PUC. We  
17 welcomed you to our community over past issues or rate  
18 issues.

19 We hope to continue working with you to  
20 find solutions to these problems. And we urge you  
21 again to reach out beyond your own purview, if  
22 necessary, to help with the communications issues.

23 You can be sure that we'll be doing that,  
24 and we urge you to do likewise. Thank you.

25 MS. MCNAUGHTON: I think we have our last

1 business leader and community association and then move  
2 into public comment. John Petuzzo from Petuzzo's  
3 Italian Restaurant.

4 MR. PETUZZO: Good evening, ladies and  
5 gentlemen. I own Petuzzo's Italian/American  
6 Restaurant, along with my family. And we've been there  
7 for 67 years, right there.

8 This isn't the only catastrophic storm  
9 that we've had in the area. I was here when the 1955  
10 flood killed 73 people in Monroe County.

11 I was also here during Hurricane Agnus,  
12 Hurricane Dianne. But in the last year or so, these  
13 storms have put our restaurant out of electric longer  
14 than any of those previous storms.

15 So, I drive around a lot. I have  
16 properties in the area. And I noticed one thing,  
17 there's a definite correlation between the power  
18 outages at Saw Creek, our restaurant and this area and  
19 the removal -- the mandatory removal of a switch in  
20 beautiful downtown Bushkill by the National Park.

21 That switch used to allow electric to  
22 come this way or go that way. Now it can only come one  
23 way. I think I'm the only person that -- in this room  
24 that has seen all the park superintendents that have  
25 been here.

1                   And this present administration is  
2 probably the most maleficent I've seen. And they've  
3 caused this area a tremendous amount of financial harm.

4                   You're all legislators. I think you  
5 should legislate some law to take the power away from  
6 these people who absolutely destroyed the financial  
7 ability of the area.

8                   And, basically, removing that switch, in  
9 my opinion, is what put Saw Creek out of power, our  
10 restaurant out of power, Dingman's Ferry out of power,  
11 because you could switch the electric either which way  
12 years ago. And we didn't have these problems.

13                   The second thing is, the trees are a  
14 definite problem. Every storm that the -- that put the  
15 area out of electric, there was some trees right over  
16 here on the corner that went down and hit the main  
17 line. Same spot.

18                   And I don't just dream this up. I go out  
19 and talk to the lineman. And also, the one main line  
20 that goes through down to Bushkill through the park,  
21 apparently, the electric people were having trouble  
22 getting permission to go over there and clear the lines  
23 and fix them.

24                   And Met-Ed just didn't sit there and do  
25 nothing. They moved a switch to the corner of our

1 property, so at least they can get electric to the  
2 sewer plant and the things down here that need to be  
3 serviced.

4 But going through the park and trimming  
5 trees and having a switch station, definitely crippled  
6 this area. So, that's what I have to say.

7 If you need to know anything, you all  
8 know where I'm at. Thank you.

9 SENATOR BAKER: Thank you, John. Before  
10 we do public comment, I'm looking at our stenographer,  
11 who has diligently gone for two and a half hours.

12 We're going to take a five-minute break  
13 to give her a moment to rest her hands. If you could  
14 bear with us, we'd appreciate it. We'll be back in a  
15 couple minutes. Thank you.

16 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

17 MS. MCNAUGHTON: We only have nine more  
18 people on the list to testify. So we're making good  
19 progress here and pretty much on time.

20 I'd like to call our first public  
21 comments speaker, and that is Richard Karski. And,  
22 again, I apologize if I can't pronounce your name  
23 properly or can't read your handwriting. Thank you.  
24 It looks like Richard may have left already. If he's  
25 here and he wants to come later, please have him come

1 up. How about Joe Meehan, please.

2 MR. MEEHAN: Good evening. Joe Meehan,  
3 Bushkill, Pennsylvania. First of all, thank you for  
4 trying to put some light on the issues. No pun  
5 intended.

6 What I'd like to do tonight is to focus  
7 on a word and a phrase. The word would be reasonable.  
8 Use that word in this context.

9 As we know, our legal system uses the  
10 word reasonable to describe what would a reasonable  
11 person do in this situation. In this situation we've  
12 just been through, was it within reason for my wife and  
13 I to spend seven days and nights in the cold and the  
14 dark? You can answer that question. Was that  
15 reasonable?

16 Was it reasonable for us to incur a cost  
17 of about \$350.00 for food that we lost, which is  
18 irrevocably lost? Was that reasonable? Was it  
19 reasonable that, at some point in time, when the  
20 temperature in the house is hovering consistently at 44  
21 degrees, that we took it upon ourselves to leave our  
22 domain and put up in a hotel for a couple nights and  
23 bear the cost for that too? Was that reasonable?

24 Would it be reasonable to suggest that  
25 the power company indemnify my wife and I for those

1 kind of expenses?

2           Was it reasonable for the PUC to give us  
3 an increase of, as I remember, about 11 percent in our  
4 electric bill recently? Was that reasonable?

5           Maybe it was. I'm not answering the  
6 questions here. I'm just posing this as an issue.  
7 Were these things reasonable? I'm not sure.

8           In terms of the phrase, the phrase would  
9 be worst-case scenario. I worked in the private sector  
10 for 40 years. And one of the things we always did was  
11 to look at the worst-case scenario.

12           In that sense, we looked at in the terms  
13 of contingencies, what are some of the things that  
14 could happen which would be the worst obstacles we can  
15 confront in trying to accomplish a goal or to solve a  
16 situation?

17           My question would be, did the power  
18 companies, in this situation, primarily the one that  
19 provides our power, did they look at the worst-case  
20 scenario?

21           Many days before the storm, I heard  
22 meteorologists coining a new phrase, the phrase was  
23 Frankenstorm. Never heard that before.

24           And they were indicating to the  
25 population that some really significant storm was on

1 the way.

2           So, in my view and by no means am I a  
3 professional in the power business, that suggested that  
4 some really strong measures needed to be taken, needed  
5 to be planned for in anticipation of a monster storm.

6           Not sure, based upon my experience, that  
7 really occurred. Because I got to tell you in terms of  
8 my reasonable meter, that was going off the charts by  
9 Sunday night. That was really unreasonable at that  
10 point because of what we were experiencing.

11           So, that's my question. You're the jury.  
12 You're going to make some decisions. We would hope  
13 that you come out on the side of doing what's right in  
14 terms of the future for the population here,  
15 because our experience, to my way of thinking, wasn't  
16 terribly reasonable.

17           I've got to tell you, at the same time,  
18 as you know, there are skeptics everywhere. When they  
19 look at this panel here, they see politicians. And  
20 they would suggest that this is what politicians do.  
21 They put on a show. And they want to endear themselves  
22 to the general public. Hoping that isn't the case  
23 here, that you will do something.

24           The days ahead of the next storm we're  
25 not going to have a repeat of the ugliness we

1 experienced a little while ago. Thanks very much.

2 MS. MCNAUGHTON: Next is Anthony Nase.

3 MR. NASE: Good evening. My name is  
4 Anthony Nase. I live in Smithfield Township, Met-Ed  
5 customer. Let me start by saying I'm an electrician.  
6 I'm a lineman. That's what I do for a living. So I  
7 have an idea what is going on.

8 It was a horrendous storm. Just where I  
9 live, outside of Delaware Water Gap, there was six  
10 poles, three transformers and high voltage lines all  
11 over the place.

12 I saw that. I knew I wasn't getting  
13 power back any time soon. I live at the end of a power  
14 grid. That's how the Delaware Water Gap is.

15 They have central water there. So we  
16 were okay until the tanks went dry, then we were pretty  
17 much on our own. I will say that the power company  
18 said, this could happen. So, stock up. And I did. I  
19 went out, got cases of water, gallons of water, didn't  
20 get ice, because I didn't usually lose power but a  
21 couple hours.

22 '96, we had a Christmas storm. And I  
23 lost power for four days. But that was it in about 15  
24 years.

25 The power went out during the hurricane.

1 And probably in one of my most unwise moves, I thought  
2 it was a good idea to go to my job to get a generator  
3 at the height of the hurricane. Bad move, because I  
4 was spinning sideways in the wind.

5 I could see transformers literally  
6 blowing up on poles and knew then it was going to be  
7 bad.

8 That being said, PPL did have crews on  
9 the ground, ready to go. Met-Ed, and this is what I do  
10 for a living, so I'm not just pulling this out of my  
11 hind-end.

12 Met-Ed had people on the way. And once  
13 people were here and the winds finally died down, the  
14 biggest problem there was in this town, there was -- I  
15 don't want to say no coordination.

16 But the way it works, Met-Ed has local  
17 line crews. Instead of breaking up your local guys and  
18 sending one local person with an out-of-state crew,  
19 they would send the local crews here, give the  
20 out-of-town guys an address and say go fix this line.  
21 And these folks have no idea.

22 They were doing their darndest to do the  
23 repairs. But why did you not think, commonsense-wise,  
24 well, let's put somebody who has knowledge of the power  
25 grid in this area, knows where the switches are, where

1 the air brakes are, where the fuses are that's, okay,  
2 let's take and pull the fuses for this development.

3 Yes. I know there's 700 people in that  
4 development. But if we unhook or pull those fuses, we  
5 can get the main line down 209 energized again. And  
6 that's something Met-Ed -- they tried to make everybody  
7 happy and you guys failed miserably.

8 Instead of working on the main lines,  
9 there were parts of main street that were without power  
10 for a week. And that is absolutely no reason for it,  
11 because when the power comes off of Fox Town Hill,  
12 there was nothing.

13 What was knocking the power out was the  
14 side streets. And the way to rectify this stuff is you  
15 got to spend some money.

16 Back in the 90s, the going theme in the  
17 area was, we can't do upgrades on the powerlines  
18 because we're so busy hooking up power to all the new  
19 houses being built.

20 In case you haven't noticed, that isn't  
21 happening now. I'm not sure what the reasoning is why  
22 maintenance isn't being done.

23 If you guys would take some of these  
24 sidelines and all you got to do is go up a couple  
25 fuses, I know what it takes. A line crew that knows

1 what they're doing can do it in a couple hours.

2 So, if a tree goes down at the end of  
3 this line, yes, we're going to lose this street and  
4 we're gonna lose this neighborhood. But we're not  
5 going to lose everybody on the main line.

6 There's just no reason for parts of town  
7 to be out. Where I live, it's the end of the grid, I  
8 get it. I accept it. I had use of a generator from my  
9 boss. Made my life bearable. I had to go over the  
10 E.S.U.

11 And I thank the Red Cross immensely to  
12 take the shower. It wasn't my funniest thing, but it  
13 happens. This is life, folks. This is what's going to  
14 happen.

15 Weather is getting worse. Utilities are  
16 trying to make people happy. And instead of trying to  
17 make people happy, they need to just do the job. My  
18 only complaint I have with PPL, and this is from my  
19 mom. You guys called three days in a row and said your  
20 power will be on tonight at 10:00.

21 On the third or fourth night, the power  
22 finally came on. Don't call and say the power is going  
23 to be on until the power is going to be on.

24 One of the other things people keep  
25 talking about is trimming trees. Again, as somebody

1 that is in this business, when you want to trim trees  
2 for the safety of the utility grid, you got a lot of  
3 people come out and they say, you can't cut that down.  
4 That is my prize cherry tree. It's been there since my  
5 kid was two years old.

6 And you get the fighting that, when you  
7 get the trees where all half of it is gone and you have  
8 four branches on one side because law says you cannot  
9 take that tree.

10 There's got to be some kind of common  
11 ground. If the government can seize property to put up  
12 a hotel, they should at least be able to cut down a  
13 tree to keep it from falling over on the powerlines.

14 And as far as right-of-ways, you'll never  
15 cut all the trees down. Like you said, you cut a 100  
16 foot swath, you're going to have a 120-foot tree  
17 falling down.

18 But you guys know what the problem is and  
19 you know the problem areas. All right, guys. This  
20 isn't a new thing. Your local line guys, I've worked  
21 hand and hand with them.

22 We have said to them, why don't they run  
23 a new line? And they go, we're not allowed. And I got  
24 a little sidetracked.

25 Part of the confusion right off the bat

1 is Met-Ed crews, and everybody they brought in, they  
2 were not allowed to move until somebody went out in one  
3 of the Met-Ed trucks said, look at a pole and said,  
4 okay, that transformer is down.

5           They would call Scranton. Scranton would  
6 come up with a job number, relay it back to the line  
7 crew. Then once then and only then do they have a job  
8 number were they allowed to go out and make repairs.  
9 And this is the reason why we saw tons and tons of  
10 machinery sitting along the side of the road for hours  
11 on end.

12           I don't know why. But you guys took the  
13 power out of the local peoples' hands completely.  
14 They're not allowed to do nothing without somebody's  
15 say-so. I don't know if it is an insurance thing. I  
16 don't know what it is.

17           But you guys need -- when you have these  
18 emergencies, you guys are smart people. I just wish  
19 you would start acting as smart as I know you are.  
20 Thank you.

21           MS. MCNAUGHTON: Christina Newman.

22           MS. NEWMAN: I am a resident of the Saw  
23 Creek Estates. And I represent myself. And we all  
24 know about climate change. I think it's really bismol  
25 that the lack of preparation was just not present.

1                   And we knew about Hurricane Sandy. We  
2 knew about the prior hurricanes. We see, on a yearly  
3 basis, that the climate is becoming more and more  
4 ferocious.

5                   There's more and more inclement weather  
6 which affect, you know, all areas, all different type  
7 of utilities, including power.

8                   And for Met-Ed not to, you know, do their  
9 due diligence is just, you know, unfathomable. I had  
10 called Met-Ed, actually, several times a day, in fact.

11                   And the unprofessionalism that I received  
12 from your customer service representatives was nothing  
13 short of astounding.

14                   They actually knew nothing about the  
15 storm. They knew nothing about any powerlines that  
16 have gone down.

17                   As far as the trees are concerned, I  
18 actually called Met-Ed today to try to get insurance  
19 for my home. And I was told by the Met-Ed supervisor  
20 that the trees are covered by Met-Ed. Trimming the  
21 trees are covered by Met-Ed, and that is their  
22 responsibility to come out to each individual home and  
23 cut the trees and, once again, do their due diligence  
24 and drive around and see what lines are down or which,  
25 you know, branches are interfering with the lines.

1                   Why does -- you know, was it maintained  
2 properly? I don't know. I also feel that there should  
3 be more substations in Saw Creek. We don't have enough  
4 to -- we have close to 14,000 people that live there.  
5 We have about 3,000 homes. I mean, it's a big  
6 community.

7                   And what I don't understand is, I guess  
8 that we represent less than 6.5 percent of your  
9 customer base. Maybe that's why we're not getting, you  
10 know, the treatment that we so deserve. This is really  
11 counter-intuitive.

12                   Our utility bills are increasing  
13 substantially, and the service is decreasing  
14 substantially. I know that my power goes out every few  
15 days for a few minutes. Why? I don't know.

16                   I've had five electricians look into  
17 this. I've had Met-Ed come out. I've called the PUC.  
18 I don't know how many hearings I've had with the PUC  
19 regarding Met-Ed. And I've lost every single case.  
20 That's all I have to say.

21                   MS. MCNAUGHTON: Next is Joseph Allow.

22                   MR. ALLOW: Good evening. My name is Joe  
23 Allow. I'm here as a private resident of the Emerald  
24 Lakes Community in Tunkhannock Township.

25                   What I'd like to discuss with this panel

1 today is policy setting, ordinances that affect us as  
2 homeowners with regard to exactly this sort of thing  
3 that occurred, whether it's with the ice storm of '05,  
4 Irene and now Sandy.

5           Okay. When you look at the ordinances of  
6 townships -- and I'm glad I've heard a few supervisors  
7 here today saying that they're willing to work with you  
8 guys and with the utilities and all of that. How about  
9 working with the residents, opening up the  
10 opportunities, okay, to install and use renewable  
11 energy for your home?

12           The reason I'm bringing this about is,  
13 through Irene and through Sandy, my home was just  
14 humming right along.

15           I fought Tunkhannock Township tooth and  
16 nail in 2006 because they refused to allow me to put up  
17 a wind turbine.

18           If we had more of this, for example, I  
19 just heard today, the owner of Fernwood, right here,  
20 saying that it costs so much money, six-digit figures  
21 to put in a generator, okay, if we were to, once again,  
22 refund the PA Sunshine Fund that no longer has money,  
23 so there is no incentive for the homeowner to install  
24 solar panels, if we can refund that, could put in solar  
25 panels and could care less about whether the grid goes

1 down.

2           Could we please look in to going in this  
3 direction or at least addressing it? It's not being  
4 addressed, and it always goes to the wayside. And we  
5 have these catastrophic events like we've had last  
6 year, this year.

7           You know, put some of the power back into  
8 the hands of the people. Let them be able to do  
9 something about this, instead of coming together in a  
10 room and complaining, one after the other about Met-Ed  
11 is this, PPL is that.

12           Some of us could stay home and say I  
13 could care less about what PPL and Met-Ed is doing  
14 because, you know what, it doesn't matter. My electric  
15 bill is \$20.00 a month. I'm not charged much, because  
16 I get most of it from renewable.

17           It would be nice if more residents have  
18 the ability to do that. I'm pleading with you, as the  
19 elected officials, please, let's address that again.

20           We're putting a lot of effort into taking  
21 care of utilities. Let's take care of the homeowners  
22 too. Thank you.

23           MS. MCNAUGHTON: Is Hal Harris here?

24           MR. HARRIS: Yes, I am. Good evening,  
25 ladies and gentlemen. First let me thank Senator Baker

1 for arranging this.

2 I don't look at you politicians as  
3 elected representatives but all of the constituents  
4 that voted for you and they didn't vote for you. So I  
5 thank you for doing this.

6 Let me say to the chairman, thank you for  
7 coming out. It is very important that you're here. It  
8 shows that you do care, at least you're responsive,  
9 because there are communities where that response is  
10 not there.

11 Also, thank you for converting this small  
12 room into the largest room in the world. That's the  
13 room for improvement, because there is a lot of room  
14 for improvement. There's a lot of improvement needed.

15 Yes, he spoke about the residents. I'm  
16 going to go down the list, if you don't mind, very  
17 respectfully. I think, by and large, we were spared by  
18 God's grace. Even though we suffered, we were spared  
19 the blunt of that storm.

20 It could have been much worse.  
21 Hopefully, you take information you get today, you look  
22 forward and say, how do we respond in a better way  
23 where the least amount of people can be affected  
24 negatively?

25 Acts of God are just that, Acts of God.

1 There's no way anybody can sit here and say, oh, we  
2 know what's going to happen and this is how we will  
3 respond in this situation. However, there should be  
4 some priority.

5           Going to jump to the back of my list and  
6 go forward. This is to the legislators. Rosemary,  
7 Mario, Senator Baker, please enact some laws that  
8 establishes priority responses by the utility companies  
9 and the electric companies, Number 1, that the first  
10 response must be to clear the roads.

11           This has got to be one of the first  
12 responses, and I'll give you a specific situation. On  
13 Bushkill Falls Road, a high tension line sat across  
14 that road for five days.

15           No emergency vehicle could pass it. And  
16 everybody that rolled over it risked their life doing  
17 so. Thank God we had good supervisors for the Lehman  
18 Township Community.

19           John Sivick and Paul Menditto and Mike  
20 because they built out a back road through the woods.  
21 And thank you to Wolfington O'Neill to allow the  
22 residents of that community, to travel along a  
23 one-lane, middle-of-the-woods back road that was  
24 muddied until they built it out to travel.

25           Otherwise, we would have all been locked

1 in up the hill and couldn't get away because that  
2 tension line sat across the road.

3 Now, how did you miss that? I have no  
4 idea, because you had Met-Ed workers and Duke Power  
5 workers with their big truck at the Bushkill Falls Inn,  
6 30, 40, 50 trucks in that parking lot but nobody  
7 ventured a quarter of a mile up the hill and say, hey,  
8 let's do something about the line so the emergency  
9 vehicles can get pass.

10 That is also the road for the State  
11 Police to come from the barracks up on 402 and access  
12 this part of Pike County and Monroe County. They too  
13 had to detour and add an additional 10 minutes to their  
14 trip to respond to any emergency in this portion of  
15 Pike and/or Monroe County.

16 How that road did not become a priority  
17 escapes me, but I'm not going to beat you up for this.  
18 I'm going to say, let's do better. Let's make that our  
19 change. Let's do better.

20 I'm grateful to Met-Ed and the other  
21 utilities for being here, but you can do better. You  
22 can provide emergency generators, here's a suggestion,  
23 to all the local townships so that government can  
24 continue.

25 Our first line of defense is our elected

1 lead, Mitch Marcus, Ned Atkin, John Sivick, because  
2 they're the ones we can reach out to who can help.

3 Mitch inspected peoples' houses. One guy  
4 had four trees fall on his house. He got there, and  
5 they, in turn, can communicate with you guys.

6 Let me say thanks. I know you all  
7 provided the generators and emergency satellite phone.  
8 It sort of kind of worked.

9 But maybe in advance of the storm,  
10 instead of being preactive, let's be proactive. Let's  
11 get some generators to every one of these townships  
12 tomorrow.

13 You've got the dough. You got the money.  
14 Every time you go to the Public Utility Commission, you  
15 get your increases. Put that in your budget, so that  
16 that's there.

17 Another suggestion. We had schools  
18 closed, and there's an economic impact, more so it  
19 hurts students for far longer than it should be. Had  
20 the schools had emergency generators, they could have  
21 been up and operating it.

22 Take a leave with Middle Smithfield  
23 Township, they had warming stations, cooling station,  
24 charging station and showering station, if only they  
25 had emergency generators that were operational to

1 facilitate the school and they didn't.

2           And at the last school board meeting, and  
3 I was put on public record, I'm rather disappointed  
4 that nobody from the East Stroudsburg Area School  
5 District was not here tonight because it was their  
6 school, if they would have gotten the emergency  
7 generators, in the last meeting, proposing to spend  
8 almost a \$100,000.00 on emergency generators.

9           I think that's your responsibility,  
10 Met-Ed, PPL, because it says here, the right to safe  
11 and reliable utility service that the Pennsylvania  
12 Utility Code requires that every public utility create  
13 and maintain adequate, efficient, safe and reasonable  
14 services and facilities.

15           And services should be reasonably  
16 continuous and without unreasonable interruptions or  
17 delays.

18           I put to you five days of no school is  
19 unreasonable delay. Again, a suggestion. I don't just  
20 come with a complaint. I come with a suggestion and  
21 for the solution.

22           The solution is get some generators at  
23 the schools, at least the major high schools. They  
24 would then serve the community. If you get in all the  
25 schools, our children would then be able to go to

1 school and the parents would be able to go to work.

2 not only did the parents lose, 3 or  
3 \$400.00 of the food that they lost in the refrigerator  
4 and freezers, which, quite frankly, fell below the  
5 benchmark of the deductible in most peoples' insurance,  
6 so they can't go get anything from the insurance  
7 company.

8 Not only did they lose that, but they  
9 lost the time from work because they didn't have an  
10 opportunity to get out of their community.

11 They didn't have anywhere for their  
12 children to go, or they had to incur increased child  
13 care expenses which, once again, could have been  
14 avoided.

15 Then there was a wrong number for  
16 emergency assistance, food stamps and other things that  
17 I think you all can get ahead of. I know Rosemary  
18 Brown and some of the other elected officials  
19 distribute that information.

20 Maybe once a year put in the bulletin,  
21 here's a refrigerator magnet, so you know all the  
22 emergency numbers to contact in case of an emergency or  
23 in case of a storm.

24 Okay. I don't think that would cost you  
25 that much more money. And it's a good advertising

1 thing because now they had Met-Ed on the refrigerator  
2 at all times or PPL. I say Met-Ed, because I'm a  
3 resident of the Tamiment, and that's who services us.

4 To the Public Utility Commission, I would  
5 hope that you would develop a grading and ranking  
6 system for all of the public utilities in the State of  
7 Pennsylvania, in the great Commonwealth of  
8 Pennsylvania.

9 And fall below or fail, they  
10 automatically do not get to apply for an increase at  
11 all. You can legislate that. I hope you lead that  
12 charge, Rosemary, that you and send it over to the  
13 Public Utility Commission.

14 If you fail the homeowners who, by and  
15 large, are your source of revenue, you should not be  
16 able to ask to increase the cost of the homeowners  
17 because I'm going to forecast that, at some point in  
18 the future, you're going to blame Hurricane Sandy,  
19 Superstorm Sandy as the cause as to why you need  
20 another increase.

21 So, before you all get to that, you need  
22 to say, did we pass the mustard? Did we pass this  
23 minimum grade or this minimum ranking?

24 Then I want to talk about the meeting.  
25 Thank you, Senator, once again for setting the meeting

1 up. Thank the Chairman of the Public Utility  
2 Commission.

3           However, because there's room for  
4 improvement, I would ask you to please do it again at a  
5 time when more people can come. This is, by and large,  
6 a commuter community, where people work in New York  
7 City and in New Jersey or in Bethlehem or in Scranton.  
8 And they don't get home until 7:00.

9           But trust me, they have a lot that they  
10 want to say. And starting this meeting at 4:00 and  
11 public comments at 6 and ending it before they get off  
12 that highway, I think is unfair to the majority of  
13 people that live and work in the Poconos because there  
14 ain't no jobs in the Poconos, so they have to go  
15 elsewhere.

16           Let me talk to you also about economic  
17 impact. I saw Duke Power. I love the fact that they  
18 came up to help. That's great. But how many jobs was  
19 given to people locally?

20           How much effort was put out to say, we  
21 need people to cut trees and clear roads? We need  
22 people to direct traffic.

23           You could have had a greater economic  
24 impact on this community by hiring locally. We had a  
25 job fair, even in the midst of this or shortly after, I

1 didn't see any major effort being said, we have some  
2 basic jobs that can go out to the people who are  
3 affected right here in this community.

4 So, please, as you take this information  
5 and find a way to do better, to be better, that's all I  
6 ask. You can do better.

7 And the gentleman said, and I'm sure you  
8 have some of the smartest minds in the world, but we  
9 are so dependent on you as public citizens, on your  
10 utility, on that electric, this is what changed  
11 mankind's path, was electricity.

12 Without it, going back in the dark ages  
13 for a week. Maybe it was a good thing, showing us to  
14 be more appreciative what it is.

15 But with awesome power, comes awesome  
16 responsibilities. And I'm sad to say that, by and  
17 large, you all failed this responsibility with this  
18 community because it could have been done better.

19 And I hope that you take all of what  
20 you've heard and do a little bit better, even a little  
21 bit better, in the future, because it would make a  
22 whole lot more peoples' lives a little less miserable.  
23 Thank you.

24 MS. MCNAUGHTON: Daryl Epley.

25 MR. EPLEY: I sent my letter into Senator

1 Baker. Thank you.

2 MS. MCNAUGHTON: Bruce Samson.

3 MR. SAMSON: First I would like to thank  
4 the panel for putting on this forum tonight. My name  
5 is Bruce Samson. I live in Stroud Township. I live  
6 right on the border of Stroudsburg and Stroud Township.

7 And my power went out on a Monday and  
8 came back on the following Monday. And, basically,  
9 everything was said was covered.

10 I'd like to cover some finer points.. I  
11 think a lack of planning, what they need is when they  
12 bring these people in, the companies, to fix these  
13 power lines, they need to get a marshaling plan.

14 I worked for the government for 30 some  
15 years. That's where they have an area to stage things  
16 and put things on for these people.

17 I was totally shocked when Mr. Ertle said  
18 that he couldn't get his hotel up and running, when  
19 we're bringing people from out of state in trucks, this  
20 gentleman should have his power back on so these people  
21 who are coming in from out of state can have a place to  
22 stay.

23 My next complaint goes to Met-Ed. Trust  
24 me, most of the people left. But if I had the  
25 opportunity and they told me, can I pick your power

1 supplier? I would drop Met-Ed like a lead balloon and  
2 go to PPL.

3 I'm dissatisfied. I called them. Again,  
4 are you satisfied with the call? That isn't giving me  
5 an answer, giving anybody else an answer.

6 I did not see a Met-Ed truck -- one  
7 truck, I saw one lineman in my development. They must  
8 have been waiting. It was a local fellow. Don't blame  
9 those guys, because they're only going where they're  
10 told until the end of the seven days.

11 PPL was running all over the place. Now  
12 I would ask that the PUC do due diligence and hold  
13 Met-Ed responsible. Put your feet to the fire and ask  
14 them, can they do a better job? You're darn right they  
15 can do a better job.

16 They let the ball drop and think the  
17 first and the second time. So, I would hope that you  
18 would take all this information, go back and make them  
19 do their homework a lot better than what they did.  
20 Thank you.

21 MS. MCNAUGHTON: I think this is the last  
22 public commenter for the evening. Anita Boswell.

23 MS. BOSWELL: Hello, everyone. Last but  
24 not least, I guess. I was one of the last people to  
25 get my power back. We went 10 days.

1 I, like everyone else, lost food. Spent  
2 money eating out. Ten days, breakfast, lunch and  
3 dinner becomes very costly.

4 I had to obtain a kerosene heater because  
5 I had electric heat, so I then had to obtain kerosene.  
6 Local gas stations decided to up the kerosene prices  
7 from one night to the next.

8 So, we were getting bombarded from every  
9 direction. Our roads were blocked by downed trees and  
10 wires for two days.

11 When a path was clear, we were still  
12 forced to drive over and under wires on the road. When  
13 I called the Met-Ed and explained, they advised us not  
14 to do that but they couldn't stop us.

15 I had no heat. I have fibromyalgia and  
16 arthritis. Being in a house with no heat for two days,  
17 when I finally could get out of the house, I was  
18 crawling.

19 There was no way for anybody to get me.  
20 We had people in our community that if something  
21 happened to them, there was no way possible to get to  
22 them. There were ten trees laying in the road.

23 Met-Ed got -- I apologize. Not going to  
24 attempt his name. I will butcher his name. A  
25 spokesman was quoted numerous times in the newspaper

1 and in the news claiming that when he expected the  
2 power to be up.

3 But when we called the company, this  
4 wasn't the case. The employee I spoke to said she  
5 didn't know where we were getting our information from,  
6 but that it wasn't accurate.

7 I then read the name of the Met-Ed  
8 spokesman. She said, oh my God, I quote, I know  
9 exactly who that is. I just don't understand why he's  
10 lying to our customers.

11 I received an automated call on Monday  
12 that said my power is restored. I then spoke to a  
13 customer service person. I attempted to tell them my  
14 power was not on. She argued with me.

15 Now, mind you, this is now Monday. My  
16 patience are gone. I really tried to continue to keep  
17 a smile on my face and bear with everything.

18 I'm telling her, I can't see the hand in  
19 front of my face, therefore, I know my power is not on.  
20 She continually said, are you sure? Our computers  
21 would not call you if that wasn't the case. They must  
22 be in your area.

23 I then explain to her, that couldn't be  
24 possible because in order for power to be restored,  
25 they'd have to be in our development because our lines

1 were down. She continued to argue, and I have to be  
2 honest, I had to hang up the phone.

3 On Tuesday, I was told that our power was  
4 going to be restored. Came home. There was eight to  
5 ten trucks in our development. I was overjoyed.

6 I was driving around. Met-Ed employees  
7 and trucks. We decided to leave. Why sit in the dark  
8 house? It's going to be fixed. They were there for an  
9 hour. One man on one pole fixed one wire, while the  
10 rest of them stood and drank coffee.

11 I am very fortunate that I did not  
12 witness all of this. Because if I would have seen them  
13 leave my development, I can't promise you that I would  
14 have been calm.

15 I then called customer service the next  
16 day, because they guaranteed us our power by phone, we  
17 would be restored by noon.

18 12:30 rolls around. It's not happening.  
19 Because we had poles missing, and they told us it would  
20 take eight to ten hours per crew to repair a pole. So,  
21 when I spoke to the customer service lady, she was  
22 very, very apologetic.

23 I told her everything that had happened.  
24 And she said that -- she urged me to get off of the  
25 phone and call the Public Utility Commission

1 immediately, that the things that were happening were  
2 definitely as a direct result of miscommunication on  
3 the part of Met-Ed.

4 I was thoroughly disgusted by the poor  
5 business practices of Met-Ed and the lack of concern  
6 for their customers.

7 I, like most of us, lost monetarily. And  
8 there's no compensation. I have to laugh today when I  
9 look on-line, Pocono Record, Met-Ed was gracious to  
10 tell us we can pay our bill late.

11 Is that going to replace anything that we  
12 lost? It's amazing to me. No good time is a time for  
13 a power outage.

14 At the present time, our economy is  
15 suffering terribly. Most of us are struggling to feed  
16 our families. With the loss of food, cost of eating,  
17 out for ten days, finding different means for heat for  
18 our homes, the cost to do so, much of us missed days of  
19 work, were left with nothing.

20 Seems to be okay with Met-Ed. On a  
21 general everyday basis when their butts aren't against  
22 the fire, it would not be acceptable for us to be late  
23 on a bill.

24 Where are their responsibilities to their  
25 customers for everything that we lost? I just don't

1 understand. We are all suffering right now.

2 And I mean, like the man said, our  
3 insurance companies -- the check I got, \$36.00. That  
4 doesn't put a dent in everything that we lost. And all  
5 I'm urging you all to do is consider where we are right  
6 now and push that something be done, because it's  
7 definitely getting worse.

8 With Irene, five days we were out.  
9 Now we're up to 10. It doesn't make any sense.  
10 There's no progress. Thank you.

11 SENATOR BAKER: I think that concludes  
12 all of our public comments. But I would like to remind  
13 anyone who did not have an opportunity to offer any  
14 thoughts today, you can send an e-mail or contact my  
15 office by letter. Share the information.

16 I would also encourage anyone who didn't  
17 sign up, if you'd like additional information, we will  
18 have a summary of the meeting.

19 This is being transcribed. And, so, if  
20 you're interested in any follow-up, certainly, we would  
21 be happy to share that with you.

22 To conclude the comments this evening, I  
23 would ask Chairman Powelson to offer a few brief  
24 comments and offer the podium to him.

25 COMMISSIONER POWELSON: Thank you,

1 Senator. I want to thank everybody for coming out. We  
2 heard you loud and clear. And this has been an  
3 eyeopener for us, and my colleague, Commissioner  
4 Gardner.

5 We are here because we want to hear from  
6 you, obviously. We live in a part of the state where  
7 we weren't impacted as bad as this Pike and Monroe  
8 County.

9 I can assure you that over the next  
10 couple months, we will be taking action on the missteps  
11 that we heard here tonight.

12 The utility CEO is here. I can assure  
13 you, again, over the next couple of months, corrective  
14 steps will be taken.

15 You heard me say earlier, on January  
16 10th, we will conduct a hearing at the Commission. I'm  
17 looking at it, my good friend Frank Cleaver, I  
18 understand there's another set of hearings at the  
19 Pennsylvania State Senate will be hosting under our  
20 oversight, Senator Tomlinson and Senator Baker as well.

21 These are not the kind of meetings I like  
22 to attend. But I'm here because my colleagues are  
23 here, because we need to hear from you about the trials  
24 and tribulations of this massive weather event.

25 And I want to leave you on one note. I

1 know one gentleman said we're politicians, and this is  
2 all theater here.

3 Let me assure you, I drove three hours to  
4 get up here. And this is not theater. Okay. We're  
5 listening. We will do our jobs. And I am not a  
6 politician. I am a public utility regulator.

7 And our vested interest is in your  
8 economic, your social well-being and that you have safe  
9 and reliable utility service.

10 So, with that, I want to thank you, Senator  
11 Baker and members of the General Assembly, thank you  
12 for having us here. We will do our jobs.

13 And with that in mind, Senator, we can  
14 adjourn on that note. And I will stick around if  
15 anybody wants to do a sidebar with me.

16 Thank you for having us tonight in your  
17 community and want to wish you a safe trip. Thank you.

18 (Whereupon, at 7:04 p.m., the input  
19 session was concluded.)

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I hereby certify, as the stenographic reporter, that the foregoing proceedings were reported stenographically by me, and thereafter reduced to typewriting by me or under my direction; and that this transcript is a true and accurate record to the best of my ability.

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