

Chairman Needleman and Members of the Energy and Technology Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly,

I'd like to share my experiences and concerns with you regarding the service provided by Eversource and its appalling preparation and response to Tropical Storm Isaias.

But first, I'd like to draw your attention to their tone-deaf email sent to customers in the aftermath of Isaias (content copied below) in which they pat themselves on the back for what they consider a job well done. They do not apologize for their lack of preparation or responsiveness nor they do not offer compensation for lost food in the midst of a pandemic and record unemployment. Instead they offer the same platitudes that we have heard after each storm in which they have failed to provide sufficient preparation and adequate service restoration. I will simply point out that once again they have chosen selective facts to support their view of their performance. Restoration after Isaias SHOULD have been quicker than after Sandy or Irene as we (thankfully!) did not have the rain/flooding issues with Isaias that we saw with both Sandy and Irene.

It has been reported that Eversource essentially made a bet on the storm and moved crews elsewhere anticipating that the storm would not impact CT to the extent that it did. They were playing with our lives and property and while they lost the bet, we paid the price. And, no doubt, they'll request a rate hike as a result and we'll be forced to pay AGAIN.

My husband saw trucks with crews just sitting in the trucks at Coleytown school in Westport on August 6th. They were 'awaiting instructions' and **remained there all day**. So, we paid for them to sit in their trucks ALL DAY. No one's power was restored. The complete and utter lack of communication from Eversource is inexcusable and can only mean that they had nothing to say in their own defense or, perhaps worse, simply had no idea themselves what was going on. The outage maps were woefully incorrect. I had family members thinking my power had been restored the same day because the map showed no outage in this area for DAYS. You couldn't get through on the Eversource website, you couldn't get through on the automated phone service, and you sure couldn't get a representative on the phone. You had no way to know if they even knew about your outage much less get a restoration time. The only way in which Eversource's response could have been worse is if it were to have occurred in the winter: no heat, issues with pipes bursting, health risks for the elderly, etc.

Sadly, Eversource's storm response is reminiscent of the Bill Murray movie "Groundhog Day" – the same things keep happening over and over. In March 2010 and October 2011, the SAME complaints were registered with regard to Eversource's poor response to outages after the March storm and in the wake of Hurricane Irene: **inadequate communication with residents and municipalities; idle repair trucks waiting for orders; resident without power for 8 days**. Sound familiar?? In March 2010, Governor Jodi Rell said she was concerned about Eversource's response time after that storm. In August 2020, Governor Lamont called on Public Utilities Regulatory Authority to investigate Eversource's response to the storm. Governor Lamont tweeted, "Several years ago, Connecticut experienced large-scale outages that took days to recover from, and we were told that the utilities were improving their resources so that they can be prepared for the next time Mother Nature inevitably hits again. And now here we are, with a wholly inadequate response to another storm." When is Eversource going to be held accountable? Until incentives are put in place to FORCE Eversource to change, it has proven it will not do so.

Why is the CEO of a public utility with such a poor record paid \$19.8 million? For what? I guess he kept expenses down because Eversource is sure not doing the preventative or anticipatory work needed to prevent outages or restore power as quickly as possible such as positioning teams for rapid response. I urge you to read the article on Eversource executive compensation as compared to its competitors from the CT Examiner: <https://ctexaminer.com/2020/08/17/eversource-compensation-and-the-competition/>. Eversource is the 4th largest (in terms of customers) US owned and publicly traded electrical provider in the northeast but pays its executive more than any of the other companies. The top 5 Eversource executives were paid \$39.37 million in compensation – no wonder they’re looking for a rate hike!

Unfortunately, I believe it is not a question of *if* but *when* this area gets hit by another 1938 Long Island Express / Great New England Hurricane, particularly with the extreme weather patterns that have begun emerging. Estimates are that it would take MONTHS to restore the power. If it takes Eversource 8 days in the wake of Isaias, it will be MANY MONTHS LONGER THAN PREDICTED for Eversource to restore power after a major hurricane. Wouldn't it be prudent to 'hold their feet to the fire' now to ensure they are prepared as best as possible to meet that sort of a disaster than to continue to let them make empty promises as has been done for the past decade? We can take preemptive measures now or we are all going to bemoan the same Eversource lack of preparation and responsiveness as we have been. Apparently, there are no, or certainly insufficient, incentives in place to FORCE Eversource to change the appalling way it services – or fails to service – its CAPTIVE customers.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Anonymous but Disgusted

Westport, CT

Email received 8/14/2020 from communications@email.eversource.com with subject line, “A storm for the record books”

EVERSOURCE



Isaias – one for the record books

When Tropical Storm Isaias swept across the Northeast on Aug. 4, thousands of trees were toppled and took out large chunks of the power delivery system we all rely on. When severe weather hits, we all weather the storm together. Yet this one was especially hard.

More than 632,000 of our Connecticut customers lost power at the peak of the storm, and hundreds of thousands of people were forced to manage life without electricity for many days.

We heard you

A loss of power is a loss of control. It impacts work life, home life, and the daily routine. It's even more confusing to not know when your power will be back, especially as we're all living through this pandemic. And each day that goes by without it feels even worse.

We read your emails and social media posts, took the calls, and listened to customer stories in person. We heard your frustration and worked urgently to bring every possible resource to bear.

The impact

This storm impacted all 149 communities we serve in the state. Roads were blocked by thousands of downed trees across the state, many of which had been weakened by drought and disease. More than 2,000 utility poles were broken or damaged. Hundreds of miles of wire were pulled down and 1,000 transformers were damaged. The tallies so far show Isaias delivered more damage to the Connecticut power system than historic hurricanes Sandy and Irene.

The restoration

Because the damage was so widespread, we mobilized the largest mutual aid response in our company's history. Eversource crews from New Hampshire and Massachusetts joined their Connecticut colleagues, and utilities from other states and Canada poured in to repair the system and get the power back. Even though we took more damage in this storm than during Sandy and Irene, the restoration was 33% faster. Isaias was substantially restored in 8 days; Sandy 11 days; Irene 12 days.

Thank you

As a company focused on reliability, we learn from every major storm. Working with community leaders and regulators, we're committed to doing so again. We heard your voices, and we're going to use what you told us to continuously improve. One area we've already addressed is ensuring our self-service outage reporting systems can handle even higher surges of simultaneous volume.

From the first responders who worked tirelessly and safely with us to all the individuals who helped their friends and neighbors during this difficult time, it was truly a team effort. On behalf of our 8,300 dedicated employees, thank you for your patience, understanding and for weathering this storm with us. Stay safe.

Sincerely,

Craig Hallstrom, President of Regional Electric Operations

Penni McLean-Conner, Senior Vice President and Chief Customer Officer



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