



August 27, 2020

Energy & Technology Committee  
Legislative Office Building

RE: Tropical Storm Isaias Response

Dear Honorable Members of the Energy & Technology Committee,

On behalf of the Town of Farmington, I wanted to express our concerns that Eversource failed to adequately prepare for and respond to Tropical Storm Isaias. I have categorized our concerns into four topics below.

**Topic 1: Communication**

- Restoration times were not posted on the Eversource web site or were untimely. Some customers never received a restoration time. It is unacceptable that Eversource could not give timely restoration projections.
- The Town Liaison system does not work. While Farmington had a very nice and responsive liaison, the liaison was only able to provide very limited information that was of true value. Based on my past experience with the storm of 2011, information regarding restoration times originates from the operations side of the organization, and the town liaisons are not on this side of the organization.
- Eversource appears to work in silos and one silo does not know what the other silo is doing. For example, the tree crews do not communicate directly with the electrical crew and, as indicated above, the Town liaison structure is not in the same silo as operations. This is not an effective way to operate and creates a disconnect internally at Eversource. The inability to communicate internally also hinders external communication to Towns and Eversource customers.

**Topic 2: Restoration efforts**

- The Town of Farmington did receive a small crew within 24 hours to help clear roads. This was crucial since the Town of



Farmington's main arteries were grid locked, creating a larger public safety issue. The Town of Farmington has dedicated public safety and public works crews to work directly with the Eversource crew(s) to clear the roads. This approach works.

- After 72 hours a substantial number of crews arrived in Farmington and were able to restore the majority of power to the Town in less than 24 hours. My conclusion is that once crews arrive in a community, restoration work can be completed in a timely manner. However, waiting 72 hours for crews to begin their restoration efforts, is an unacceptable timeframe. Aside from the amount of time it took crews to begin restoration, Eversource should have communicated a timeline for restoration to the Town that power was not going to be restored for at least 4 days (See Topic 1- Communication).

### **Topic 3: Coordination efforts**

- Eversource crews were in the Town of Farmington for 24-48 hours and did not appear to accomplish any work. My understanding of the situation was that either a tree crew was waiting for an electrical crew or an electrical crew was waiting for a tree crew, which prevented either crew from beginning their work. At one point we had both tree and electrical crews waiting around for "someone" to give permission to start the work. It is clear that no one from Eversource was coordinating work, resulting in at least 48 hours of wasted time and a delay in restoration. I cannot envision any situation where it is appropriate for crews to sit in their trucks for up to 12 hours and not accomplish some type of work.

### **Topic 4: Deja-vu from the storm of 2011**

- What is extremely frustrating, and troubling is that these are the same concerns Farmington had in response to the 2011. I was Town Manager in 2011, so I have first-hand experience with Eversource's lackluster response to a storm. It is abundantly clear that Eversource has not made any strides to improve its response, or communication when a significant power outage occurs state-wide.
- Farmington's electricity infrastructure was extensively damaged

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as a result of Tropical Storm Isaias. The Town of Farmington is extremely disappointed in Eversource for its poor response, inadequate coordination to restore power, and inability to provide valuable information when our residents need it most.

The Town of Farmington is willing and available to offer our insight on how utility companies can improve their response to wide-spread storm disasters.

Sincerely,

Kathleen A. Eagen  
Town Manager  
Town of Farmington