



Office of the TOWN COUNCIL
JAMES BROWN, CHAIR

September 10, 2020

VIA EMAIL DELIVERY

TOWN COUNCIL

James Brown
Chairperson

Dean Markham
Vice Chairman

Tim Feegel

Derek Johnson

Barbara Moore

Mark Philhower

Kevin Reich

Honorable Senator Needleman, Chair
Honorable Representative Arconti, Chair
Distinguished Members of the Energy and Technology Committee

Public Utility Regulatory Authority
Marissa Paslick Gillett - Chairman
Ten Franklin Square
New Britain CT 06051

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please accept the following from the Town of East Hampton in regard to Docket No. 20-08-03, Investigation into Electric Distribution Companies' Preparation for and Response to Tropical Storm Isaias and other actions or investigations related to Eversource's response to the storm or proposed regulations.

The Town of East Hampton in northern Middlesex County, was struck by winds related to Tropical Storm Isaias around 1:30pm on August 4, 2020 and was in the storm for about five to six hours. Major impacts of the storm lingered until late in the day on Tuesday, August 11 due to lack of immediate response and confused response from Eversource.

During the storm, East Hampton experienced many downed trees and wire entanglements, which cannot be addressed by Town crews and require intervention by Eversource. While many of these did not fully block roads, they certainly inhibited movement around Town by the public as well as crews but also, importantly, emergency services. The difficulty of this is rooted in the lack of the "Make Safe" program during this event. The lack of early response from Eversource crews with the sole purpose of ensuring the safe removal of debris from roadways directly contributed to long lead times to get roads cleared. At Eversource's request, the Town's written priority lists were redone on multiple occasions until the Town was finally directed to call our priorities in to the utility's dispatch center directly.

Unfortunately, because the utility was focused on restoration of power efforts, having never assisted in the road clearing efforts, the Town still had residents trapped in their houses and neighborhoods by 100% blocked roads until Sunday, August 9 many others with long, partially blocked rural/dirt



road alternative routes well into the following week. The Town finds this unnecessary and unacceptable.

While the Town understands the need to restore power as soon as possible, it is initially more critical to ensure that road clearing can proceed to ensure that all crews can move about unimpeded and that residents without power are able to move to areas with service or to emergency shelters. Any effort to revise regulations or to find faults in the utility's response should take this into consideration. A regulation that focuses merely on timelines for restoration of power and does not make road opening a priority will leave rural or less dense areas in an untenable position as they wait for wires to be removed.

Eversource must return to the "Make Safe" program immediately and such a program must remain a priority in any proposed regulation.

Sincerely,

James Brown
Town Council Chair

Cc: Town Council
David Cox, Town Manager
Representative Irene Haines
COST
CCM