



September 8, 2020

Comments Relating to The Energy and Technology Committee Virtual Listening Session regarding LCO No. 3920. AAC EMERGENCY RESPONSE BY ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION COMPANIES AND REVISING THE REGULATION OF OTHER PUBLIC UTILITIES

Background on the Chamber- The Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce is a dynamic business organization with over 2,175 members that employ over 50,000 people. Our chamber represents businesses of all sizes and from all industry sectors, from Fortune 500 companies, to micro businesses, and we are committed to promoting a positive business climate in Middlesex County. In addition to being an effective and dynamic business organization, our chamber strives to be a strong community organization. We run a number of events and programs that support workforce development, youth development, substance abuse prevention, our veterans, and much more.

We are writing today to offer comments on LCO No. 3920 *AAC EMERGENCY RESPONSE BY ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION COMPANIES AND REVISING THE REGULATION OF OTHER PUBLIC UTILITIES*.

The Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce understands that energy policy is extremely complicated, especially in a state like ours. We also understand the importance of having a reliable and resilient public utility system. The tropical storm that hit Connecticut in early August had a major impact on the business community and on the residents of Middlesex County. We acknowledge that changes need to be made in order to ensure that communication and the process for restoring power after an outage is as seamless as possible. However, we also believe that these changes need to be made in a deliberate, collaborative, and thoughtful manner, and that they should be done in a bi-partisan way. Implementing such substantive changes during special session does not allow for the full legislative process with broad stakeholder engagement, opportunities to evaluate any unintended consequences from the bill on other PURA regulated utilities, or consideration of reasonable amendments that might improve the bill. Further, it would seem there would be benefit to allow PURA to conclude its investigation into the utilities' storm response, and consider those recommendations before adopting legislation aimed at addressing that response.

This is a very serious time for our state and our nation. We are still dealing with the dynamics of a global pandemic, and we are nearing the end of summer and preparing for colder weather. Our chamber believes that any changes to energy policy in our state should consider not only what is best for ratepayers, but also what is best for our public utilities, and what is best for Connecticut's energy future. After all, we are all in this together.

The Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce is fortunate to count Eversource as a strong, and longtime member. The State of Connecticut is fortunate that Eversource has a steadfast commitment to community organizations in its service area. Eversource supports our Business and Education Advisory Council which connects the business and education communities in our region, our Business "Know How" program which supports minority business development, our annual High School Career Exploration event, and our efforts to increase economic resilience in Middlesex County. We are grateful for this support, and look forward to growing our relationship with the company as we move forward.

In closing, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to offer some comments on this important issue. We would also like to thank you for your service to the State of Connecticut. As always, we look forward to being a constructive partner on all fronts as we move forward.