



Energy and Technology Committee Listening Session
September 8, 2020

Chairman Arconti, Ranking Member Ferraro, Chairman Needleman, Ranking Member Formica, and distinguished members of the Energy and Technology Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on **LCO No. 3920, An Act Concerning Emergency Response by Electric Distribution Companies and Revising the Regulation of Other Public Utilities.**

On behalf of the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce, I write this Committee to request that more time and consideration is given to this bill and the underlying topics. The resulting power outage from Tropical Storm Isaias was devastating for residents and businesses of all sizes. There are improvements and modifications that can be made to storm response, but they should be well thought out and not addressed during a special session. Too often, well intentioned policy initiatives around energy result in additional costs to ratepayers.

The Chamber is a business association covering fifteen municipalities including New Haven. United Illuminating is a long-standing member of the Chamber that has supported many of our business recovery efforts during the pandemic. We also represent businesses who suffered significant losses during the storm and were frustrated by the duration of the outage.

A full and complete review of what went right and what went wrong should be the starting point of new legislation. There are obvious issues, no one would disagree that there can be more communication improvements during major storm events, but there are other issues that deserve a deeper review, including: priorities of restoration, the effectiveness of past storm hardening measures, and restoration times relative to the amount of damage.

Any changes that are deemed necessary, should undergo further vetting to ensure that their costs do not outweigh their benefits. Minimum staffing levels and changes to Conservation Load Management programs are just two examples of where well-intentioned legislation could result in increased rates. Utility deregulation and the recent renewables reclassification of nuclear power were actions that were intended to save ratepayers money and instead they have increased costs.

The businesses that our organization represent want to ensure that power restoration is efficient and effective, but they are also concerned with the cost of electricity. I worry that an expedited storm response bill could increase these costs in the long-term. Our state's history with complex energy legislation validates these concerns. Please allow for ample consideration and rigorous review of this proposed legislation.

Sincerely,

Garrett Sheehan
President & CEO

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