

**PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17105-3265**

**Electric Distribution Company Service Outage Response and
Restoration Practices**

**PUBLIC MEETING
April 30, 2009
C-0011
Docket No. M-2008-2065532**

**JOINT MOTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN TYRONE CHRISTY AND
COMMISSIONER KIM PIZZINGRILLI**

On September 25, 2008, the Commission adopted our Joint Motion to initiate an investigation into electric distribution company service outage response and restoration practices. This evaluation was prompted by the interruption of service to over 450,000 customers due to the effects of Hurricane Ike on September 14 and 15, 2008. As part of this investigation, the Commission held two public input hearings in western Pennsylvania and solicited information from electric distribution companies on their current and past storm preparation and response practices.

Commission staff has prepared a report that summarizes the findings of this investigation and includes the following recommendations for future action:

- Utilities should apply the principles of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and its Incident Command System when managing widespread service outages. Application of NIMS would involve:
 - Development of written crisis communication plans consistent with national NIMS standards.
 - Establishment of a Joint Information System/Joint Information Center to coordinate responses when multiple utilities in the same region are affected by an incident.
- Utility personnel should communicate with the news media and public in a consistent fashion. Common talking points should be distributed to all utility employees who may be in contact with the public and news media.
- During incident management, utilities should establish a schedule for the regular release of information to the news media.
- Utilities should strive to use the best available technology to facilitate the sharing of information, including automated dialing systems, electronic mail and text messaging.

- Utilities should provide a greater level of detail in their notices to the Commission on unscheduled service interruptions, including the level of damage to utility facilities, number of personnel utilized through mutual aid agreements, and other matters identified in the report.
- The Commission should establish a more uniform approach to reportable incidents involving accidents relating to utility facilities and operations.

In order to implement these recommendations the Commission will open proceedings to adopt a Policy Statement on Service Outage Public Notification Guidelines and revise its regulations on Service Outages at 52 Pa. Code § 67.1, *et seq.*, and reportable incidents at 52 Pa. Code §§ 57.11, 59.11, and 65.2.

We commend staff for their work on this investigation, members of the public who participated in our input hearings, and utility staff who responded to our data requests. We would also like to thank the emergency responders, utility crews, and contractors for their commitment in responding to this severe weather event. We believe that the consideration of these policies and procedures will result in even more effective responses to future unscheduled service outages.

THEREFORE, WE MOVE THAT:

1. The report prepared by Commission staff be made public.
2. The Law Bureau initiate the rulemaking proceedings recommended by Commission staff in the Electric Distribution Company Service Outage Response and Restoration Practices Report.

April 30, 2009

Date

TYRONE J. CHRISTY, VICE-CHAIRMAN

KIM PIZZINGRILLI, COMMISSIONER