

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

**Proposed Policy Statement Regarding Utility
Service Outage Public Notification Guidelines**

**PUBLIC MEETING
November 6, 2009
2065532-LAW
Docket No. M-2008-2065532**

**JOINT STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER KIM PIZZINGRILLI
AND VICE CHAIRMAN TYRONE J. CHRISTY**

Pennsylvania experienced widespread electric distribution service outages as a consequence of Hurricane Ike in September of 2008. On September 25, 2008, the Commission initiated an investigation to evaluate current electric utility service storm response, service restoration, and customer communication practices. The Commission released a report on April 30, 2009 that summarized the findings of this investigation and recommended revisions to existing regulations and the adoption of a new policy statement.

This proposed policy statement will implement the report's recommendation that the Commission adopt a uniform policy for incident management and communications with customers during significant electric service outages. The policy statement recommends that electric distribution companies:

- Adopt the principles of the National Incident Management System (NIMS), its Incident Command System, and its Public Information System including the development of a written crisis communication plan and establishment of a Joint Information System/Center to coordinate responses when multiple utilities in the same region are affected by an incident.
- Communicate with their customers and the news media in a consistent fashion during widespread service outages.
- Establish a schedule for the regular release of information to the news media through a single point of contact.
- Utilize the best available technology to facilitate the distribution of information to customers and the news media.

This policy statement is intended to provide guidance and help ensure that timely notice is provided whenever an event disrupts service or potentially endangers public safety. The Commission invites comment on whether this policy statement should be applied across all jurisdictional utilities. We would encourage utilities to pay particular attention to our focus on NIMS and its components. This represents the best practice for emergency preparedness and incident management. It has been adopted by federal agencies, and agencies of the Commonwealth, including this Commission. We further invite an analysis regarding the benefits versus costs that may be incurred with the implementation of this policy statement.

We would like to thank our staff for their comprehensive review of utility practices and the development of these recommendations. We encourage all affected utilities to review this proposed policy statement and provide comments.

November 6, 2009
Date

KIM PIZZINGRILLI, COMMISSIONER

TYRONE J. CHRISTY, VICE CHAIRMAN