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Rosemary Chiavetta Esq.
Secretary
PA Public Utility Commission
P.O. Box 3265
Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265

RE: Docket No C-2024-3049856. Thomas Little v. First Energy PA Electric Co.
Reply to the Answer & New Matter of FE PA (Met Ed Rate District)

Dear Secretary Chiavetta,

I am responding to the July 22nd answer from First Energy (FE) to the above referenced complaint. The answer from FE is completely inadequate. My complaint cited power outages over a 3-year (36 month) time period. FE replied that there were 18 sustained power outages in the prior 24 months. They did not provide data for the entire 36-month period. They state that the outages occurred due to inclement weather and trees outside the ROW. FE's letter does not define "inclement weather" or the ROW. FE does not provide the date and time these outages occurred, the date and time the outages ended, the location of the problem responsible for each outage and the cause of each outage. I believe they are required to report this data. This data is needed to determine the duration of outages and understand the impact of the outages on their customers.

With respect to "inclement weather," PUC chairman DeFrank has issued public warnings stating "snow, ice, and high winds can disrupt utility service...". What were the specific weather conditions when each of the 18 sustained power outages occurred? What wind conditions existed when these outages occurred? FE should be required to provide the date and time of the power interruptions which can be compared to the specific weather conditions at those times.

FE provides no information on their definition of the ROW. I have been unable to obtain a copy of the ROW after 2 RTK requests to Williams Twp and one to

Northampton County. Williams Twp has no record of the ROW on file. Williams Twp cited 53. P.S. Section 67306 which establishes a ROW ranging from 35' to 120.' The Twp does not know the width which is in force. Repair crews on the scene have quoted different ROW distances to me. If they don't know the width of the ROW, how can they reliably report whether a fallen tree was inside or outside the ROW? How can we have any confidence in FE's allegation that trees outside the ROW caused the power interruptions? Do the repair crews record the distance of a downed tree from the center of the road? Do they create any photographic record of these events? I believe the PUC should require FE to produce a copy of the ROW in force in Williams Twp to begin this analysis. They provide no documentation of the location of the causative trees, relative to the road which is the reference point for the ROW. They provide no information on trees whose trunk may be outside the alleged ROW but whose branches are within the ROW. How do they determine the location of the branch prior to its falling? If a dead branch falls vertically damaging a power line, can we infer that it was within the area of FE's responsibility? FE has provided no prospectively recorded data to document the location of the dead trees and limbs causing the power interruptions which they allege is not their fault.

FE in their response on page 4 state "The Respondent avers that it monitors and makes improvements to the facilities that provide service to the Complainant to mitigate potential outages." In January 2024, we experienced three power outages in the same week (1/10, 1/13, 1/14) from repeated falling tree damage to the distribution line located between 455 and 465 Texas Road in Williams Township. This resulted from a cluster of dead trees which fell in serial fashion over a few days causing power interruption on each occasion. Clearly, FE did not mitigate the situation on 1/10/24. This important data is unreported or omitted in the Respondent's answer. This information is necessary for the PUC to evaluate the reliability of power delivery and the credibility of the FE answer. PUC regulations require energy distribution companies like FE to "undertake prudent operational measures to prevent or avoid outages that are preventable at a reasonable cost." When FE first repaired the damaged distribution line on 1/10/24, they must have seen the other dead trees posing an ongoing risk. Clearly, by not removing those dead trees, FE did not make improvements to mitigate potential outages which then occurred within one week. Would the cost of this tree removal when personnel were at the site have been a reasonable cost? By not removing additional dead trees when they first repaired a damaged distribution line, FE failed to prevent 2 additional power disruptions on 1/13 and 1/14/24. There are additional dead trees at that site representing an ongoing unmitigated risk for additional power interruptions in the future. The cost of cutting down those DEAD trees would likely have been less than the cost of sending repair crews to the same site twice more that week. Thus, the cost of cutting down those dead trees was not only "reasonable," it was likely cost effective for FE. These trees are located in a wooded area and should have been cut down at minimal cost while the power was off. I stress that these avoidable power interruptions occurred in January when electricity is needed to provide heat to homes along with water from wells and septic system sanitation. Perhaps the PUC should request the expense of those

avoidable repairs compared to the cost of cutting down the trees. Assess for yourselves if the cost was reasonable.

FE avers that their reliability meets standards. Section 57.194 requires EDCs to analyze reliability and take corrective measures as necessary to achieve performance benchmarks and performance standards. FE reports sustained power outages in 75% of the months reported without documenting their duration. Did FE recognize this poor reliability? If so, did FE take any measures to improve their service reliability? PUC code Section 57.198(b) requires an EDC to submit a “condition-based plan” for vegetation management for its transmission system. The City of Easton developed a management plan for the ash borer starting in 2015. Did FE develop a plan for ash borer risk to power interruption? The ash borer infestation has clearly changed the conditions in which FE delivers power. Has FE modified its vegetation management plan to respond to the changing conditions?

Does FE aver that this reliability met benchmarks and performance standards? If so, what are those standards and benchmarks? If not, what corrective measures did FE take to meet these benchmarks and performance standards? FE has not provided data concerning SAIFI, SAIDI, CAIDI, CEMI and CELID to support their assertion that their service was reasonable. In their response, Fe provides no data to indicate that their service is reliable and meets standards. The PUC should obtain these performance metrics concerning Texas Road and make them available to me and the community. The Supervisors of Williams Township have written to support this complaint and should be informed of the PUCs findings.

With respect to safety, Township roads have been closed due to downed power lines which I assume was related to the risk of electrocution. These events were not unanticipated. They are predicable based on the presence of dead trees and preventable with proper vegetation management. In the western U.S, and Hawaii, devastating wildfires have resulted from downed power lines and increased fuel on the ground. These conditions exist in Williams Township and elevate the risk of wildfires if drier conditions occur.

Repair crews and their supervisors have repeatedly told me different stories about their responsibilities for vegetation management. Some claim it is based on the ROW. I have been quoted various specifications for the ROW. A supervisor said it includes a 15’ “circle around the power line itself independent of the ROW. I have requested from the PUC through RTK a copy of Met-Ed’s inspection and management plan and thus far the PUC has not provided this information. As a rural community with winding roads, the FE distribution lines often travel outside the assumed ROW. Has FE undertaken measures to manage vegetation within the “wire zone border zone?” Does the PUC have regulations with respect to wires traveling outside the ROW? Does FE have policies and procedures regulated by the PUC to provide vegetation management for distribution lines which travel outside the ROW?

This communication should not be considered a verification of the statements offered by FE in their response. Also, since the PUC has not yet responded to my RTK request for information, I reserve the right to file an additional response when that information is provided.

In summary, the Response from FE provides limited and severely incomplete data. This limited data does support my claim of unreliable power delivery. FE provides no data to suggest that their service complies with PUC regulations. The power interruptions in Williams Twp were predictable and preventable. They are ongoing. FE did not take the steps necessary, at reasonable cost, required to provide safe and reliable power to our community. FE's assertion that their performance was reasonable and meets standards is laughable. I lived for 2 years in Grenada a poor country with a per capita GDP of \$742.20 at that time. Power rarely was interrupted in this mountainous heavily forested country exposed to continuous ocean generated weather conditions. FE should provide a level of service reliability comparable to that third world country.

Sincerely,

Thomas Little

CC:

Margaret A. Morris, Esq, Reger Rizzo & Darnall LLP
Melody Ernst, Williams Township
Representative Robert Freeman, Pennsylvania Assembly
Senator Lisa Boscola, Pennsylvania Senate