

1 STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
2 PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION AND
3 NEW HAMPSHIRE HOMELAND SECURITY
4 & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

5
6 April 20, 2009 - 7:06 p.m.
Derry Municipal Center
7 14 Manning Street
Derry, New Hampshire
8

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10 RE: DECEMBER 2008 ICE STORM REVIEW
Hearing to receive public statements.

11

12

13 PRESENT: Chairman Thomas B. Getz, Presiding (NHPUC)
Commissioner Graham J. Morrison (NHPUC)
14 Commissioner Clifton C. Below (NHPUC)
Asst. Director Kathy Douth (HS&EM)
15

16 ALSO PRESENT: Reptg. the New Hampshire PUC Staff:
Lynn Fabrizio, Esq., - Legal Division
17 Randall Knepper, Director - Safety Division

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Reptg. NH Homeland Security & Emergency Mgt.:
19 James C. Van Dongen, Public Information Off.

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23 Court Reporter: Steven E. Patnaude, LCR No. 52

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Okay. Good evening,
3 everyone. I'm going to open the public statement hearing
4 with respect to the 2008 ice storm. My name is Tom Getz.
5 I'm the Chairman of the New Hampshire Public Utilities
6 Commission. On my right is Commissioner Clifton Below, on
7 my left is Commissioner Graham Morrison, and on his left
8 is the Assistant Director of the Division of Homeland
9 Security & Emergency Management, Kathy Doult. Also here
10 this evening from the PUC is the Director of our Safety
11 Division, Randy Knepper, who is sitting up front, and in
12 the back of the room is Lynn Fabrizio, who is an attorney
13 with the Public Utilities Commission. I also note, as
14 well from Emergency Management, is Jim Van Dongen, who's
15 in the front row.

16 The public statement hearing this
17 evening is a joint effort by the Public Utilities
18 Commission and Emergency Management as part of our after
19 action review of the ice storm, which will review the
20 preparedness and response both of public utilities and
21 State government to the ice storm that began on the
22 evening of December 11, affected approximately 60 percent
23 of New Hampshire customers at its peak, and resulted in
24 some customers going without service for as long as two

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1 weeks.

2 In very general terms, an after action
3 review is focused on analyzing what happened, why it
4 happened, and how the PUC, the utilities, and State
5 government can perform better in the future. In order to
6 effectively analyze what happened, we have begun by
7 systematically gathering data. And, this data-gathering
8 effort started during the ice storm with the records and
9 notes kept by the various individuals involved in
10 responding to the ice storm. In addition, the Public
11 Utilities Commission has submitted over 400 requests for
12 information and for documents to the various public
13 utilities, and has received answers to those questions and
14 received documents. You can see the questions and answers
15 on our website at www.puc.nh.gov. Also on our website,
16 you can see information or reports that the utilities have
17 submitted on their own accord, which is part of the
18 overall documentation that we will be reviewing.

19 We have also posted a comment form on
20 our website for public input that asks a series of
21 specific questions about the ice storm, and the answers
22 are also on our website. And, we received over 150 of
23 these comment forms so far. This evening, if you would
24 like to fill out a comment form, they're available in the

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1 back of the room. We will take those answers, and we'll
2 also make sure that they get posted on our website.

3 The hearing tonight, and the nine others
4 that have been scheduled around the state, are another
5 part of the information-gathering effort. And, we expect
6 that hearing your experiences during the ice storm and
7 your recommendations for corrective measures will help us
8 both in identifying issues and decided on specific courses
9 of action. Your analyses of what went wrong and what went
10 right, and your recommendations about how things can be
11 changed for the better, are critical inputs to the
12 process.

13 And, let me point to some other steps
14 that have been taken by Emergency Management. Emergency
15 Management has held a series of meetings with local,
16 public safety, and community officials around the state,
17 and the Emergency Management has already initiated a
18 review process for State agencies. And, Assistant
19 Director Douthett will describe those briefly when I've
20 finished my introductory remarks.

21 One other effort that will occur this
22 spring concerns the issue of undergrounding utility lines.
23 And, Chairman Naida Kaen, of the House Science, Technology
24 & Energy Committee, will be holding an informational

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1 session in her committee to better understand the
2 potential costs and benefits of undergrounding, and will
3 also be looking as well at the capability and prospects
4 for automated outage management systems for utilities in
5 New Hampshire.

6 As we collect what is obviously a large
7 amount of information, we will be analyzing the data to
8 identify issues that need attention and remediation.
9 While it is not our intention to prejudge anything, I
10 think there is no serious debate that communications on
11 many levels must be improved. That is why the
12 Commission's Safety Division Director, Mr. Knepper, is
13 facilitating a review of utility communications practices
14 with utilities. This effort will focus on communications
15 to the Public Utilities Commission, to State Emergency
16 Management, to local Emergency Management Directors, and
17 to the public generally. The goal of this effort is to
18 identify model practices that should be adopted by all
19 utilities in the State of New Hampshire.

20 At the same time, there are some other
21 issues that require a closer look before we can come to
22 any definitive conclusions. In general terms, we will be
23 looking at whether the utilities were reasonably prepared,
24 that is did they plan properly, and we will be looking at

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1 whether they responded reasonably, which asks the question
2 "did they execute their plans effectively?" Within that
3 framework, we will be looking at particular issues, which
4 include, among other things, the effect of tree-trimming
5 on customer outages, the status of mutual aid arrangements
6 among utilities, protocols for prioritizing restoration,
7 and decisions that were made on allocating work crews.
8 Depending on what emerges from this investigation, this
9 after review action report, the PUC can proceed in a
10 number of directions, including instituting rulemakings
11 and formal adjudicative proceedings to address particular
12 issues.

13 To assist us in our review, both because
14 of the sheer amount of data that must be sorted and
15 analyzed, and because there may be certain subjects that
16 require specialized expertise, we have issued an RFP for
17 consulting assistance, and we are reviewing those
18 proposals at the moment.

19 As I noted earlier, we have not reached
20 any specific conclusions at this point, and that is
21 because it is our job to take an objective look at all of
22 the facts. But I can assure you that we will follow the
23 information we receive wherever it leads. And, we have a
24 couple of goals in mind through this process. And, the

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1 first is to issue a report in September that will set
2 forth the results of this after action review, including
3 recommendations for specific proceedings that may required
4 as a follow-up, and another is to make sure that the
5 utilities have improved their planning and response
6 protocols, especially as it concerns communications, prior
7 to next winter.

8 So, at this point, I would turn to
9 Assistant Director Douth.

10 ASST. DIRECTOR DOUTH: Thank you, sir.
11 And, thank you all for having us here. We, at Homeland
12 Security & Emergency Management, as Commissioner Getz
13 said, are currently involved in the midst of a large
14 effort ourselves to collect information statewide on
15 various response issues related to the December ice storm.
16 As you are aware, this storm impacted the whole state, and
17 New Hampshire received a Presidential Disaster Declaration
18 because of its impact. Homeland Security & Emergency
19 Management has reached out to our customers, the local
20 responders and EMDs, State agencies, and other responding
21 organizations, the news media, and several business sector
22 groups requesting their after action reports, input, and
23 other information to help us assess this massive response
24 and to develop an improvement plan for future responses.

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1 The emergency response to the ice storm
2 was a massive operation at all levels. At the State EOC,
3 we dealt with a large acquisition and distribution of
4 resources, such as water, MREs, shelter equipment, and
5 generators for community infrastructure in memory, as we
6 tried to fill the requests from towns and anticipate
7 future needs. Fifty-nine (59) shelters were stood up by
8 towns and regions, housing over 1,500 people early on in
9 the incident. Even then, a shelter planning cell actually
10 effected sheltering for up to 10,000 people, including
11 those with some medical needs and functional challenges.
12 Seventeen (17) pet-friendly shelters and/or pet shelters
13 themselves were set up.

14 However, we shouldn't forget that there
15 were four fatalities related to this incident, as well as
16 over 200 injuries, mostly related to carbon monoxide
17 poisoning. And, I don't want to forget, before we go any
18 further, to publicly thank Chief George Klauber for his
19 efforts, not only during the ice storm, but he is helping
20 Homeland Security & Emergency Management in this after
21 action report, gathering the information, sorting through
22 it. And, Chief, I'd like to publicly thank you for that
23 effort.

24 CHIEF KLAUBER: Thank you.

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1 ASST. DIRECTOR DOUTT: I'd also like to
2 tell you that, if any of you are uncomfortable making any
3 statements in this public forum, I will stay afterwards
4 should you want to speak to me alone. But thank you for
5 the opportunity to be here with you this evening.
6 Commissioner.

7 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you. Well, the
8 first person that has indicated they would like to make a
9 statement tonight is Warren Ross. And, I believe these
10 microphones are working at the chairs up here?

11 MR. PATNAUDE: And the podium.

12 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Whichever you would like
13 to do.

14 MR. ROSS: This one is okay. Yes. I'm
15 Warren Ross. I live in Hampstead. Tonight I would like
16 to read into the record a letter that I sent to you folks
17 on February 25, which describes my feelings about the
18 whole thing. And, also, I would like to read into the
19 record just a couple of paragraphs from a letter I
20 received from Public Service, when I complained about what
21 they had done to me. First, the letter I wrote to you.
22 And, you have both of these in your files already, but
23 I'll leave these extra copies with you just in case.

24 The first one is dated February 25,
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1 2009: "Subject: A storm-related rate increase for PSNH.
2 Dear Commissioners: Countless PSNH customers have been
3 harmed, some seriously, by PSNH's inadequate response to
4 the ice storm. PSNH is claiming immunity from liability
5 because such events are "acts of God" under the terms of
6 service approved by the New Hampshire Public Utilities
7 Commission (Please see the January 7, 2009 letter to me -
8 copy enclosed).

9 May I go sit over here?

10 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Whichever is more
11 comfortable for you.

12 MR. ROSS: Thank you. I will be a
13 little more comfortable here. "The "act of God" -- can I
14 be heard now?

15 [Court reporter interruption]

16 MR. ROSS: "The "act of God" thing will
17 be their pitch" --

18 CMSR. BELOW: It may not be on. I think
19 there's a button at the base.

20 MR. PATNAUDE: It should be on. I
21 checked it.

22 FROM THE FLOOR: There should be a green
23 light.

24 MR. ROSS: I'll just read the previous

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1 paragraph again, because it sort of sets up my argument.
2 "PSNH is claiming immunity from liability because such
3 events are "acts of God" under the terms of service
4 approved by the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission
5 (Please see their January 7, 2009 letter to me - copy
6 enclosed). The "act of God" thing will be their pitch
7 when they come before you for the rate increase, as though
8 an "act of God" is an open-ended blank check. There is no
9 doubt that the ice storm was an "act of God". But PSNH's
10 inadequate response was an act of management incompetence
11 and had nothing to do with God."

12 "I would apportion 50 percent of their
13 costs to God and 50 percent to management. God's share
14 can be picked up with a rate increase. Management's share
15 can come from their investors and stockholders. We bailed
16 them out once, with Seabrook, and must not do it again,
17 even if bankruptcy is the alternative. We might get
18 competent management at long last."

19 Now, this is a letter I received from
20 Public Service of New Hampshire, after I complained to
21 them. It's dated January 7, 2009, and you will find a
22 copy in your file already. The important part of this
23 letter is, I had attempted to bill them for the harm they
24 did to me. And, this is the letter I got in response.

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1 It's sort of a form letter, because in the beginning it
2 tells about how terrible the storm was and the heroic
3 efforts to put things right. So, here's what they say in
4 the letter: "Interruption to electric service caused by
5 or resulting from serious storms, such as we experienced
6 during this major December ice storm, is simply beyond the
7 control of the Company. Such events are considered to be
8 "acts of God" under the terms of service approved by the
9 New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission. The state's
10 utilities, including PSNH, are not responsible for damages
11 caused by such events. Therefore, PSNH is denying your
12 claim."

13 Now, am I to believe, and I do not
14 believe for a second, that you Commissioners have the
15 power to grant them immunity from liability? This is
16 preposterous. You can't possibly have that power. Do you
17 have that power?

18 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Well, any authority we
19 derive we derive from the statutes that the Legislature
20 has enabled for the creation of the Commission. So, with
21 respect to tariffed service, and what the obligations of
22 the utilities are, we can approve -- we can approve the
23 conditions of service. Now, just to say that there's --
24 that's a different thing from saying that there's absolute

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1 immunity from all liability for all things.

2 MR. ROSS: All right.

3 CHAIRMAN GETZ: So, you have to take
4 what's in the tariff in the context of what the action
5 was, and then there's a factual determination, what's
6 related to the so-called "act of God" and what's not, and
7 what was the role of the utility within the context of
8 whatever harm is complained of. So, like anything, in a
9 legal context, it depends.

10 MR. ROSS: Yes.

11 CHAIRMAN GETZ: But you have to step
12 back from making a blanket statement.

13 MR. ROSS: Right. I think this should
14 be brought out. And, you have given a pretty good
15 explanation here. I would further complain, and this
16 might not have anything to do with you, is their statement
17 in this letter amounts to an outright letter, the
18 statement that they have "immunity from liability", which
19 is what they have said here. You have said "they do not
20 in all cases."

21 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Well, I think --

22 MR. ROSS: So, therefore, that's
23 misleading.

24 CHAIRMAN GETZ: I would have to take a

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1 look at the letters, I can't remember from memory. But I
2 take it their position is, under these circumstances, with
3 respect to the claims that you have presented to them,
4 that they are immune from liability for those particular
5 claims under these particular circumstances, --

6 MR. ROSS: Thank you very much.

7 CHAIRMAN GETZ: -- I would expect.

8 MR. ROSS: And, I'm finished.

9 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Okay.

10 MR. ROSS: And, you have this already.

11 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you, Mr. Ross.

12 Okay. Marge Bisson. Did I pronounce that correctly?

13 MS. BISSON: Pardon?

14 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Did I pronounce your
15 name correctly?

16 MS. BISSON: Yes, sir.

17 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Okay. Good evening.

18 MS. BISSON: Good evening. Thank you
19 for having this meeting. I also had gone to the Derry
20 Town Council to voice my opinion about what happened
21 during the ice storm. I think the communication was
22 terrible. We lost power on Thursday, the 11th, like
23 everybody else; we didn't get our power back on until the
24 18th. However, when I came home from my sons, our

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1 neighbor stopped us and said "Don't go down your driveway.
2 Your box is hanging off the house. You have live wires
3 across your driveway. And, you need to call Public
4 Service and tell them to come out and fix that."

5 Well, I did call them. And, they said
6 "well, that's a terrible situation you have. We'll send
7 it to dispatch." And, that's all I heard from them. I
8 called them again and told them that my car -- my garage
9 is under my house, and I needed to get my car out, because
10 I had a daughter that was on life support in Southern New
11 Hospital down in Nashua. And, I was the only one who
12 could make any decisions with the doctors. She didn't
13 have a power of attorney or advance directives or anything
14 like that. And, they said "oh, well, they would make sure
15 that they got that right to dispatch and something would
16 be done about it." Well, of course, again nothing was
17 done.

18 Then, you had somebody, I think
19 Interstate or something like that, some other power
20 company that was helping, they came. And, they said they
21 needed to have Public Service come out with a bucket
22 truck. And, when they put the wires back on the pole,
23 then they could hook up my box to my house. I was told
24 that that would come on Saturday, the 20th, at 10:00.

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1 Well, obviously, they didn't show up.

2 I again called Public Service, I
3 explained to them I had three sons coming from -- two from
4 North Carolina, one from Seattle, trying to get there
5 before their sister passed away. And, I had to get
6 messages to them to tell them they couldn't go down my
7 driveway. Of course, with the storm, they got sidetracked
8 in all different places. Seattle, who normally doesn't
9 have much snow, had 7 inches. When my son was leaving,
10 he's in the Coast Guard, he got derailed in
11 Minneapolis-St. Paul. And, then, he finally found a
12 flight to La Guardia, but then no connected flight, of
13 course, to Manchester. The others couldn't get through
14 New York, from North Carolina.

15 So, I waited for them to do something
16 about that bucket truck coming. Sunday, the next day,
17 that would have been the 21st, there was a bucket truck
18 across the street from me. So, I went over and asked the
19 people if they were coming to fix mine next, and they said
20 "no". I wasn't on their list. Probably somebody from
21 another part of town was. I said, "Well, that's kind of
22 ridiculous when you're across the street." And, he says
23 "well, we all have our own areas. And, you're not on my
24 list." And, then, the other power company came and tried

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1 talking to them and tell them I had a situation where I
2 had to be able to get out. His comment was "Well,
3 everybody has emergencies."

4 So, I got annoyed. I went back in and
5 called Public Service again. I said "You told me that
6 bucket truck would be here yesterday at 10:00. It isn't.
7 You've got one across the street. He says he can't come
8 across the street because that's not his area." And, I
9 said -- she said "I'll send that to dispatch." I said "I
10 am sick and tired of hearing you say you're "sending it to
11 dispatch". Nothing has been done all these days." And,
12 she says "well, let me talk to my supervisor." So, she
13 talked to the supervisor. And, he said, finally, I guess
14 he said "I was promised one the day before. He would have
15 that man go over and hook up the wires, so the other ones
16 could put the box back on my house."

17 In the meantime, I had called the head
18 of the Derry Town Council, who I never received a call
19 back from. I finally called Senator LeTourneau. And, he
20 said "Marge, while I'm talking to you, I'm texting other
21 people to see if somebody can get up there and help you,
22 so you can get out." And, he was one of the very few
23 people that actually tried, you know, doing any help
24 whatsoever.

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1 Then, we had lost our land line also.
2 So, it was kind of hard to make calls, because of trying
3 to keep the cellphone going, and we don't have very good
4 reception where we are. I did get a call the night of the
5 21st from FairPoint, up in Maine, saying they had come and
6 temporarily hooked up my phone for me. So, they wanted to
7 know if it was still working. I said "yes, right now it
8 is." And, they said "As soon as Public Service does what
9 they have to do, call us back so we can, you know, fix
10 everything the way it's supposed to go." And, then, when
11 they did, then they told me to call Comcast to make sure
12 they came and pulled their wires back up, too. And, I
13 did. And, they said "Well, you're still getting service.
14 So, there's no reason for us to come and do anything about
15 them." Well, I had to have a truck come in my driveway.
16 They couldn't get even down, because of the wires are
17 hanging down so far, and they're like that to this day.

18 I mean, we were told not to go near
19 those wires, they were live. Everybody stay away. Make
20 sure you get word to anybody coming to your house not to
21 go near them. And, then, finally, I got ahold of one man,
22 and he says "well, we're not going to do anything about
23 your house until you remove the limbs and branches from
24 the wires first." And, now, we said "Well, wait a minute.

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1 We were told we weren't to go anywhere near them." Now,
2 do we go near these, when wires are down across your
3 driveway, and they're supposedly live?

4 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Not a good idea.

5 MS. BISSON: Well, that's it. And, he
6 said they weren't going to do anything to help us until we
7 removed them ourselves. My sons arrived on the 22nd --

8 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Now, this was someone
9 from --

10 MS. BISSON: From Public Service. And,
11 I said -- So, my sons were kind of pulling some of them
12 off, and I says "I hope they aren't live at this point,
13 because" -- you know? And, then, the ground wire was
14 broken, and that was hanging over my walkway. And, even
15 my grandson had said to me "Grammie, aren't they supposed
16 to hang an orange or a red flag or something to let people
17 know that might be dangerous?" And, I said "Well, yes."
18 And, he says "Well, how come they aren't doing it?" And,
19 I thought, "well, here's my grandson telling, you know,
20 what he thought they were supposed to be doing."

21 I mean, it was hectic. I couldn't pick
22 up my son from the airport, so he had to take a -- rent a
23 car, and then we did get down to Nashua, and they did get
24 there just before my daughter died. She died on Christmas

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1 Eve. And, it was just hectic going through all this, with
2 Public Service keep saying "It's a dangerous situation.
3 We're going to take care of it right away." And, a week
4 and a half later it took them before they did anything
5 whatsoever. And, that was practically by badgering them.
6 And, I think -- I didn't like the comment, when the man
7 told me "everybody has emergencies." I said, "well, I
8 know that. But I think this takes precedent over some of
9 them, because I do have to get down there."

10 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Now, you said that the
11 line from the utility pole to the house is still --

12 MS. BISSON: Comcast is still dangling,
13 it's low.

14 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Oh, the Comcast?

15 MS. BISSON: Yes.

16 CHAIRMAN GETZ: But the electric line
17 was put back where it was supposed to?

18 MS. BISSON: That was put back and box
19 was put back on my house. But I know they have to go
20 electric, telephone, and Comcast. And, like I said, I
21 can't get trucks down. I also had a problem with my
22 boiler, and had to call the oil company. And, then, I had
23 to turn around and call them back and say "Wait a minute,
24 you can't go down to my garage, because I've got live

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1 wires there." And, he says "how far could I go?" I said
2 "Only as far as where my neighbor plowed, which is right
3 at the top of the driveway." I didn't want anybody
4 getting hurt in my driveway.

5 So, I mean, it was bad enough with the
6 problems with the ice storm and everything else, and my
7 daughter, but the communication, like I said, telling us
8 not to go near the wires, and then somebody says "Well, we
9 won't do it unless you take the branches off yourself."
10 So, I don't know, what are you supposed to do in a case
11 like that?

12 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Well, certainly you
13 shouldn't be out taking the branches off yourself. That
14 someone, a qualified electrician, or someone from the
15 utility company should be doing that.

16 MS. BISSON: Because I was always taught
17 you never go near downed wires.

18 CHAIRMAN GETZ: And, that's correct.

19 MS. BISSON: Well, then somebody in your
20 company there doesn't know it.

21 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Well, and that's, you
22 know, part of what the overall communications --

23 MS. BISSON: Well, that's why I said
24 "communication was terrible".

1 CHAIRMAN GETZ: -- to make sure that the
2 communications between customers and utility and the PUC,
3 etcetera, is improved, and that the messages are
4 consistent is key. So, that will be something we'll be
5 looking at.

6 CMSR. BELOW: Can I ask, when was the
7 last time you were in touch with Comcast about the low
8 hanging wire?

9 MS. BISSON: A couple of weeks ago,
10 because, not only that, when the power came back on, it
11 caused a back puff from my boiler, which meant it set soot
12 throughout my whole house, and I had to have a cleaning
13 company come in and clean, and they couldn't get their
14 truck down my driveway. And, I told them that I had
15 somebody with a truck coming. And, what they did is they
16 -- two men got on each side of the driveway with poles and
17 held it up so the truck could go down to the end of my
18 driveway. And, then, when they were leaving, they had to
19 do the same thing. And, it's still hanging low. But the
20 comment made to me was "well, you still got, you know,
21 service, so there's no reason for us to take care of it."

22 CMSR. BELOW: For something like that,
23 you can always also file a complaint at the Public
24 Utilities Commission, and our staff can help follow up on

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1 something like that.

2 MS. BISSON: Well, I didn't want us to
3 have another wind storm or something, and next thing you
4 know they're all coming back down again. So, --

5 CMSR. BELOW: Okay. Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Well, and we can follow
7 up on this.

8 CMSR. BELOW: Yes.

9 MS. BISSON: I mean, like I said, it was
10 nothing but poor communication as far as I can see. Well,
11 thank you for listening.

12 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you. And, Chief
13 Klauber.

14 CHIEF KLAUBER: Good evening,
15 Commissioners. And, thank you, Director, for your kind
16 words. I sit here tonight, first of all, I appreciate you
17 coming to Derry and to listen to some of our concerns.
18 And, I'm here on behalf of the Town, and welcome. And,
19 the first thing I'd like to say is I don't really have a
20 complaint. I also do sit on the Core Committee, so it's
21 nice to be on this side and have a chance to talk for a
22 change. I've listened for about the last two and a half
23 months. One of the things I'd like to do is to, and you
24 may not hear a lot of this, I really want to congratulate

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1 the utility workers who were in our community for the work
2 that they did. Not for the work that they didn't do, but
3 for the work they really did do, because we saw, during
4 two horrific snowstorms, besides the ice storm, in the
5 middle of all this for them to continue to work. And, the
6 crews that came in from across the country to work in
7 Derry, we witnessed the work that they were doing, and
8 just yeoman's work. And, so, it all was not bad.

9 I also want to thank, though it took a
10 little bit longer than we would have liked to, I had the
11 opportunity to actually meet with the CEO of PSNH, and
12 prior to an airing of a television show that I was asked
13 to sit in on. And, during that time I suggested strongly
14 to him, and I think he took the advice, of embedding
15 somebody into some of the active EOCs. We did have a
16 person to come into the Derry EOC. And, I would tell you
17 that, of all the things that occurred from that point on,
18 and it may have been coincidental, I think we were a week
19 into it, but we still had another week to go, that we
20 really found that that was the greatest assistance that we
21 were able to get. And, the reason was, if we had had this
22 earlier, even though the utility companies were coming in
23 and they were trying to analyze what their situations
24 were, there were situations that might not have dealt with

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1 the customers, as they call them, but they were really
2 dealing with, in our case, major thoroughfares. And, a
3 great example was, once we got the person embedded, we had
4 an opportunity to just go out, because much as you just
5 heard Mrs. Bisson just speak before, we, too, do not touch
6 anything that we might consider to be live wires. We had
7 a transformer and low wires hanging over a major road in
8 town, Warner Hill Road. And, because of that, we had to
9 take large detours. And, during the course of the event,
10 actually had a major structure fire, with a delayed
11 response, because the normal roads we would have taken we
12 were not able to use. We found out about ten days into
13 the event that all it had to be was he literally took a
14 chainsaw to the utility pole, cut the wires and push it
15 off to the side, and it had been dead for ten days. And,
16 if we had assumed that, but, certainly, weren't about to
17 take those types of actions. And, we had a number of
18 those areas with densely populated neighborhoods and roads
19 that -- major thoroughfares that we would have liked to
20 have worked closely with the utility companies, to just
21 say "You don't have to do the work. We didn't anticipate
22 power coming back." And, didn't want any of the neighbors
23 to assume that we were doing it for that reason. But, if
24 they could have just assisted us, we would have cut,

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1 cleaned and moved the stuff out of the way, used our own
2 public works department to do that.

3 So, it worked well, but it worked late.
4 And, I would like to, as you put together a report, the
5 consideration that not all towns, but there are a number
6 of towns, along with I would imagine the State, that could
7 embed, it should have somebody from the utility companies
8 sitting in a seat that could be of assistance. And, once
9 that happened, I would say things really started to clear
10 up.

11 We found out, I'll give you a great
12 example, they came in and were able to, in one
13 neighborhood, a densely populated neighborhood in the
14 downtown area, restore power. Unfortunately, and I'm not
15 an electrician, but I knew that we realized that one of
16 three legs was not operating, so people had power, but
17 they didn't have full power. And, dangerously, after not
18 having power for about a week, the first thing that moms
19 did was they did laundry and began using dryers. The draw
20 began to create other problems. We had smoking wires and
21 everything else. A simple notification, if we had
22 somebody inside, saying "we restored power." What we did
23 do, and if they had told us we could have done it earlier,
24 we literally sent people out through that neighborhood on

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1 fire apparatus and said "You have power. You don't have
2 full power. There's a leg of it down. Please do not use
3 any heavy duty work, you know, in regards to using dryers
4 and such", and ended it right then and there. We were
5 fortunate not to have a structure fire because of that.

6 And, again, better communication. And,
7 I know you've heard a lot of that. But embedded into us
8 would have been something we could have gotten out to that
9 community. And, we worked very hard in Derry throughout
10 the storm to have those types of communications. Again,
11 once Diane, who was our PSNH rep., sat in with us with
12 maps, and we were able to look at it, even to the extent
13 where we had an issue in the surrounding Town of Chester,
14 but we were able to assist her because somebody had a
15 severe issue that they were not going to be able to get
16 power back, it was -- well, the person had a medical
17 issue. And, once the PSNH crew made us aware of what we
18 didn't know was happening inside their house, we were able
19 to assist them and get them into Concord and into a
20 shelter.

21 Lastly, I will talk about the biggest
22 issue that we had early on, and this is -- it may be a
23 utility and it may be a public relations. But one of the
24 issues that we had very early on, and it went through much

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1 of the incident, was we had notification that at one
2 point, and I can show you the headlines, "Derry to have
3 90 percent of the power restored by Monday or Tuesday."
4 As the Director of Emergency Management, I can tell you
5 literally the frustration, and at times almost tears in
6 the eyes of our firefighters, begging people to please
7 leave and go to a shelter, and them telling us "you will
8 have" -- "We're going to have power back. I read it in
9 the paper. There's a comment from the utility companies.
10 And, I'm willing to stay another day." And, I can be very
11 honest with you, our assessment was "impossible". I mean,
12 we could see the trees, the limbs down, and said "You
13 really need to leave."

14 We were very fortunate, I think, that we
15 didn't have more injuries and deaths in the community. We
16 ended up bringing many of those people to the shelter
17 almost by force or trying to get some of their family
18 members to convince them to go that we could finally
19 convince them that they were not going to get any power
20 back.

21 So, again, a lot of this has to do with
22 communications. I think it will get better. We've
23 learned some valuable lessons. Again, I sit on the
24 Committee, I've heard a lot those things from around the

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1 state, but I bring you Derry's concerns, that are pretty
2 similar to many of the rest. I think we'll do a better
3 job in Derry. And, my hope is that we'll have better
4 communications with the utility companies, because we
5 understand, and understood throughout, this is a, you
6 know, a monumental, maybe once-in-a-lifetime, let's hope,
7 once-in-a-lifetime event.

8 We probably had about 90 percent of the
9 power out in Derry. And, the majority of the power, if
10 you were to look on a curve, as compared to how the power
11 came back in the state, versus how the power came back in
12 Derry, we were probably the largest community, in regards
13 to density of population, to receive their power back at
14 the latest amount of time.

15 I'm not -- That's a fact that I believe
16 happened. And, I don't know why, and there may be good
17 reason, because I understand it could have been major
18 lines and stuff down. But, because of that, I think that,
19 if we had better coordination and communication with the
20 utility companies, we could have done a better job of
21 managing it from the local level.

22 So, I thank you for the opportunity to
23 sit here and at least bring our concerns forward.

24 CHAIRMAN GETZ: And, we appreciate it.

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1 And, I think, you know, you probably already said this,
2 but most of what you're saying relates to communications.
3 And, what we saw with the whole embed approach, from our
4 perspective being at the -- the PUC participating at the
5 Emergency Operating Centers, that embed, once that
6 happened, that opened up much better lines of
7 communications. And, I think some of that gets to "how
8 many can you have?" And, "how many are going to be
9 trained?" And, "how many are going to" -- and, I think
10 that's certainly something that we're going to be pursuing
11 as a model practice, because we think it did work very
12 well, once we got, you know, once it came about.

13 CHIEF KLAUBER: The other thing, and
14 I've heard this from other people, and we're not -- we
15 have not done maybe enough of a job here in Derry,
16 admittedly, but is to be able to begin to, again, I say
17 "active Emergency Operating Centers locally", because I
18 think that, while not every community is large enough to
19 be able to stand up like Derry or maybe Nashua or maybe
20 even over in Hampstead next door. But one the things that
21 would be useful is working more closely with the mapping
22 that they have and the mapping that we have. We're,
23 you've seen the technology here in the building, we're a
24 very active GIS community. If we could have overlapped,

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1 even though, again, they talk about transmission lines and
2 utility lines and how that they may go through. What we
3 could have done that they didn't have the information is,
4 is density of population and roads, and say "I understand
5 that you'd like to get this, but if we could get this area
6 done." And, I'll speak on behalf of my neighborhood next
7 door in Londonderry, who is not here, but a great example
8 that he gives is that he had a trailer park. But, if he
9 could have simply got the trailer park's electricity put
10 back on, which was not a huge issue, apparently, instead
11 of that, because it wasn't on their loop, instead he had
12 to get most of the people out of there that were elderly
13 and put a burden on a shelter that didn't need to be
14 there, they could have had an easily fixed thing. Again,
15 he also had somebody embedded and worked with him. So,
16 once that began to happen, we all started saying "My God,
17 if this had happened three or four days ago", and we
18 understand the training aspect. And, even if we share
19 them, were some of the things we're looking at locally.
20 So, even if that embedded person was in Derry for a few
21 hours in the morning, and could go over to Londonderry or
22 in that area, it would be helpful. So, again, I
23 appreciate it.

24 CHAIRMAN GETZ: And, I guess I would

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1 suggest talking to Mr. Knepper, our Safety Director. GIS
2 mapping is an issue near and dear to his heart, and he's
3 been doing a lot for --

4 CHIEF KLAUBER: And, I've actually sat
5 next to Randy through a lot of our public safety meetings.
6 So, I think it's a great thing, if we can get the state
7 done, and certainly do it here, and start to overlay these
8 maps, because it gives us a better, and I'm a visual
9 person, you could have certainly seen what the issues
10 were. So, again, thank you very much for listening to us.

11 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Okay. Thank you. Is
12 there anyone else who would like to speak this evening?

13 (No verbal response)

14 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Okay. Then, hearing
15 nothing, we will close the public statement hearing, and
16 thank you all for coming out. Appreciate it.

17 (Whereupon the hearing ended at 7:48
18 p.m.)

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