

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

5
6 March 24, 2009 - 7:06 p.m.
7 Exeter Town Hall
8 10 Front Street
9 Exeter, New Hampshire

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

12
13 PRESENT: Chairman Thomas B. Getz, Presiding (NHPUC)
14 Commissioner Graham J. Morrison (NHPUC)
15 Commissioner Clifton C. Below (NHPUC)
16 Director Christopher Pope (HS&EM)

17 ALSO PRESENT: Reptg. the New Hampshire PUC Staff:
18 Thomas C. Frantz, Director - Electric Div.
19 Randall Knepper, Director - Safety Div.
20 Lynn Fabrizio, Esq. - Legal Division

21 Reptg. Residential Ratepayers:
22 Rorie Hollenberg, Esq.
23 Office of Consumer Advocate

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

25 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: All right. Good
3 evening, everyone. I'm going to open the evening public
4 statement hearing. My name is Tom Getz. I'm Chairman of
5 the Public Utilities Commission. And, also here this
6 evening from the PUC are, on my right, Commissioner
7 Clifton Below, and on my far left is Commissioner Graham
8 Morrison. Also, on the right, coming to the front, is
9 Randy Knepper. He's the Director of our Safety Division.
10 Tom Frantz is the Director of our Electric Division. And,
11 in the back of the room, in the middle, is an attorney
12 with the Commission, Lynn Fabrizio. Also here this
13 evening, from the Office of Consumer Advocate, in the
14 front right is Rorie Hollenberg, an attorney with the
15 Consumer Advocate. And, from the Division of Homeland
16 Security and Emergency Management, on my left is Director
17 Chris Pope, and also from Emergency Management, in the
18 front on the left, is Jim Van Dongen.

19 The public statement hearing this
20 evening is a joint effort by the Public Utilities
21 Commission and the Emergency Management Division as part
22 of our after action review of the ice storm, which will
23 review the preparedness and response both of public
24 utilities and state government to the ice storm that began

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1 on the evening of December 11th, affected approximately 60
2 percent of New Hampshire customers at its peak, and
3 resulted in some customers going without service for as
4 long as two weeks.

5 In very general terms, an after action
6 review is focused on analyzing what happened, why it
7 happened, and how it can be done better. In order to
8 effectively analyze what happened, we have begun by
9 systematically gathering data. And, that data-gathering
10 effort started during the ice storm, with the records and
11 notes kept by the various individuals involved in
12 responding to the ice storm, which included Chris, myself,
13 and Randy Knepper, and many others.

14 In addition, the Public Utilities
15 Commission has submitted a first set of 50 requests to the
16 various utilities asking for documents and answers to
17 particular questions, and they were submitted to the
18 Commission on February 27. And, you can see the questions
19 and answers on our website, at www.puc.nh.gov. And, there
20 is a portal for the ice storm on the first page of the
21 website, and there's a good deal of information that might
22 be helpful for you to take a look at. A second set of
23 interrogatories/questions have also been sent out to the
24 utilities, and those answers are due at the end of the

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1 week.

2 Now, some utilities have also filed
3 other information and reports on their own, and they're
4 found on our website. And, we also have posted a comment
5 form on our website for public input that asks specific
6 questions about the ice storm. And, we have posted online
7 the 110 comments that we've received to date.

8 The hearing tonight, and the nine others
9 that have been scheduled around the state, are another
10 part of the information-gathering effort. And, this is
11 the second of the meetings. We had our first meeting last
12 week in Peterborough, at the ConVal High School. And, we
13 expect that hearing your experiences during the ice storm,
14 and your recommendations for corrective measures, will
15 help us both in identifying issues and deciding on
16 specific courses of action. Your analysis of what went
17 wrong and what went right, and your recommendations about
18 how things could be changed for the better, are critical
19 inputs to the process.

20 I'd also like to point to some other
21 steps that have been taken since the ice storm. Over the
22 past few weeks, Director Pope has held a series of
23 meetings with local, public safety, and community
24 officials, which he will explain in some more detail.

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1 And, in addition, Director Pope has initiated a review
2 process for state agencies, which he will also describe.

3 One other effort that will occur this
4 spring concerns the issue of undergrounding of utility
5 lines. And, Chairman Naida Kaen, who is here this
6 evening, is a Representative from Durham, is Chairman --
7 is the Chair of the House Science, Technology and Energy
8 Committee, and she will be holding an informational
9 session in her committee to better understand the
10 potential costs and benefits of undergrounding, and will
11 also be taking a look at the issue of Smart Grid and Smart
12 Metering as a potential means for better collection of
13 information during outages in the future.

14 Now, as we collect what is obviously a
15 large amount of information, we will be analyzing the data
16 to identify issues that need attention and remediation.
17 While it is not our intention to prejudge anything, I
18 think there is no serious debate that communications on
19 many levels must be improved. And, that is one reason why
20 the Public Utilities Commission Safety Director,
21 Mr. Knepper, will also be facilitating a review of utility
22 communication practices. And, that effort will include
23 communications to the Public Utilities Commission, to
24 State Emergency Management, and to Director Pope and

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1 everyone who is going to be at the Emergency Operating
2 Center during the event, to local Emergency Management
3 Directors, and to the public generally. The goal of this
4 effort is to identify practices and identify "best
5 practices" that should be adopted by all utilities.

6 At the same time, there are other issues
7 that require a closer look before we can come to
8 definitive conclusions. In general terms, from the PUC's
9 perspective, we will be looking at whether the utilities
10 were reasonably prepared, that is, "did they plan
11 properly?" And, whether they responded reasonably, that
12 is, "did they execute their plans effectively?"

13 Within that overall framework, we will
14 be looking at particular issues, which include, among
15 other things, the effect of tree-trimming on customer
16 outages, the status of mutual aid arrangements among
17 utilities, protocols for prioritizing restoration, and
18 decisions on allocating work crews. And, those are
19 examples of a long list of questions that our Staff has
20 been asking the utilities about and that we will be
21 looking into.

22 Now, depending on what emerges, the
23 Public Utilities Commission can proceed in a number of
24 directions. We can proceed informally to discuss new

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1 protocols or practices with the utilities or we can
2 proceed more formally with rulemakings, that would change
3 the rules, or with formal adjudicative proceedings to
4 address particular issues that have emerged from this
5 undertaking.

6 Now, to assist in our review, both
7 because of the sheer amount of the data that must be
8 sorted and analyzed, and because there may be certain
9 subjects that require a specialized expertise that we do
10 not have on staff, the PUC has issued a Request for
11 Proposals for consulting assistance, and we are currently
12 reviewing those proposals, and expect to select a
13 consultant within the next couple of weeks.

14 As I noted earlier, we have not reached
15 any specific conclusions at this point, and that is
16 because our job is to take an objective look at all of the
17 facts. But I can assure you we will follow the
18 information we receive, wherever it leads.

19 We have a couple of goals in mind
20 through the process. One is to issue a report in
21 September that will set forth the results of the after
22 action review, including recommendations for specific
23 proceedings that may be required as a follow-up. And,
24 another is to make sure that the utilities have improved

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1 their planning and response protocols, especially as it
2 concerns communications, in advance of next winter.

3 Before we turn to opportunity for the
4 public to speak tonight, I'd like to have Director Pope
5 say a few words.

6 DIR. POPE: Thank you very much, Tom.
7 And, good evening, everybody. And, thank you, to all of
8 you, who have taken time out of your busy lives to come
9 and share comments with us related to this storm. The
10 Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management
11 operates the State's Emergency Operations Center during
12 disasters. As an example, this past year, since last
13 July, we have had four Presidentially declared disasters
14 where our "EOC", as we call it, has been operational.
15 This was -- The ice storm, of course, was the most
16 significant event, in terms of numbers of folks that it
17 impact. We had four fatalities that in some way were
18 attributed to this storm, over 200 citizens were injured,
19 a vast majority of them from carbon monoxide poisoning.

20 We opened our state, and, actually, the
21 hard work of many local responders, opened 59 shelters; 17
22 of which, for the first time, accepted pets. And, as we
23 know, if shelters -- if no shelter will accept a pet, the
24 citizen may not evacuate to that shelter. We ordered

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1 100,000 gallons of potable water from the federal
2 government per day to meet the needs of those citizens who
3 did not have water. We ordered meals and set up points of
4 distribution to distribute food. Excuse me. We managed,
5 with FEMA, the distribution of generators for critical
6 infrastructure in communities where critical
7 infrastructure did not have emergency generators or their
8 emergency generators failed. This is just but a small
9 sample of the more than 1,200 requests for assistance that
10 the State EOC received. The State EOC, staffed with folks
11 from a broad spectrum of State agencies, the federal
12 government, non-governmental agencies, work in partnership
13 and as a team with local emergency management staff,
14 federal emergency management staff, and others to serve
15 the needs of the citizens.

16 The Governor, about three weeks after
17 the incident, met with Tom and me, and asked that we work
18 together to identify areas where we can improve the
19 service to our citizens. As part of that, as Tom
20 mentioned, we have collected a huge amount of information
21 from local communities. We've collected 40 after action
22 reports from local communities, and we're studying those.
23 We have had constituent meetings with local first
24 responders, fire chiefs, police chiefs, emergency

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1 management directors, local town managers and road agents
2 and public works directors, local public health and all
3 health hazard region folks. We've met with elected
4 officials. We have met with specialty groups, such as
5 engineers. We will have a meeting soon with news media,
6 reporters and staff management folks, to find out what
7 things we can do to better work with the news media to get
8 out messages.

9 Ultimately, after we have collected all
10 of this information we will sit down and synthesize that
11 information, and identify those things that we need to
12 correct, that we can correct, and who would be responsible
13 for developing an improvement plan for those areas. And,
14 ultimately, we will also rewrite our State Emergency
15 Operations Plan.

16 While we've had many, many positive
17 comments, and state response personnel have had a
18 tremendous amount of support from citizens in the
19 communities, we are here tonight to listen, to listen to
20 your concerns, to listen to not just those things related
21 to specifically utility issues, but, if there are things
22 that are related to your public safety and response issues
23 that you feel that we can do better.

24 I will remain here after this meeting is
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1 over. Some of you may not be comfortable speaking in
2 public, and may wish to catch one of our ears privately.
3 And, I will remain here after the meeting to listen to
4 you, if that is your preferred means of communication.

5 And, with that, I'll turn it back over
6 to Tom. And, once again, say thank you very much for
7 taking the time to come and share your thoughts with us
8 tonight.

9 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you, Chris. And,
10 of course, the same will apply to PUC and our folks. If
11 you'd rather speak off-line, then we'll be available to do
12 that. But, for purposes of folks who would like to speak
13 tonight, there are forms that have been handed out. If
14 you would like a form to indicate whether you wish to
15 speak, then, Ms. Fabrizio, just flag her down and she'll
16 come get it. I'm just going to call on the people in the
17 order that I got the forms. There's also comment forms,
18 if you want to fill those out separately, and just make
19 sure that you leave them with someone from the PUC before
20 you leave tonight, that will be very helpful as well.
21 Yes. And, the form that you're given is the same form
22 that you could go to online to fill out.

23 But, I guess, with that, and we have a
24 podium down front, Mr. Patnaude is our court reporter,

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1 he'll be keeping a transcript, and that will be available
2 online as well, as soon as he gets done with the other 20
3 cases he's providing transcripts for.

4 But, other than that, I think, if we
5 could call Richard Knight please.

6 MR. KNIGHT: Thank you, members of the
7 Board and everyone. My name is Rich Knight. I do line
8 clearance for the power companies. And, I've been doing
9 it for almost 20 years now. In my opinion, there is no
10 real response. I mean, you can plan for a hurricane. You
11 see it coming in, you know you got to stage things. But,
12 for these storms here like this, nobody expected what was
13 going to happen. I was out all night long. And, we kept
14 getting sent back and back and back. And, I don't know
15 how many times I went to the same road, same address, same
16 driveway, same town. And, the devastation, once daylight
17 came, that's when everything started, it was like, this is
18 bigger than we all thought.

19 And, I mean, unfortunately, I know a lot
20 of people were inconvenienced, and they weren't happy.
21 They wanted more communication, more results. But, from
22 my aspect, we were out there doing our darndest to get
23 everything back going. I mean, broken poles, lines
24 crossed everywhere, roads you can't even drive down,

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1 because we got to cut our way in to get to everything.
2 And, then, it's just, "okay, drive down the road and see
3 something, take care of it." And, it was just
4 unbelievable seeing everything that, once daylight hit
5 that Friday morning, the actual -- We had crews coming in
6 from out-of-state Friday, Thursday night they got the
7 call. They were on the road Friday morning, they'd get
8 here Saturday, Sunday, from where they were coming. We
9 had probably close to 500 tree trucks in the state by
10 Sunday. Just other states sending them, other companies
11 sending them. And, I mean, a lot of guys, they were away
12 from their homes. And, I mean, most of us, we were -- we
13 put in like 25, 26 days straight, 16 to 20 hour days.

14 We did our best. I know people aren't
15 happy. Maybe not with us, but the Call Center, they only
16 have so many people that can take phone calls. And, with
17 the number of people without power, there's not a whole
18 lot you can do, timewise, when you've got 20 poles on one
19 road you got to replace. And, you got miles and miles of
20 line that utilities are running out, because they didn't
21 realize it was going to happen. And, okay, you've got
22 5 miles of line down, and they have to replace 5 miles of
23 line in some cases. A lot of them don't have it. They
24 have to order it.

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1 Like I said, a hurricane is the only
2 storm you can plan for, because you know it's coming.
3 Snowstorms, windstorms, thunderstorms, a hailstorm back in
4 '06 here in Exeter. I was out for four days during that
5 hailstorm. And, I still see cars driving around today
6 from that storm.

7 But I thought the utilities did as good
8 a job as they could. Meaning, while they have limited
9 budgets, trimming, they got regular jobs they have to do
10 during the day and this and that. And, it was just
11 overwhelming for everyone.

12 One rule I would like to see changed,
13 though, is some utilities require us to get permission
14 before we can do anything to the trees around the lines.
15 We get people that don't let us do anything. "Don't touch
16 my trees." We got people "I want a two foot hole around
17 the lines". That's not going to help in the long run.
18 The people that let us do full spec, I noticed during the
19 storm, areas where we were able to take everything out
20 from underneath and clear everything back 10, 12 feet,
21 there was less problems in those areas than there were in
22 areas, say, we hadn't been because there's limited trucks
23 per area, and I don't know how many miles of lines we have
24 to trim. And, it takes time, it takes a lot of effort, a

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1 lot of hard work. If we could get that rule changed, I'm
2 not saying take every single tree out in front of
3 everyone's houses. But, I'm saying, let us do our jobs.
4 Trim the way we're supposed to, to try and lighten the
5 disaster of the ice storm in '08.

6 And, that's my biggest thing right
7 there, being a tree worker, and line clearance, just let
8 us do our job as best we can. And, hopefully, it won't
9 happen in the future, or not as drastic in the future.
10 Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you. And, let me
12 just say one thing. You know, an after action review is
13 intended to take a look at all of the issues; what worked,
14 what didn't work. And, I would hope that all the folks
15 who were out there working hard every day would not take
16 this effort to improve things as any criticism of all the
17 hard and long days of work that they put in during the ice
18 storm.

19 The next is Carl Anderson.

20 MR. ANDERSON: My name is Carl Anderson.
21 I'm a resident of Exeter. And, we were without power for
22 approximately five or six days. And, it was kind of
23 interesting to look 100 yards away and see another part of
24 town lighted. But that's the problem with the grid system

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1 and everything else. But I'd like to move back on
2 Mr. Knight's comments. I like my trees, and I think
3 everybody else here likes their trees, but I think we have
4 to be realistic with this storm. The damage that was done
5 by our beautiful scenic byways and highways. And, I'm as
6 guilty as the next person, because now I have 40 to 60
7 foot high sycamores encroaching on the power lines. And,
8 it was a small tree that was planted probably 30 years ago
9 that took out a pole and the high line in our development,
10 amongst other things that happened. But what bothered me
11 the most was seeing some of the devastation that was in
12 this town. In order to keep our cellphones powered up, we
13 had to get out in our truck and we'd drive around the
14 countryside as far as we could possibly go without running
15 into the trees on the ground and the devastation that was
16 out there. It was like being in a war zone or being in
17 the middle of a giant game of Pick-Up Sticks. It was just
18 that bad, because you couldn't get there from here. And,
19 my hat goes off to the utility companies and the people
20 that did the work to get us power as soon as they could.
21 It was just terrible out there.

22 And, the biggest problem I think that we
23 experienced was communications. Losing our power was one
24 thing. And, then, having battery backed up telephone

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1 system, when that died, we had to rely on our cellphones.
2 And, like I said earlier, we had to drive around to get
3 our cellphones charged up. But it was also communicating
4 with the utility company to try to get an update as to
5 what was happening. And, I know they were hard-pressed,
6 they only had certain people manage the station, but you
7 got the same canned statement "We're working on it." And,
8 I knew they were. But you would like to have an idea or a
9 feeling as to what they were working on, where they were
10 working and how they were doing. And, it was very
11 difficult to do that. And, that's my only comment.

12 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you. Jim Peschel.

13 MR. PESCHEL: Good evening. My name is
14 Jim Peschel. I live in Exeter, on Meadowood Drive, on the
15 east side of town. Our neighborhood was without power for
16 seven days. And, I'm not here to talk about the seven
17 days, the lack of power. It's really the lack of
18 communication and the lack of information coming from
19 Unitil. I think Mr. Anderson touched on that very well.
20 Every day, if you talk to the individuals on the 800 line,
21 you got the same message, which is "We expect full
22 restoration by 11:00 this evening." That went on for
23 seven days. Could never get anybody that could tell us "I
24 don't know when it's coming back."

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1 We saw the same situation that Mr.
2 Anderson saw, that one block they had power. So, if
3 Unitil could only have said "We have this particular area
4 out. We don't know how long it's going to take. It might
5 take three days, it might take four days." It could have
6 helped the people plan. And, in my neighborhood, there
7 are many elderly people, and they rode this out because
8 they expected the power to come back every night. And,
9 that's just not the way for a franchised utility to carry
10 out their mandate.

11 And, I think the number one thing that I
12 would like to have the Public Utilities Commission address
13 in this particular area, and I come back to recovery of
14 costs, is a reasonable question on their communication. I
15 don't think their communication was reasonable. I don't
16 think it was adequate. And, in fact, on the very last
17 day, before I got my power back, the Unitil website
18 published a little excerpt and it said "In Exeter, there
19 are 70 customers out." There were 150 out in my
20 neighborhood. And, the 70 I believe were on the other
21 side of town, in Pickpocket. Those were the people that
22 got the press. So, we called and asked them about this.
23 You can't get any information.

24 No information was being given out by
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1 the Company. I don't think they were forthright in their
2 communication with the customers and with the press. And,
3 another thing that is very disturbing is that they had
4 police officers at their building, so you couldn't even --
5 you couldn't go in to talk. You were being turned.

6 So, I think, if you look at it, the
7 communication is the key. They have got to be able to
8 tell us when it's coming back. If they don't know, they
9 have to say "We don't know", so people can plan and so
10 people could take the appropriate action. So, that's what
11 I'd like to have you look at when you get into the
12 hearings this fall.

13 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you.

14 MR. PESCHEL: Thank you very much for
15 your time and thank you very much for coming out.

16 CHAIRMAN GETZ: You're welcome, sir.
17 Lester Marston.

18 MR. MARSTON: Hi. I'm Lester Marston.
19 I'm from Exeter. I live at Westside Drive. And, the
20 first thing I want to say is that I've got some great
21 neighbors. All the information that I got came from the
22 neighbors. What they knew, what rumor they heard. I live
23 in the same development as Carl, and we could see the
24 lights up on the hill. And, you know, I need the

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1 communication so I can make plans. You know, after the
2 first morning, Saturday, you know, I go out and buy a
3 generator; there's none. You're talking about -- I've got
4 -- I heat my house with electricity. There's no cable, no
5 -- the only thing running was the water. Now, I had a
6 five month old grandson, and we had to make plans of where
7 we were going to put him, with relatives and people.

8 And, the neighbors were great. We saw
9 one truck come down through, traveling about 30 miles an
10 hour, did not stop for anybody so they could ask possibly
11 what's going on. Didn't know -- did very little, did not
12 help to try to get town officials, because they weren't
13 informed either.

14 Finally, that Tuesday morning a truck
15 came through, and two woman in the neighborhood had to
16 jump out in front and make him stop to get an answer on
17 when they were going to get the power back in the
18 neighborhood. He said "By 12:00, if everything runs."
19 Well, they did better than that. They did 11:30. I think
20 the crews -- I walked around the neighborhood, and there's
21 still limbs and trees still there today from that storm.
22 I think the crews did a reasonable job. And, under the
23 circumstances, everybody was overwhelmed. I now have a
24 generator, I now have two heaters.

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1 But all the information I got was from
2 my neighbors. And, they're reluctant to talk to regular
3 people. One of my neighbors is a fireman, they talk to
4 him, they talk to the police; won't talk to you.

5 I was just -- I am a little concerned
6 going forward that I heard a rumor that the top man at
7 Unitil got a nice bonus for being profitable this year,
8 and ten percent of that was based on customer
9 satisfaction. That concerns me going forward that only
10 10 percent is based on customer satisfaction. I don't
11 begrudge him the bonus. Everybody's got to make money,
12 but you got to keep your customers happy.

13 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you, sir.
14 Councilor Hollingworth.

15 COUNCILOR HOLLINGWORTH: Thank you. I
16 will take the opportunity to speak. First, I'm sorry, I
17 was going to stay, but, as you can hear from my voice, I
18 have a very bad cold. And, the sooner you're rid of me,
19 I'm sure you'll be happy. I don't want to spread the
20 cold. Sorry. I wanted to hear from the public, and I'm
21 glad that I did. I'm Beverly Hollingworth, and I
22 represent District 3. I represent 35 towns. Out of those
23 35 towns, 18 of them are Unitil and the other 19 are the
24 other utilities. I can tell you, when this happened,

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1 that, as long as my phone was working, which wasn't very
2 long, because I lost my power, as well as the rest of my
3 family. And, fortunately, I own a piece of property at
4 the beach that has buried of lines. And, that piece of
5 property has three apartments. And, so, I was able to
6 supply housing for three members of my family. My house
7 in Waterville had power as well. They have buried lines.
8 And, they were all -- other members of my family were able
9 to be there.

10 In full disclosure, I want to say my son
11 works for Unitil, and has for many years. I heard exactly
12 what you're hearing tonight, communication. "If only we
13 knew" was what I heard from just about everybody that
14 called me. "If I could only plan", "if I had some idea
15 how long I'm going to be without power." So, that was one
16 of the things that really concerned me. And, some towns
17 did an excellent job. They actually had fliers printed up
18 as soon as they could. The first responders made it, and
19 some of the post offices, they went door-to-door in some
20 of the communities and put on the doors or in the houses a
21 flier saying "Here is where you can go for shelter", which
22 was another problem that people experienced. That they
23 usually would go to a school, where they had generators
24 and other things. But, in the case of some of my

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1 communities, they were told that they couldn't use that
2 shelter, they had to go to a regional shelter. And, in
3 the case of North Hampton, they had to go to Portsmouth.
4 And, for seniors, who want to be near their home or near
5 their family or near their animals, this was a major
6 concern for them, to take and have to go to another
7 community. They wanted to be able to go and check their
8 homes.

9 So, I'm not sure how you can resolve
10 that. But what I was told was the shelters could only be
11 opened where the Red Cross would staff it. Now, I know
12 that communities, several of them, said "We wanted to
13 staff it. We had the facilities, we had the food, we had
14 the ability." And, so, I think that's a question that
15 needs to be responded to. Can we establish, in the event
16 of another emergency, where those locations will be, so
17 that people can plan? That, "yes, I can go to my school"
18 or "no, I'm going to have to plan to go to another
19 facility."

20 The communications, I think, is a major
21 concern. And, what I had said to one of the people that I
22 spoke to in the Emergency Management was there are five
23 councilors in the State of New Hampshire. I know you
24 can't communicate with everybody. But, if you

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1 communicated to five of us, or, -- and, in this case,
2 wherever there was power outages, and we could correspond
3 somehow, communicate to our representatives and our
4 senators, we might be some way able to do some
5 communication.

6 I know that there was misunderstanding
7 as to who is the first responder. In some of the
8 communities, apparently, we got, and I didn't realize
9 this, I thought the State would be the first responder.
10 What I heard was the community assigns a first responder,
11 who may be elected or appointed by the community. And,
12 they are the ones that then communicate to the State
13 saying "we need assistance." So, I think that needs to
14 be, if that's true, and, again, my statements are -- I'm
15 asking you to help answer some of the questions that I
16 don't know the answer to, I found that some of my first
17 responders, when I found out who they were, were not able
18 to communicate to anybody. And, so, I think that that --
19 I don't know how we resolve that. If people don't have a
20 means of a telephone, that they can -- a cellphone, that
21 they can contact with someone who has an open
22 communication. TV was totally useless for everyone. I've
23 heard people were going out and sitting in their cars,
24 trying to take and keep warm and to listen to the radio to

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1 find out what the conditions were.

2 One of the major concerns was I was very
3 frightened that some of the seniors who thought that what
4 they could do was get into bed, put some blankets on, and
5 go to sleep. And, that's what I was told by some of them
6 that I spoke to. And, I said "No. You can't." And, I
7 think that's a message that we need to take and make sure
8 that people know that, in a situation like this, where the
9 temperatures could drop, where they need to take and know
10 those dangers and risks that they, just as with the
11 generators, the big concern, there needs to be some
12 document that says "These things you do not do and these
13 things you can do to help protect yourself."

14 And, I thank you so much for your coming
15 and your involvement and what you're trying to do in the
16 future, and I'm very glad Naida Kaen is doing to bury the
17 power lines. I believe that we had legislation many years
18 ago that said it was much too costly. But, if we are
19 going to ever have another storm like the one we just
20 recently had, we may need to reevaluate that financial
21 cost. And, thank you again for doing this.

22 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you, Councilor. I
23 don't know, Chris, you want to speak to it a little bit,
24 but there is a direct line during -- well, all the time,

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1 and especially during an event from the Emergency
2 Operations Center to the Emergency Management Director in
3 each town. And, every day, starting from the first Friday
4 after the storm, there was a conference call at 1:00 that
5 Chris chaired, and that either Randy or I were involved
6 in, and a variety of folks from different agencies. So,
7 there is that, you know, there's a single number that's a
8 private number, so that it's -- it facilitates
9 communication between the EOC and any Emergency Management
10 Director, just so that that line doesn't get busy, because
11 it's not a line to call and just ask general questions.

12 But, I don't know, Chris, if you wanted
13 to speak to it a little.

14 DIR. POPE: Well, if there was a
15 particular community that was not able to get in touch
16 with us, we need to know about it immediately. And, I'm
17 not aware of any community that was unable to communicate
18 with us. That's a primary public safety necessity. And,
19 Tom is absolutely right; every community, by state
20 statute, from an emergency management perspective, is
21 really only required to do one thing, and that's to have a
22 local emergency management director that the town chooses.
23 If the town does not choose one, it defaults to the senior
24 elected official in that town. That is our primary point

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1 of contact. And, of course, the local emergency
2 management director may be the police chief or the fire
3 chief, or works very closely with. And, we have a bank of
4 phones with people who are receiving calls from
5 communities for assistance, and we have a bank of phones
6 with people who are calling out to the local communities
7 to ask "how you're doing?" "Are you all set?" "Do you
8 need things?"

9 We did receive much positive feedback.
10 We had a conference call every day at noontime with local
11 emergency management folks. As the power came on, the
12 participation in those calls waned. I think our first few
13 calls we had over 100 local officials on those conference
14 calls. But some of these, I think the comments that were
15 made in general were very germane and helpful. And, so,
16 you know, it will give us plenty of things to work on.

17 CHAIRMAN GETZ: And, I think it's also
18 fair to recognize there is a wide range of experience of
19 the folks who are in those positions. They may be new to
20 it, they may not have been around as long as some other
21 folks, and how their communications within their town
22 works is another issue. But I know that both Chris and I
23 had a lot of calls, more than just that noon call,
24 reaching out to us to try to get more information. But,

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1 again, as part of the after action review, and what Chris
2 has been doing in those meetings the past month I think
3 will help train up some of the folks that were less
4 experienced and nail down what those other changes of
5 communication are.

6 DIR. POPE: And, I think Councilor
7 Hollingworth hit on some of the key issues, the sheltering
8 issues and communication issues were very -- they are
9 common themes that we're hearing, points well made.

10 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Sharon Fontaine.

11 MS. FONTAINE: Hi. I'm Sharon Fontaine,
12 from Hampton. My family and I were without power for nine
13 days. We had to move around quite a bit to try to stay
14 warm, from friend's house to friend's house. It was a
15 very costly week. Very hard on my elderly neighbors,
16 neighbors with children, and two neighbors that require
17 oxygen to breathe when they sleep. There were days when
18 there were no crews to be seen in Hampton at all.

19 On the eighth day, my neighbors and I on
20 Wentworth and Strafford held a peaceful protest at the
21 Town Hall. Later that day, myself and neighbors on
22 Wentworth went up to meet with Unitil in Hampton to
23 discuss the long delays for the power outage in Hampton.
24 And, we pointed out on the map where the line had been

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1 tripped, so it could be turned on. And, then, it still
2 took them two days to come to do it.

3 And, the next day was Friday. On
4 Friday, we went -- we then again approached Unitil again,
5 in the morning and in the afternoon about the power
6 outage. And, finally, by Friday afternoon, nine days
7 after, power was restored by a private utility out of
8 Raymond, New Hampshire called "I.C. Reed & Sons".

9 And, I do agree with John Reagan, of
10 Deerfield, that the utility has to be held responsible and
11 accountable for the lack of a plan in place and for the
12 long time that the power outage lasted. And, hopefully,
13 we can be more prepared in the future for an emergency
14 like this one. You must put customers first. It is we
15 who do business with you. You must regard us as top
16 priority, so we can continue to do business with you.

17 Hopefully, a lesson has been learned
18 here. And, I know, on March 12th, in Concord, a meeting
19 was held that fines would rather be paid than upgrade.
20 And, as a customer, that does not give me much confidence
21 that the next disaster will be prepared for. And, I say
22 do the upgrades, never mind the penalties, where the costs
23 will be absorbent and the costs will go to the customers.
24 And, if anyone deserves the award and bonus, is all of us

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1 customers in New England -- in the New England region that
2 went through this power outage for over one week. Thank
3 you.

4 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you. Colleen St.
5 Onge.

6 MS. ST. ONGE: Hi. Colleen St. Onge. I
7 own property at 41 Bell Ave. and 43 Bell Ave. here in
8 Exeter. I live in 43 Bell Ave. And, we were without
9 power for nine days. And, as I understand it, it was due
10 to a switch at the top of the pole. It was a five-minute
11 fix. I even requested at one point in time for somebody
12 to either bring me the stick and I would flip the switch
13 myself. Happy to do it. But I was told I needed to wait.
14 I waited nine days for somebody to do less than a
15 five-minute fix. I do not blame the linemen. They're
16 getting their orders from somebody higher up. They're
17 telling them which jobs are, you know, the biggest.

18 My power went out on the 11th, came back
19 on the 20th. In between that time, there was a brief
20 moment, 20 minutes on a Saturday, when it came back on,
21 the entire neighborhood came back on. And, then, four
22 houses went out. And, we stayed out for those eight days,
23 while the rest of the neighborhood had power. Our
24 generator was the two generators in the neighborhood

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1 running every night. We'd get home from work and start it
2 up. Start our whole day over again, showering at night or
3 running off to neighbors who had power.

4 And, again, every day I called Unitil,
5 it was the same message: "Somebody's in the area." I
6 never saw a truck. There was no communication; nothing.
7 When you called there, you were repeating the same story.
8 And, I think at one point in time, their message is "All
9 of these calls are taped for purposes of reviewing later
10 on." Were they writing anything down at this Customer
11 Service desk, because I told them my story every day, for
12 nine days. I probably called a dozen times a day. "Any
13 news?" "Where are we at?" I got the same story. Most of
14 the time I got "Yes, I'm still without power, too." But
15 that's your job to go in every day. I was still doing my
16 job every day, going to a job that I had to do, and I was
17 without power. I don't want to hear their sob story. I
18 wanted them to hear mine and feel compassionate about what
19 was happening to us, and why a neighborhood, other than
20 four houses, had power.

21 So, it's definitely a communication
22 issue. But there was nobody from our town to come down
23 and tell us anything that was going on. We got
24 information as we went off to work, called on, you know,

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1 neighbors coming by to check on us, listening to a
2 portable radio. I mean, thankful, we, you know, were
3 prepared, we had batteries, we had a portable radio. You
4 know, we drove around the first day trying to get a cell
5 connection, like everybody else. But, you know, you do
6 what you have to do to get what little communication that
7 you need. And, I think that's the biggest part.

8 The biggest office that helped me, I
9 should say, was Carol Shea-Porter's office. She got me a
10 number to Jane Quint, at your office. Jane called me
11 Friday. She hooked me up with somebody at Unitil. I did
12 talk with them. Again, pleading to them at this point
13 that we were just frustrated. And, I heard from her again
14 Saturday morning saying she thought that that had been
15 taken care of. And, by Saturday, we were still without
16 power. I would have to say by noontime a Unitil truck
17 finally pulled into our neighborhood, and flipped the
18 switch with the hot stick.

19 So, as far as tree removal, I did
20 complain about a tree limb. It did not take any of the
21 power lines down. And, that's something that this
22 continuously was asked to me by the Customer Service Rep.
23 on the other end of the phone, "is it pulled from your
24 house?" Same message. "No, it's not pulled from my

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1 house. There are no visible tree down anywhere in our
2 area." I did tell them that there was a branch hanging on
3 the wire closest to our neighbor's house. And, by
4 Saturday morning, a nice breeze came through and popped
5 that sucker right off. So, we were very lucky that it
6 didn't take down that wire. But I did, for those nine
7 days, tell them there was a tree branch, but there's no
8 visible anything there. So, to have them come out and
9 flip a switch was really hard to take after nine days, for
10 a two-minute fix.

11 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you. Tracey
12 McGrail.

13 MS. MCGRAIL: Good evening. I'm Tracey
14 McGrail. I live in Stratham. For 16 years, I was the
15 president of the Exeter Area Chamber of Commerce. And, it
16 was my privilege to see how things worked behind the
17 scenes, and with the local officials, as well as the
18 utilities, and all that they do on an ongoing basis for
19 the communities and whatnot. And, so, I just want to make
20 sure people understand, and remember that, when there is
21 an emergency, they're there helping us out in any way they
22 can.

23 My personnel experience as a customer,
24 I've been with Unitil since -- well, let's just say 40

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1 plus years. Grew up in Hampton Falls, which was very
2 rural. We never had an incident of power loss, in spite
3 of blizzards and hurricanes and microbursts and tornadoes,
4 whatever, never saw anything of the magnitude of this
5 storm. So, I don't know how anyone could have been
6 prepared for it much better than they were.

7 I think that it's in the best interest
8 of the utilities to solve many of these issues for the
9 next time anyway. So, I think that they're generally --
10 genuinely engaged in making those improvements. And, I
11 know they have representatives here tonight so they can
12 hear directly from people as well about what issues are of
13 most concern to people. But I just want to say thank you
14 to the utilities and to their crews, who are our
15 neighbors, who they themselves were without power in many
16 cases, who were working 18 hour shifts, in the dead of
17 night, in the freezing cold and snow to do the best that
18 they could do. And, I just want to commend them for their
19 efforts.

20 And, I was fortunate, I only lost power
21 for 48 hours. And, I don't have a cellphone. And, I was
22 quite happy not to have a phone going for 48 hours. But I
23 do have family in Hampton, three brothers and a sister who
24 all live within blocks of each other, and they all got

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1 their power back much later than I did, and not at the
2 same time, because the extent of the damage being
3 literally from street to street. So, it's unfortunate,
4 and some of the stories we've heard tonight, you know,
5 just a lot of people who were put out for a great deal of
6 time. But I think the utilities are interested, as much
7 as anyone, in making sure that, in the future, they can do
8 a better job of communication at any rate.

9 And, again, I just want to express
10 appreciation for all that they did do to help communities
11 and the individuals that were affected by this
12 astronomical natural disaster. Something that couldn't be
13 planned for, unlike the FairPoint/Verizon, that's a
14 situation that could be planned for. At any rate, thank
15 you very much.

16 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you. Wendy
17 MacArthur-Keith.

18 MS. MacARTHUR-KEITH: Well, I don't have
19 anything formal planned to say, but we were out for nine
20 days. I live here at 135 Linden Street, which is about a
21 mile out of town. We also have two families that I'm
22 related to, my parents, who are in their 80s, who live
23 very close to the center of town, and my brother, with his
24 family, who lives up on High Street. So, we were all

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1 represented here in different parts of the town. I also
2 work in the school, as many people here in the hall know
3 me as a teacher in the school. And, I would go in every
4 day and say to my kids "well, I haven't got it yet
5 either", once we got back to school. So, I had kids from
6 East Kingston, you know, Kensington, Brentwood, all over
7 the place. But I'm right outside of Exeter, about a mile,
8 and I still don't have it in nine days.

9 We did finally go over to my parents one
10 day, but we have a dog and everything, and a well. And,
11 we didn't want -- we have, thank goodness, a wood stove,
12 so we had heat. My husband works nights, I work days.
13 So, I would get up and stock all night the stove so our
14 pipes wouldn't freeze, and then he would stock all day.
15 We used most of our -- we thought we had a good wood pile
16 at the beginning of the season. We used a great deal of
17 wood up. We had cut like four trees last summer and
18 thought we had two winters' worth of wood.

19 Well, anyway, I have elderly parents.
20 So, thank goodness, theirs went on quickly. But I didn't
21 even know, in the schools, that I was part of the public
22 scene. And, one of my friends finally said "have you
23 called anybody?" And, I said "Have I called anybody? I
24 thought they knew I was out of electricity." You know?

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1 The only thing I could think of is I live down near
2 Pickpocket. That's -- My house is down near there. So, I
3 thought "Well, maybe I'm not on the same grid as
4 Pickpocket", and there's a lot of trees down through
5 there.

6 So, anyway, on the eighth day, I
7 finally, you know, we had stocked the stove, and my
8 husband actually let the dog sleep next to us, because it
9 was so cold inside, but we had done that. And, what
10 happened was, I said "I'm going to call the fire
11 department." I said "This is ridiculous. I'm getting no
12 communication." I'm within the school, I don't even know
13 when I'm getting turned on. My principal would say every
14 day "Wendy", when I walked in, "got it yet?" "No, I don't
15 have it yet." Freezing cold, can't -- you know, I'm here.
16 And, I would say many of my kids couldn't, of course, take
17 a shower, we know teenagers take them five times a day,
18 they couldn't take it. But, you know, still, you know,
19 these freezing kids coming into school, I knew they had
20 been freezing all night. Some of them don't have
21 generators and stuff, or the wood stove that I had at
22 least, you know?

23 But I called the fire department, and
24 thank goodness. I think, if I didn't call the fire

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1 department, I might still be sitting out on Linden Street
2 without any electricity, because the man said "Okay, I'll
3 put you on a list." I thought "I thought I was already on
4 a list." You know? Why did I have to call in? Now, I'm
5 not blaming this poor man who was on line. I mean, my
6 goodness, they were out there doing everything they could.

7 We had driven back with my daughter from
8 Keene State College the night of the ice storm. We knew
9 how bad it was. I drove from Keene, with my husband, back
10 that night. And, thank goodness we got back, and I woke
11 up to the ice -- the outage the next morning. But, you
12 know, the communication was the key, people. I mean, even
13 if you put something in the schools, you know, there were
14 so many of us there. One of my friends finally just said
15 "You need to call the utility company." I called that; I
16 got a recording. I finally called my friend, who's a
17 fireman, and they gave me some answers, "you're on a list,
18 Wen." I said "Great, I'm on a list. That's great."

19 We had been going to the spring here in
20 town, we're campers, so, okay, getting water at the
21 spring, in these big bottles we use for camping. Coming
22 home, so we had a system so we could flush the toilet so
23 many times, because we're on a well. You know, we know
24 how to boil water, we had a gas stove, thank goodness, and

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1 things like that. My candles all melted down. You know,
2 we're campers. But what about older people who live up
3 the street in Sherwood Forest? I heard people who Bev was
4 talking about who were underneath blankets, okay, staying
5 warm, because they didn't want to go up to the gym. So, I
6 worry about people like that. Bev made a lot of good
7 suggestions, and some other people here, but communication
8 is huge. The schools finally opened, you could have
9 communicated even through some of us at school. All I had
10 was a friend finally say "Call somebody." And, I called
11 the fire department.

12 Now, I'll tell you what, my husband and
13 I packed everything up, we were going over to my parents
14 finally, we were bailing. Okay? It was the ninth day.
15 And, I said "This is Murphy's Law. We're going to get all
16 packed up, we're going to go, and, you know, and get the
17 dog squared away and the cat, blah, blah, blah." Okay?
18 We drive down the road on Linden Street, a guy from
19 Pennsylvania is on the line, okay? And, at 9:00 that
20 night, the electricity went on. The fire department told
21 me one line, just one line, just passed the bridge on
22 Linden Street, was a little bit frayed, for nine days, you
23 know?

24 So, I'm just worried about your older

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1 people, like Bev was talking about, underneath the puffs,
2 whatever, staying warm, who don't have a fireplace like
3 me. We had a system all set up with the fireplace and
4 everything. What are people doing who don't have any
5 warmth or water? We are on a well. Okay? So, we were
6 going to the spring with the big waters, and my husband
7 was -- we had a whole system set up.

8 But I couldn't get any communication at
9 all. Now, I think that's the key. Just tell us "No,
10 we're not there yet. You're not on the line for down
11 here." Okay? "You have one frayed wire." That's what
12 the fireman told me. It's like the lady with the switch.
13 I'll climb up the pole and I'll help the guy do it at this
14 rate, you know, in order to help people. But you've got a
15 whole mobile home park down there of older people, you
16 know, who are senior citizens, who are underneath their
17 puffs. You know?

18 So, I think communication, like centers,
19 like the schools, where else could you -- that's a great
20 area to communicate, I know you don't want to frazzle the
21 kids up. But, I mean, East Kingston, the kids would say
22 to me "Yeah, Ms. Mac, we ain't got it yet." You know?
23 So, and we were all communicating, this man who talked
24 about his neighborhood, the good thing about the storm,

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1 the only good thing about it, is we all start to get out
2 of our computers, that we can't use anymore and stuff, and
3 we all start communicating that way. And, we found out
4 what we're really dependent on, you know, that way. But
5 you have to communicate better, really, you know? So,
6 thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you. Bob Frese.

8 MR. FRESE: Hi. I'm Bob Frese, from
9 Exeter. And, I might have been on a different channel,
10 but I got communication. I called the 800 number on the
11 Unitil bill, which is my provider, and it did provide
12 updated information. You know, it said "This message is
13 updated as of this hour." So, I called repeatedly, and I
14 got updates. I heard there was a shelter in Exeter, so I
15 went there. The communication there was fine. There was
16 an Exeter Police Officer sitting right out with the Red
17 Cross people. They would radio him when the power came
18 on. And, I laid on a bunk for probably an hour or so and
19 they come in and said "Your street is on."

20 So, I thought the communication was
21 fine. I thought Unitil did a good job. In fact, I heard
22 of some of the negative stuff, where people were storming
23 the power company in Epping and Kensington and had to have
24 police patrols down there. That's bad behavior. Maybe we

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1 should be supportive of the crews. I don't want to be out
2 there doing what they were doing. I mean, I can imagine
3 what it's like out there, with the freezing rain on their
4 hands. I'm sure they're working with bare hands. I don't
5 want to be doing what they were doing. I appreciate what
6 they did. I didn't like the loss of power, but it
7 happens. I think it caught everybody off guard, this
8 storm. I appreciate the work they did. I have no
9 complaints, other than the guy that got the 300 grand,
10 which somebody else mentioned. That should have been
11 disbursed to the line workers. They were actually up in
12 the poles and up in the bucket truck just doing the work,
13 actually being out there. Sitting behind an office,
14 getting 300 grand, is not appropriate. The guys doing the
15 work out there should have gotten it.

16 And, I thought the communication was
17 fine. And, I hated having to go to Seabrook to take a
18 shower and to Exeter, because I had never been in a
19 shelter in my life. I volunteered a couple times, now I
20 was on the other side of it. It wasn't pleasant, but, you
21 know, we made it through. But I appreciate what they did.
22 And, even when I was rounding a corner I saw a crew
23 working behind Walgreens in Exeter. And, I cranked down
24 the car window and I said "I appreciate what you're

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1 doing." They said "Thank you very much." And, I mean,
2 there out there with all that crap, they don't need to
3 hear any more crap. And, I did appreciate what they were
4 doing.

5 I'll tell you, that was very exciting
6 when that Red Cross worker come in and said "Such and such
7 street is on." I buzzed home. I stayed up till 2:00 in
8 the morning and enjoyed that electricity. You don't
9 appreciate what you have until you lose it. And, I prayed
10 for them. I really did. I prayed for the workers out
11 there. No one got killed. And, so, I don't have a
12 problem with it. I think they did a good job. I hope it
13 never happens again. And, that's my two cents. Thank
14 you.

15 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you.
16 Representative Schlochman.

17 REP. SCHLOCHMAN: Thank you. I'm Donna
18 Schlochman. I represent Rockingham 13, which is Exeter,
19 Stratham, and North Hampton. And, I'll try not to repeat
20 anything. I think the theme of communication has been
21 large. And, I assume you're going to come away from this
22 with a lot of time spent on developing a plan and looking
23 at how those things can happen. One of the things in
24 listening to people that have occurred to me is, and we

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1 had a transistor radio, but you turned it on and you
2 didn't necessarily get any information. So, I think it
3 would be really helpful, for those who went back in their
4 cars, those who had a transistor, if we actually had a
5 station that we could have listened to that would have
6 told us town-by-town what's going on, who do you call,
7 what can you expect. I mean, these are -- we've got
8 airwaves, and I think it's a cheap and easy way for most
9 of us to get information.

10 I think the other thing I heard someone
11 suggest, which I thought was great, and it might have been
12 Beverly Hollingworth, was let's have a book, let's have a
13 little booklet for each town. You get them, if you're
14 within the Seabrook Nuclear Plant, you have a booklet
15 that's a calendar. I don't know if anybody has bothered
16 reading it, because most of us are hoping we don't need
17 it. But, you know, just a booklet, "If you live in this
18 town, here's your emergency contact people." We don't
19 know who they are. And, so, I think just some basic
20 information would be really a great comfort.

21 I serve on the Commerce Committee, and
22 we, after the storm, someone brought a bill to us
23 addressing the needs of people in mobile home parks. That
24 really hit all of us. These are the -- you know, we have,

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1 in this region, actually, a lot of mobile home parks.
2 And, unlike people in my neighborhood and some of these
3 neighborhoods, these people can't go out and buy a
4 generator and get their electricity going or get their
5 toilets going, you know, get their water going. And, we
6 heard about one mobile park that was out for nine days.
7 And, there weren't people there checking on these people.
8 And, they were without water until somebody got wind of
9 it, it was a State Rep., and started delivering water.

10 Now, I don't know if the Red Cross, I
11 know they did shelters, because I went to the one in
12 Exeter, I don't know if they went beyond shelters during
13 this storm. But I remember, after the floods, I
14 volunteered for them, and we went in cars with teams town
15 to town to town and checked in with their emergency people
16 and found out what it was that people needed. Now, I
17 heard that there was somebody in Epping who died during
18 this storm, because nobody knew that this gentleman was on
19 oxygen, and he had no electricity. Fortunately, that
20 there weren't a lot of those stores. There were stories
21 of people dying of carbon monoxide poisoning, because they
22 had generators and didn't know some of the basic safety
23 things.

24 But I certainly think we need a process,
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1 whether it's the Red Cross or some of our service clubs
2 here, we have a lot of people who do a lot of wonderful
3 volunteering that we could take advantage of, but some way
4 systematically of having people go and check on people. I
5 know, in some towns, the fire and the police know who are
6 the elderly people who are frail, who are the people who
7 are sick and on oxygen, who are the people who are
8 disabled and can't physically get to those shelters. So,
9 we need to have a process to make sure that people are
10 checked in on.

11 You know, as everybody said, the people
12 working out on the lines were doing an incredible job,
13 working really hard. Yes, maybe there were some issues on
14 whether or not there were enough teams in different
15 neighborhoods, but I don't think anybody has any
16 complaints about the performance of those people that were
17 out there in their trucks in the snow and the rain and
18 whatnot. But I think that we need another layer of people
19 that are lined up to really check in on people and make
20 sure that people in, and I go back to the mobile home
21 parks, they don't have the ability to help themselves the
22 way people in other neighborhoods could. So, just the
23 process, again, I don't know if the Red Cross was out
24 there delivering water and food to people; they certainly

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1 have that capability. Obviously, nobody knew this storm
2 at the beginning was going to go on for nine days or two
3 weeks or whatever, so you don't know at what point to
4 mobilize those people. But there needs to be a process by
5 which we could have their help in checking in on people.

6 So, I think I've probably covered the
7 main points that I wanted to cover. And, I thank you for
8 coming and listening.

9 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you.

10 DIR. POPE: Those were all good
11 comments, if I had any response to all that, and I think
12 that that's some excellent feedback, certainly consistent
13 with some of the information we've been hearing in other
14 parts of the state. One area we know we need to do a
15 better job is communicating with citizens. There were
16 news media outlets, and I'm not going to identify any
17 particular news media outlets, but there were news media
18 outlets that did a terrific job, of, you know, almost a
19 24/7 basis providing information. But, because of the
20 challenges of power outages, Internet outages, phone
21 outages, there were still people that didn't get the
22 message.

23 We also know that there were some
24 communities that, through their own local emergency

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1 management programs, did an outstanding job of getting
2 local shelter information, where can we get water, where
3 could we get food if we needed it, getting those situation
4 reports out by posting them in schools, putting them on
5 the pizza boxes at the take-out places, all sorts of
6 unique means of communicating. We're looking at all of
7 that. And, we're sharing "best practices". We have a
8 yearly conference coming up in June. We're working right
9 now on sharing those best practices with local responders
10 and emergency management folks. But thank you for
11 bringing that up.

12 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Representative Casey.

13 REP. CASEY: Good evening. My name is
14 Representative Kim Casey. I represent East Kingston and
15 Newton, that's Rockingham 11. And, in order to spend as
16 little time talking about what some of the things you've
17 already heard, I will just try to encapsulate some of the
18 things that I've been concerned about, in particular, with
19 the Town of Newton, which was out for nine or ten days at
20 the very least. And, I just want to remind the PUC that,
21 for most of the people in Newton, in fact, for everyone in
22 Newton, a lack of electricity meant a lack of water, as
23 well as heat. And, you know, so it was really a major,
24 major outage for that entire town.

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1 One of the things I'm concerned about is
2 that -- and, by the way, thank you for being here. It is
3 a big help for us to, first of all, hear all of our
4 stories, and feel like a community and sharing some of the
5 hardships of that. I know, if I'm not dipped in hot water
6 at least once every other day, I get really, really
7 grumpy, and that happened. So, thank you for that.

8 But here's my concern. There doesn't
9 seem to be a maintenance of -- or, there doesn't seem to
10 be a systemic response to some of -- each of my towns, and
11 some towns around us, did everything differently. And,
12 that's okay, to a certain extent. But, for Newton,
13 wellness visits became a real problem, because there's
14 lots of little streets, and it's a really hard town to
15 cover. I know I've tried to cover it in my own way,
16 politically, and you're really out there. And, that was
17 very difficult. And, they found it very hard to find
18 support to get that kind of -- to get people out calling,
19 you know, calling on neighbors, to make sure that they
20 were all right. And, I thought a door-to-door visit was
21 an important aspect of making sure that people were not
22 lost in the mix. Because the town -- a town near them,
23 which will remain nameless, had another system. They were
24 using -- literally going around the town using a bullhorn,

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1 suggesting that, "If you needed anything, you should come
2 out and address that." Now, obviously, I can immediately
3 see that there's a problem. If there is a man at home
4 that has oxygen, he is not going to be able to get up to
5 get to his door in time to go out and say "I need help."

6 So, that I didn't like -- I'm really
7 concerned about the fact that one town would be so
8 different in the way they respond for these wellness
9 visits. Our town, East Kingston, had its fire department,
10 my town where I live, had the fire department go door to
11 door. I think this was probably the most essential part
12 of, especially day four and day five, of making sure
13 people could avail themselves of whatever, you know, they
14 needed at that time. So, I did -- I'm really concerned
15 that there is a lack of sort of consistency.

16 And, I have to say, the second thing
17 that I wanted to address is that, when we were on the --
18 when I was on the school board here in Exeter, it's
19 required by law that the Exeter School District have a
20 very specific emergency plan. And, we have -- we are
21 required by law to do certain emergency testing. We have
22 these tests that we do every couple years, we bring
23 everybody together. And, it's a big to-do, and I
24 understand that. But I think it's essential that -- there

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1 are 236 towns. I think that it is essential that we have
2 regional opportunities for towns to develop and work to
3 gather the best practices that we will gather from these
4 sessions, so that there can be some consistency of effort
5 from town to town. So, it doesn't make any difference
6 whether you're from Kingston or East Kingston, there is
7 going to be some consistency there, in terms of the
8 response that you're going to receive from your emergency
9 management people.

10 And, the third thing I would like to say
11 is that, for those of you who have mentioned concerns
12 about trees, I am co-sponsoring, with Senator Hassan from
13 Exeter, a bill that is looking at tree removal and limb
14 removal in the same way that it's a Maine model. I don't
15 want to spend a lot of time talking about it, please look
16 for it and support us on this. We're trying to make
17 efforts to try and have a little more rational basis plan
18 for tree and limb removal, so that we don't have to have
19 that situation. That's just a sort of FYI for the folks
20 here tonight.

21 So, thank you for an opportunity to
22 speak tonight. I really do appreciate it, and I know my
23 constituents do as well. Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you.

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1 DIR. POPE: One comment I'll make very
2 quickly. Again, some excellent points, I've taken a lot
3 of notes. Just as a matter of interest, and since we do
4 have elected officials here, it is interesting to note
5 that you are absolutely correct that school systems are
6 required by law to have not just an emergency response
7 plan, operations plan, but to function -- but to have
8 training in things like the National Incident Management
9 System, and communities are not required. So, it's an
10 interesting thing. It says whatever we want to think
11 about what it says, but we obviously value our
12 schoolchildren, but there is a little bit of difference
13 there.

14 REP. CASEY: I would be more than
15 willing, and I know Representative Schlochman would be
16 willing, to sponsor legislation to ask that each town
17 participate in training sessions, so that they could have
18 a very, you know, systemic and qualified response to
19 emergencies.

20 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you,
21 Representative. Janet Murphy.

22 MS. MURPHY: That was good timing, and I
23 appreciate everything that all the previous speakers have
24 said, and I agree with all of them. But my big thing is,

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1 I was in software for 20 years, worked for several
2 different computer companies. And, emergency response
3 management was the thing that they all had to do. And, my
4 question is, why don't the utilities have emergency
5 response plans? I live in Exeter. And, I don't believe
6 that Unitil had any clue what to do when this ice storm,
7 because they never experienced such a big thing before.
8 But it was obvious to me that they had no emergency
9 response plan, disaster plan. They should have a plan. I
10 agree the Town should have them, and schools do. But the
11 utilities should also have a disaster recovery plan. And,
12 that's all I wanted to say.

13 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you.

14 MS. MURPHY: Thank you. I appreciate
15 the opportunity.

16 CHAIRMAN GETZ: You're welcome. Chief
17 Briggs.

18 CHIEF BRIGGS: Good evening. I'm here
19 to talk a little bit about what did work and what we did
20 in our community. The evening of the storm, I was called
21 out by my midnight officer saying that he needed some
22 assistance. Needless to say, I was grateful for that, to
23 be woken of at midnight to help. But, anyway, once we got
24 out there, we realized the magnitude of the storm. We'd

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1 travel 100 feet at a time, 200 feet at a time, trees were
2 coming down, wires were coming down, they were bouncing
3 off my cruiser. It was a mess. Realizing that we had a
4 problem at that point, what I did is I called for
5 assistance. I met with the fire chief and our road agent
6 and said "Listen, we're going to develop our own plan as
7 this goes." And, this is what we did:

8 I went to the local -- to the local
9 electricians that we have, "You're coming with me, I need
10 your assistance." And, they did, gratefully. We put them
11 in cruisers and fire trucks and highway vehicles. We
12 developed teams. And, we would go out on every road,
13 because the roads were closing down, which made an issue
14 for emergency responders. And, I knew the next morning,
15 the magnitude of the storm, the residents weren't going to
16 be able to get out, number one. Secondly, they weren't
17 going to be able to go for food, for medicine, for other
18 shelter, so we needed to act quickly.

19 So, we took the electricians and we
20 checked the wires that were down, found they were not
21 energized. We would cut them, tape them up, roll them up,
22 put them beside the poles, tied them to the poles. Okay?
23 We did that with the telephone wires and the cable wires.
24 We then had the highway people come in and clear the

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1 debris, pile it on the side of the roads. And, we had the
2 fire department assist us as well. So, we worked as a
3 team, a team effort. And, we did that throughout the
4 evening.

5 We met the next morning, bright and
6 early, we opened our Emergency Operations Center, which
7 was very critical. Where all of the key components of the
8 community get together and have our input. We knew,
9 number one, we needed to have communication. The lack of
10 communications always leads to the lack of understanding.
11 That's what I tell my people. Very critical. So, we did
12 several things. We all met. We knew we have to be able
13 to communicate with the public. What are we going to do?
14 Well, we're going to call Concord, the Emergency
15 Operations Center in Concord. We're going to get some big
16 sign boards. We're going to have them flashing all over
17 the place: "Food here", "Water here", "Shelter set up",
18 we had a regional shelter at the new high school that we
19 have. So, we had the Red Cross involved. We did have a
20 little issue with pets. They didn't want to take pets.
21 You're right, that's an issue. I had elderly people
22 sleeping in their cars with their pets; not going to
23 happen. You're going to take those pets. If you're going
24 to blame somebody for putting pets in here, it's going to

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1 be me. So, we made sure that they would take pets. That
2 is a major issue that you really need to address. Because
3 there are several thoughts with the Red Cross with pets,
4 and not taking pets. You got to take pets. Big issue.

5 We sent out two mailers to all
6 residents. We went down to the post office, this is what
7 we need to tell you. We developed what we wanted to tell
8 the public. Shelters, food, water, if you need any
9 information about electricity. And, I was the guy that
10 was the lucky guy that got to deal with the utilities.
11 And, I mean that in a positive way. I know circuits, I
12 know everything about transformers, primary circuits. So,
13 I was the guy to do it. Actually, I have a very good
14 rapport with Unitil, because we cover motor vehicle
15 accidents, we do a lot of things that take down power
16 lines. I deal with used to be Verizon, now FairPoint,
17 Comcast, so I understand the whole working of the system.
18 And, how circuits work and where we have line substations
19 in town, we have substations, so, if you know the
20 technical terms, you can do much better.

21 But back to the mailers. So important
22 to keep the public informed. What I would tell you, every
23 road that you go down, when the utilities got there, they
24 would go down these roads and they would say "Oh my God,

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1 there's something else." What we would do, we traveled
2 every road. "Okay, at pole number such and such, we have
3 a primary wire down, we have a crossarm that's broken, we
4 have a broken insulator. We also have maybe a secondary
5 wire down." We had 87 drops to homes down, which are from
6 a pole to your home. So, we actually sent our electrical
7 inspector out to all the homes and said "Okay." We
8 developed again the paperwork. "This is what you need to
9 do. If the eye at the top of your home is pulled out, you
10 need to immediately get ahold of an electrician. We are
11 putting you on a list, but I have to tell you, you are the
12 last people that will be turned on. The main lines to all
13 the substations get turned on first, primary. Secondary,
14 all the primary lines on the main roads get turned on
15 second. The secondaries get turned on the next step.
16 And, the last things that get turned on are your drops to
17 the houses. So, we went out and communicated to those
18 people and said "Guess what, folks? We're going to be
19 proactive. This is what you need to do. Call your
20 electrician." Excuse my back, I'm speaking to everybody
21 here I can. "You need to go out and get ahold of your
22 electrician. If your eye bolt is in or the weather-head
23 is broken at the top, get your electrician here. Get
24 ahold of him. We're going to put you on the list.

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1 Because, if that's not done and the utility truck pulls
2 up, guess what? They're going to toot the horn and drive
3 off. So, that's important." We communicated with 87
4 residents. So, we were on board with that.

5 We sent, let me tell you, the fire
6 department are great people, they have a lot more people
7 than I do, we work very good together. They sent their
8 people out, and we took the Elderly Exemption List. How
9 are we going to --

10 [Court reporter interruption]

11 CHIEF BRIGGS: All right. Sorry. We
12 took the Elderly Exemption List. How are we going to find
13 out all the elderly people? Well, most of them are on the
14 Elderly Exemption List. So, we did that, and we went
15 door-to-door. While we created these lists, 80 -- I'm
16 sorry, 98 miles of public highway I have, and it was a
17 disaster. When I looked at that, I was the guy that made
18 the decision on that flier "we're going to be out for
19 several days." "Guess what, people? You're going to be
20 with power for seven days -- for several days. Be
21 prepared. You're going to be out. I can tell you that
22 right now." I fielded a lot of calls. "This is what
23 we're seeing from here." So, we did that. We
24 communicated to the public.

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1 We also went into several other things
2 along the way. People were buying generators. And, we
3 went into a generator share program. "You got your power
4 turned on. Hey, mind calling us, give us a list, maybe we
5 can share your generator with somebody else." Worked
6 pretty well. "Hey, my power is on, let me help somebody
7 else. So, we did a number of different things. We
8 communicated with our regional shelter. They actually fed
9 all the emergency workers, so it took care of that
10 problem. We fed some of the utility workers when they
11 came into the town. So, we tried to consolidate those
12 issues and worked together as a team; the utility, the
13 local people that were taking care of this emergency, and
14 some of those other issues.

15 As we went along, so we -- every day I
16 would fax in in the morning, "These are the streets that
17 are out. These are the problems at each pole on every
18 street. These are the number of homes on that street."
19 Because I know, when the utility is going to come in,
20 they're going to turn it back on by circuit. They're
21 going to try to turn the last amount of homes on at a
22 time, makes sense, you know, get the bigger bang for your
23 buck. Turn those people on. If there's 100 people over
24 here and 20 over here, guess what? If they're working

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1 that circuit, because they can't jump circuits, like I
2 heard somebody say "the lights were on over here, but not
3 over here." They can't jump circuits. They have to work
4 that circuit all the way through to the end or it's not
5 going to work.

6 [Court reporter interruption]

7 CHIEF BRIGGS: I'm sorry, kick me if I'm
8 not talking loud enough.

9 [Court reporter interruption]

10 CHIEF BRIGGS: Anyway, so that's -- and
11 I understand that. And, it was my job to educate the
12 public on some of those things. So, that's why we put a
13 lot of this stuff on the fliers.

14 The other thing we got into, and here's
15 where communications comes in. We did a lot of other
16 little things as well, but those were just some that I
17 wanted to inform you about. I got a call from the upper
18 management from Unitil, "we got a problem here." "What's
19 the problem?" "Our line workers are being shot at with
20 paintballs. They're cutting our trucks off and
21 threatening our employees. They went in for breakfast and
22 they're holding them hostage in the restaurant." Can't
23 have it. Can't have it. Can't have that stuff. These
24 guys are out there working day and night, doing a great

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1 job. When I was out there with them for many, many days
2 and nights, most of the people would go by, give them the
3 thumb's up. Toot their horn, "Thanks for the job you're
4 doing." Someone would stop, "Hey, when is the power going
5 to be on?" "As soon as we can get it on. We don't know."
6 Because, what's happening, as we go down each road, we're
7 finding more and more problems. We can't tell you that.
8 We might go 200 feet a day or 2 miles a day. We don't
9 know. When we got into that field, we're finding more and
10 more problems. We're finding "Oh, the cops didn't tell us
11 about this transformer that was tripped over here."

12 One my problems that kept the south end
13 of town off, we got out there and somebody had stole the
14 copper wire. Gone. Cut. We investigated, we found out
15 who took it, we arrested him. Went up and cut the copper
16 wire right off where it fell.

17 We had this conversation with the
18 utility, back to the utility. "We both have a problem.
19 In order for me to protect your people, we need to know
20 where you are. Not only that, we're having a
21 communications issue, let's meet." "Great idea." They
22 all came down to our emergency shelter at the Sanborn
23 Regional High School, all the upper management from
24 Unutil, and all -- and I invited the 13 towns, all the

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1 chiefs of police. We need to sit here, we need to open up
2 that line of communication. And, we sat there and I said,
3 "okay, you know, we've got a major disaster on our hands
4 here. Not only do we, but you do. We need to work
5 together. We need to get this issue resolved, with the
6 fire, the emergency management people, everybody. It's
7 our problem, not their problem. It's our problem."

8 So, we knew that we were fielding
9 hundreds and hundreds of calls from the public. And, the
10 public was saying "when's my power going to be turned on?"
11 "Well, it's going to be several days." "Well, when's my
12 street?" "We don't know." So, we do -- we developed
13 something with the utility. We're going to do a
14 teleconference twice a day, in the morning and in the
15 evening. That worked well. Everybody was on line. And,
16 what we did, as a result of that, we turned on critical
17 infrastructure in our community first. What we did, we
18 knew what circuits were coming out of the substation, we
19 turned on our drugstores, we turned on our food stores,
20 gasoline for generators, gas for cars, so people could
21 travel. We turned on critical infrastructure first. We
22 looked at, "Okay, on this circuit, I can turn on a gas
23 station and I can turn on the drugstore. And, you know
24 something, I can put my elderly housing, my senior

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1 citizens at this whole area with that circuit, I can turn
2 them on. We turned them on. "We want this circuit on
3 first, okay?" "You'll get that circuit first." So,
4 communications. We talked about, and twice a day we did
5 teleconferencing, where any community could jump on and
6 say "folks, I need this turned on first, for this reason.
7 What can you do?" They'd look up the circuit. "Well, we
8 can't maybe do it today, but we can do it tomorrow." We
9 talked about communications. Well, guess what happened
10 with communications, one of the communities got a little
11 ticked off because, again, they're fielding -- we have
12 emergency lines that went to Unitil and to
13 Verizon/FairPoint, those people -- excuse me, those
14 people. One community actually gave the emergency numbers
15 out, so we could no longer get into their lines. "Hey, we
16 can't give you an answer. Call on these numbers." What
17 happened? Communications broke down. So, what we did was
18 started emailing. And, what I found interesting, I
19 thought the same thing, how many people are going to use a
20 computer when there's a power outage? And, what they told
21 me was we have three times the amount of hits on our
22 system. With the power outage, people with a laptop will
23 go somewhere and find power so they can communicate with
24 the utility. So, we found that very interesting. So, out

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1 of that, we have developed a better system and a
2 standardized system. We have talked to the utility, I
3 kind of spearheaded it, saying "we need a form so more
4 towns get involved to go out and find some of the problems
5 in the field so they can help crews coming in, their
6 crews, what have you, to understand the magnitude of the
7 storm in each community. Each community was hit in
8 different ways. We were wiped out. I think probably
9 Kingston was one of the worst towns.

10 So, we learned a lot from that. And,
11 every storm since then we emailed and we get alerts and
12 bulletins from the utility. "Hey, we're going to have
13 high winds today. Just to let you know, these are the
14 emergency numbers. Communicate with us if you need
15 anything. We will go to a teleconferencing issue if we
16 have some disaster that happens. We already have your
17 cellphone number, your home phone number. We know how to
18 turn onto this teleconferencing twice a day."
19 Communications. Based upon that meeting that we had, we
20 started making a lot of success. We were really moving
21 forward, because now we're working as a team. And, that's
22 important.

23 Some of the other things that we did,
24 and what you might not understand is Unitil, in some

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1 towns, is not responsible for your telephone poles.
2 Kingston, FairPoint is responsible for the telephone poles
3 to set them. So, what I did is I got ahold of FairPoint.
4 "Okay, at this location, Pole Number such and such, such
5 and such, such and such, I need your trucks out here right
6 away to start setting poles." Guess what? They did it.
7 They had my poles set within four days. I communicated
8 every day back to the utility, "this pole at this location
9 has now been set. So, add that to your list." I
10 communicated back to them to let them know this problem is
11 solved now.

12 So, again, by working together, because
13 you may never have another ice storm like this again, the
14 possibility of a hurricane or a tornado, guess what?
15 You're going to have the same situation. It's like we
16 used mutual aid today, I had a large structure fire. And,
17 I'm sitting there thinking, coming to this meeting
18 tonight, and I watched the number of fire trucks that came
19 up the road. Guess what? If Kingston hadn't had that
20 number of fire trucks come up the road to assist them, the
21 house would have burned to the ground. Salem Police, I
22 have a bad car crash, I'm going to use mutual aid. I'm
23 going to call in seven other communities to help me with
24 this bad car crash. So, I think that's some of the things

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1 that we did that really, really did work.

2 The other thing that I would just like
3 to say is, not only do I think the utilities did a great
4 job for what they're faced with, I bet the people in this
5 room don't even know how many utility vehicles that Unitil
6 actually owns. Seven. They have seven bucket trucks for
7 13 communities. Seven. Okay? And, for years and years
8 and years, they have been able to maintain their system
9 with seven trucks, and done a good job. Obviously, this
10 disaster hit, and they started reaching out for more
11 mutual aid towns -- more mutual aid companies. "Come help
12 us. We need help." Guess what? Everybody else sucked
13 them up before they got here. They had to keep grasping,
14 and that's what we were told. So, we were aware of that.
15 They ended up in Tennessee, I think it was Tennessee that
16 they come up from. They were great guys, did a great job.
17 They really did. They were nice people and did a
18 wonderful job. But, again, if you're not communicating
19 this, and I think some of it falls upon the communities,
20 it's our responsibility. I'm a public employee, I work
21 for you. And, it's my job to come out and help you,
22 serve, and do what's necessary in an emergency.

23 FROM THE FLOOR: Well, where's our Chief
24 of Police? He should be here tonight.

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1 CHIEF BRIGGS: Well, I can't --

2 FROM THE FLOOR: I understand.

3 CHIEF BRIGGS: I'm not speaking for any
4 other community. But -- And, that's kind of how I look at
5 things. So, we actually, understanding the system, I
6 mean, we had the same disaster. I mean, I had some people
7 -- I told you, the last people that get turned on are the
8 house drops. We made sure that everyone got turned on.
9 We went to them afterwards, "Hey, you all set?" "Oh, yes.
10 Yes. Yes. They're already here now doing it." Or, if
11 one truck got lost, guess what? "Can you show me where
12 this road is?" "Follow me. I'm going to bring you up
13 here. I know the house, house number such and such."
14 Work with these people.

15 And, I think, just like you people,
16 knowing your neighbors better and sharing water and food
17 and those types of things. I had people coming out into
18 the road, making coffee, you know, if the home had a
19 generator, they were making coffee for the utility
20 workers. "Hey, thanks a lot for getting my power up", or,
21 you know, giving them something to eat or whatever. So, I
22 think that's what it's all about. We need to all work
23 together, for the communities, to do the right thing.

24 FROM THE FLOOR: Can I --

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1 CHIEF BRIGGS: Sure, sure.

2 [Court reporter interruption]

3 CHIEF BRIGGS: I'm sorry.

4 CHAIRMAN GETZ: He's trying to get it on
5 the --

6 CHIEF BRIGGS: Thank you. Thank you.
7 That's about all I have. Thank you very much.

8 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thanks, Chief. If you
9 want to make a quick comment, but just would like to hear
10 it.

11 FROM THE FLOOR: When he said that he,
12 you know, had people knocking on doors, I mean, there were
13 only two -- well, between my two generators and the little
14 old lady next door, there are three generators running in
15 a community of probably over 100 people. It would have
16 been nice if somebody had, from the Town, had knocked on
17 my door and said "Are you guys okay? You know, it's been
18 nine days. You're still running a generator, and
19 everybody else has power. What's up?" You know, somebody
20 could have communicated elsewhere. So, I think maybe he
21 needs to go around to different towns and give a seminar
22 on what they need to do. That was great information.

23 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you. Susan
24 Goodenough.

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1 MS. GOODENOUGH: Hello. I'm Susan
2 Goodenough. I live on Pickpocket Road. We were without
3 power, water, and telephone for eight days. Besides the
4 communication issue, Unitil communication issue or lack of
5 communication, my biggest issue was, for almost the full
6 eight days, there was a broken telephone pole laying
7 across the road, blocking traffic. No emergency vehicles
8 were able to get through. We talked to the -- one of the
9 utilities, the fire department, they said it was up to
10 Unitil to move the pole. The town, I guess, couldn't do
11 anything about it. So, it really caused a hazard, both --
12 actually, both ends of the road were blocked, because one
13 -- telephone poles on both sides, so no emergency vehicles
14 were able to get down past the poles. So, that was a big
15 deal.

16 The other thing, the radio stations, the
17 only thing that I heard, besides Christmas carols, were
18 PSNH updates; nothing about Unitil. And, we still, on our
19 property, still have a cable wire that is down. It has
20 been done since the storm. It's not our cable wire, it's
21 from the telephone pole, it's still laying on the ground.
22 So, it's across our neighbor's driveway, down the edge of
23 the road. It's still sitting there. That's it.

24 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you. Fred Rice.

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1 MR. RICE: Hi. My name is Fred Rice. I
2 live on 15 Heather Lane, in Hampton. And, I'd like to
3 thank you gentlemen for taking the time to do this. I
4 know it's not an easy job and appreciate your taking the
5 time to gather these comments.

6 One of the things that I learned in the
7 military is that you don't make much progress if you just
8 complain about what happened. The only time you do is
9 when you turn it into a lesson learned and something
10 positive that you plan to do to improve it the next time.
11 I know that's why you're here. I'll try to make my
12 comments in that direction.

13 We had kind of a unique situation where
14 I live. Power went out on Thursday night. On Friday --
15 let's see, on Saturday, the power came on on all the
16 streets around us. And, I know the Chief just mentioned
17 that you have to go down the branches and so forth in
18 line, and we understand that, I understand that. But we
19 were out, a little loop of about 30 homes that came off of
20 one of the main streets. We live just in off of Route
21 127, which down near Hampton we call "Exeter Road", which
22 is opposite, up here you call it "Hampton Road". Same
23 road down there, but it's Exeter Road. And, there are two
24 main streets that come in off of there. Well, we are a

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1 loop of three streets off of one of those main streets.
2 That power came back on on Saturday. We didn't get ours
3 back until Wednesday. Three little streets are there, and
4 there were a couple of other pockets like that. It wasn't
5 an isolated group. This is about 35 homes, a fair number
6 of people, and I know of two or three other similar
7 situations off High Street on the east side of Hampton
8 where the same thing happened. There was a considerable
9 number of homes that were an isolated pocket that they
10 just forgot about.

11 Well, on Friday, when the power had been
12 out, I contacted an individual that I know was an
13 executive with the utility company and told him "Hey,
14 well, my power is out, too." And, you know, everybody
15 expected it was going to be off overnight, would come back
16 on. When it was a full day, I contacted this guy by
17 e-mail on my iPhone, and I said "Hey, our power is out.
18 Here's what the deal is." And, he wrote back and said
19 "Thanks for the specific information", said "I'll pass it
20 onto the right people." I'm sure that he did. I have no
21 question at all with what he did. But it was another --
22 the power came on on Saturday and I emailed again, I said
23 "My neighbor said that they heard from somebody out on the
24 street that all the crews were leaving town and going

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1 west, and that they don't have -- a lot of the power is
2 still out throughout Hampton." And, he responded to the
3 general effect "Yes, that's right. They are relocating
4 the crews. They're going to clear the main roads."

5 Well, this brings up the point that,
6 everybody is talking about the crews out in the field, I
7 think they did an outstanding job. And, there's no
8 question -- there's no reason to question anything they
9 did. They did things right. The problem was, that higher
10 up, in the management of the companies, they didn't plan
11 to do the right things. The workers did things right.
12 They worked their butts off and cleared and repaired and
13 everything as fast as they could get to it. But the
14 management of the company was not prepared for it.

15 Now, this is not a bad thing, and I'm
16 not saying it in the way of a complaint, because it
17 illustrates something. The longest we've ever been out
18 without power before is two, three, four hours, maybe
19 overnight. So, that was what I think they were probably
20 prepared for. What happened here was catastrophic. And,
21 the thing, I'd say, if I had a complaint about this, the
22 only complaint was that, in the aftermath of all this, we
23 had full-page ads about "Yeah, we had a power outage, and
24 we called in people from all over the world to help us

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1 with that." I know they did that. And, we certainly
2 would have expected that, and we appreciate that. The
3 problem was, the utility company never admitted "We were
4 totally unprepared for something of this magnitude." Had
5 they admitted that, I think a lot of people would have
6 thought that "So, that's why they didn't get to us. They
7 just -- They were overwhelmed." They never said "We were
8 overwhelmed", they just said "We worked hard. We brought
9 people in." They're kind of making it like they "did a
10 great thing". Well, they did, but they never acknowledged
11 the level over -- that it was over their capability or
12 their planning.

13 Now, I used to be in a fairly high level
14 planning position in one of my army assignments, and we
15 plan for everything on a contingency. I was in the War
16 Plans branch in the headquarters in Europe, and we planned
17 for virtually everything that could happen in every city
18 in Europe, and some of them were disastrous circumstances.
19 Fortunately, that didn't happen. But I don't think that
20 the utility companies or most local agencies plan way, way
21 above what they have experienced to date. I think they go
22 a little bit above it, but this was way above clearly. I
23 think, now, what they need to do, and I'll put the
24 positive spin on this, they must plan for the ultimate

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1 disaster. They must plan for virtually all of the
2 utilities being wiped out or floods that they have never
3 experienced before, they have got to plan for all of these
4 contingencies that may never ever happen, but, if they do,
5 they have got to be prepared for them.

6 The communication, I have to echo what
7 everybody else has said before, the communication was
8 poor. On our little street, in our area, there were a
9 couple of lines that were down for a bit. A private
10 electrician came in and fixed one of them, another one was
11 cleared, and we never had a single police, fire, public
12 works, or utility company vehicle on those streets ever
13 the whole time. I asked all of my neighbors, I walked up
14 and down the street, talked to the neighbors, we gathered
15 out in the street a few times, and found that there had
16 been no vehicles to come around to notify anybody about
17 anything. I think that is a shortcoming. There needs to
18 be some kind of a plan that make sure that people
19 throughout the area have the feeling that somebody is
20 looking out for them. They don't need to be looking over
21 their shoulder, but looking out for them to some degree,
22 even if it's infrequent. An occasional public vehicle or
23 official vehicle of some type going by, somebody with a
24 bullhorn that was mentioned, those would all be very, very

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1 helpful things.

2 When I was out driving one of the days,
3 we went by Winnacunnet High School, all the lights were on
4 in the parking lot, they had power. They could have been
5 an emergency shelter. But we heard that the only, I had a
6 battery-powered radio, and we heard that the shelters were
7 in Portsmouth, 12 miles in one direction, and in Seabrook,
8 seven or eight miles, five or six miles in the other
9 direction. But Hampton, the largest community on the
10 Seacoast south of Portsmouth, although it had a high
11 school, with a huge gymnasium, it had power, they were
12 ready, willing and able to do it, the Red Cross, I believe
13 it was their responsibility, had made the decision not to
14 open that as an emergency shelter. We didn't know where
15 to go. I mean, we tried to stay warm at less than
16 40 degrees in the house. And, then, finally, it got to
17 the point where we had to go someplace. If there had been
18 a shelter, we would have gone there. There just wasn't
19 any. And, I wasn't about to drive 12 miles to Portsmouth
20 to go to a shelter, because I'd think "The power's
21 probably going to be on tomorrow", "tomorrow", "tomorrow",
22 "tomorrow", and that kept happening.

23 I think that the strategy of clearing
24 the main routes versus clusters, yes, I understand what

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1 the Chief said, and I don't disagree with that. I think
2 that's a good way. Obviously, you have to clear the main
3 routes, and you have to follow the distribution lines so
4 that the power is -- you follow it down to the end. But,
5 on the other hand, in the situation that I was in, we
6 looked out my back window and I saw that people on one
7 street, all the lights were on. They were on Saturday. I
8 looked down the other street and they were all on. Just a
9 block and a half from my house they were on. And, yet,
10 these three little streets in there were out. And, I
11 think that they had a plan of going after the big stuff,
12 but there wasn't a second level plan to come in and do a
13 quick follow-up, a cleanup, to make sure "we think we got
14 this, but maybe we didn't." I think what happened is that
15 people going by on Exeter Road, on Route 27, would look up
16 and say "that street is okay", "that street is okay", not
17 realizing that a little way down the street there was
18 another loop off of that that was totally black. And, I
19 think that was a shortcoming. That it's just an extra
20 level of follow-up that I think would do an awful lot to
21 fill in the gaps. And, I think there were a lot of little
22 gaps like that, not intentional, not expected. And, I
23 think the only way you would ever find out about it is to
24 have a situation like this happen where you get this

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1 lesson that you learn from it.

2 A couple other things that I think are
3 the "big picture" things. One, the status of the repair
4 was not known. We didn't know, from where I was, I might
5 have been on Mars for all I knew what was going on. There
6 was no -- no contact came to us. And, even your own
7 questionnaire that you're passing out here, "Well, did you
8 find out about what was happening on the television?"
9 "No, I had no electricity." "Did you find out on the
10 Internet?" "No, I had no electricity." "Did you find out
11 by telephone?" "No, I had no electricity." And,
12 remember, the old days, when the phone still worked when
13 the power was out, that's gone, because everybody now has
14 wireless phones in their house. And, that's, I'd say,
15 75 percent of the people in town probably have wireless
16 phones, in any community. So, they don't have power, when
17 the power goes out, there's no ring to the phone, there's
18 no dial-tone. There's no nothing in there, unless it's a
19 battery-operated base station. So, there was no way to
20 find that out.

21 And, a couple times when I did call from
22 a cellphone, and I was not going to stay on, by the way,
23 and go through -- go on the Internet and start wearing
24 down the battery on my cellphone, I wanted to keep it in

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1 case I needed it for an emergency. So, I made a couple of
2 calls now and then to the utility company, a couple of
3 e-mails that went out to people. And, when I called the
4 utility company, I got differing bits of information. I
5 got stuff, "oh, everything is going to be on within a
6 day." That was for the people that were around me, their
7 power came on on Saturday, but we were still another four
8 days. A lot of the info was not accurate. I think I got
9 better information in retrospect of what was out there
10 from my neighbors than I did from any official
11 communication channel. And, I'm not trying to fault them,
12 it's just that they never -- I don't think that anybody
13 ever anticipated that this would be the need. And, now,
14 we don't have that excuse, now we know how bad it can get.
15 It's worse than it's ever been before in recent memory.
16 So, I think we now know the level that it has to be geared
17 up to in order to handle the entire situation.

18 There is, as I mentioned, this second
19 level of effort. There is no mechanism in place, I don't
20 think, for a 100 percent check of what's on and what
21 isn't, in terms of the power being pack on or if it was
22 some other natural disaster, whether the gas lines are
23 out. And, thank goodness, the gas company didn't
24 experience this, all their stuff's underground. But, if

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1 it did, I think that each of the utilities need to have
2 some kind of a system, if they don't already have
3 something like that, that can give them the ability to
4 somehow check the details of 100 percent being on or not,
5 in a given area, a community, or whatever.

6 One thing that was a little bit -- oh,
7 by the way, the Emergency TV Network, you know, that
8 annoying buzz, buzz, buzz, this is the Gray -- new Gray,
9 Maine station, and this is our Emergency Network. I never
10 saw that used. If it wasn't used for this, what the hell
11 good is it, except for interfering with good TV shows? I
12 don't know, because it never -- it never was used. What
13 it's for? I mean, I think that's probably in your
14 bailiwick that, I don't know, I'm just asking the
15 question, kind of rhetorically, --

16 DIR. POPE: I'm sorry, but it actually
17 was used, and we were criticized for busting in on a
18 Patriots game.

19 MR. RICE: There was a Patriots game?

20 DIR. POPE: Some football game, yes,
21 exactly.

22 MR. RICE: Okay.

23 DIR. POPE: But we did use that system.

24 MR. RICE: Following the storm, --

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1 FROM THE FLOOR: Yes, but there was no
2 information on it.

3 MR. RICE: Following the storm, when the
4 bills came in, when the next bill came in, I was extremely
5 surprised, extremely surprised, that I had been without
6 power for 25 percent of the month or 20 percent of the
7 month, but my bill was about 25 percent higher than it had
8 been the previous month. Now, I know it was cold, but it
9 wasn't so cold that it more than made up for being without
10 power for almost a week, plus another 20 percent above
11 that. Something was wrong. And, I'm not going to sit
12 down and do a million pages of math and everything else
13 and try to figure out this and analyze that. I just was
14 shocked that my bill went up by 20 percent, when I was
15 without power for 20, 25 percent of the month, even if it
16 was cold.

17 After this was all over, I heard the
18 story about the gentleman who passed away because the
19 battery on his oxygen tank went out, and I think
20 everybody's heard of that. And, I was very concerned
21 whether -- about people that I will call the "vulnerable"
22 people in our community. There is no positive way of
23 making sure that we've got everybody. And, the one person
24 that you don't get, that you don't catch, that's in dire

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1 straits, that could be in serious trouble healthwise or
2 whatever, could be your relative and so forth. And, if
3 it's your relative that dies because there was no power,
4 whatever the ramifications of it were, that doesn't make
5 you happy. So, you've got to consider that anybody could
6 be the most vulnerable person in town. So, I started
7 looking into it. And, I got together with some friends in
8 the Rotary Club down in Hampton, and tried to determine
9 what it would take to completely put out a safety net that
10 would catch everyone. And, I came up with something, and
11 I thought I could share this, I think this is probably in
12 your bailiwick that I would like to share with you after
13 the meeting. But, basically, we found that it's such a
14 complex system, I think it's something that can be done,
15 but it's extremely complex. I'll point out an example.
16 Everybody's got some list of people they need to contact.
17 We've got 21 different social agencies that we could come
18 up with off the top of our head, just in Hampton, that
19 probably have lists of people that are on their
20 "vulnerable list". We've got seven churches. We've got
21 families and friends. We've got town records, such as the
22 elderly exemptions, etcetera, etcetera. But, then, all
23 those people have different needs. And, so, you've got to
24 figure out what their needs are, because what is an

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1 emergency in one situation is not an emergency in another.
2 Then, you've got fire, flood, hurricane, ice storm, all
3 the different situations that could come up could create
4 different combinations. So, once you identify who needs
5 what under what circumstances, you still have to
6 computerize that, because it's far too complex to keep
7 manual records of. Then, you have to overlay that on a
8 town map. And, it's got to be a scalable map, so you can
9 pick out every single structure and home in the town.
10 Then, you've got to be able to overlay that with all of
11 the utility company distribution lines, so that you can
12 tell what's being put back in and who is still in an
13 emergency state or not, and so forth.

14 We came up with a thing here, and I'll
15 just flash this by you. It's a very, very complex set of
16 stuff, and I'd like to share it with you afterwards, I
17 won't go into it any further right now. But I have a deep
18 concern that there isn't a plan in place, not that it
19 can't be developed, but it will be a difficult job to do,
20 but there needs to be a plan in place that will protect
21 the most vulnerable of our citizens. I don't want it to
22 be one of my relatives that is the person who runs into
23 deep distress or physical harm or death or anything like
24 that because there wasn't a plan in place that could have

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1 saved them.

2 And, so, with that, I think that there
3 were a couple of towns that we heard during the middle of
4 this that did an outstanding job, I have a friend that
5 lives over on Old State Road, in Hampton Falls, it's the
6 road that comes across the river there, the Taylor River,
7 and there's no pedestrian -- it's a pedestrian walkway,
8 but not a vehicle walkway. They're literally out in the
9 boonies. They had power back, and the fire department
10 came and knocked on their door, said -- and went down a
11 questionnaire and asked them what their problems might be,
12 and if they had or would have any emergency situations.
13 And, I thought that was great. And, they're out in the
14 boonies, and they had their power back on on Saturday.
15 Here, we're in the village of a very urban development,
16 and we've got 30 or 40 homes in there that went for
17 another four or five days afterwards and nobody ever came
18 to see us. Different communities have different
19 capabilities, they went after this different ways. And, I
20 think that one of the things that perhaps the Emergency
21 Management and the PUC, in concert, could do would be to
22 come up with some kind of a standardization of these
23 plans, at least the minimums that the towns -- all of the
24 towns would have to do. I think the Chief came up with

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1 some really excellent, excellent things that he had done.
2 And, they're just the same things that we discussed when
3 we were trying to put together this -- look at how to
4 protect people.

5 So, I hope that some of these things can
6 come to pass. Again, thank you very much for your time
7 being down here. I think the crews did a great job. I
8 think that the problem is probably in long range planning.
9 And, I hope that some emphasis will be put on that and
10 they'll be able to come up with some good solutions.
11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you. Tom
13 Richardson.

14 MR. RICHARDSON: Good evening.

15 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Good evening.

16 MR. RICHARDSON: My name is Tom
17 Richardson. And, I live in Durham. I'm a retired Fire
18 Captain, also a Master Electrician. I did a stint as the
19 Statewide Coordinator for the Amateur Radio Emergency
20 Service, so I have some familiarity with the Emergency
21 Operations Center in Concord. I also own and manage a
22 25-unit apartment building in Durham.

23 First off, I'd like to thank the many
24 dedicated citizens that I think have not been recognized

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1 for the huge amount of low level activity that went on to
2 help neighbors and so on, bringing hot meals to the
3 elderly and that sort of thing. University of New
4 Hampshire, for providing hot showers and hot food to
5 people in the Durham area. That was very nice, believe
6 me. I had some meals in the dining halls and it was
7 great. The line crews, which have been thanked before.
8 And, again, our own town was bailed out by Hydro-Quebec.
9 My only regret was that I don't speak French, so I had
10 trouble thanking them. And, a group that has gone
11 unrecognized tonight is Comcast. Comcast kept the
12 Internet service going in our town almost nonstop.
13 Internet was the method of communication in our community.
14 They did this by placing generators at the utility poles
15 that had their equipment on it. That was an excellent
16 program and should be strongly encouraged. See these
17 little generators chained to utility poles and powering
18 the equipment. That kept things going.

19 The issue with the electricity being out
20 for so long concerns me. My own apartment building, with
21 80 students, is on a city block in Durham with 400
22 students living in various buildings in that one block.
23 It is right on the main road, Madbury Road, if you know
24 Durham. And, yet, we had power -- And, Madbury Road had

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1 power the whole time, or almost the entire time. And,
2 yet, we had no power in all these buildings for four days,
3 because of a simple blown fuse. The damage was so minor
4 we could not even find a tree limb that had caused it, and
5 we had a blown fuse, and all of that inconvenience related
6 to that.

7 This leads me to believe that a much
8 better system, a better and faster system of damage
9 assessment is needed by the utility Company's, Public
10 Service in our own community, if they could not find and
11 repair a minor damage like that quickly. And, had we had
12 major damage, of course, we would have understood it.
13 This would allow them -- a better survey would allow them
14 to expedite priority areas that have minimal damage. And,
15 certainly, a city block with 400 people would be a
16 priority area in just about anybody's mind.

17 The Exeter Police Chief, and I think, if
18 you listen to only one person tonight, he's the one you
19 need to listen to. He had some excellent ideas. Used
20 electricians to survey their communities, and then relay
21 that information to the utility. First off, utility
22 companies have different rules. In Public Service area, a
23 licensed electrician like myself cannot do some of the
24 things that are allowed in the Unitil areas. That's

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1 probably foolish and should be perhaps looked at. But,
2 nevertheless, electricians, your ordinary, every-day
3 electrician who works on your house does not work on high
4 voltage power lines. I would never touch them. But I
5 understand them. I know how they work, I know the parts,
6 I know how to communicate effectively with Public Service
7 and talk to their people and what to tell them. And, it
8 would not take much effort at all, perhaps a half day
9 class, to teach electricians how to survey damage, do a
10 preliminary survey of damage, as the people in Kingston
11 did. And, give a report to the appropriate utility
12 company, and let them know that this neighborhood has ten
13 poles down or broken insulators, and this other
14 neighborhood has a blown fuse and no visible damage, that
15 sort of thing.

16 And, finally, relative to the utility
17 company, the power companies, I think you need to,
18 particularly the Utilities Commission, look at why is it
19 that we seem to have had more long-term outages in the
20 last five years? I don't remember these ever in the past.
21 It used to be that a long outage was two or three hours.
22 Now, a typical outage is two or three days, in many cases.
23 Durham has had at least a 24-hour outage I think every
24 year for three years now. And, why is this?

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1 Internet, I notice on your survey, when
2 you're asking people "how long was your phone and electric
3 out?", you did not ask "how long was your Internet out?"
4 High-speed Internet is critical. And, quite frankly, at
5 least in my world, it is far more important than the
6 old-fashioned hard wired telephone. In fact, in the
7 apartment buildings in Durham, hard wired telephones
8 literally have been ripped out of the buildings and done
9 away with. It does not exist anymore. It's an obsolete
10 service. It is certainly more -- Internet, obviously, is
11 certainly more important than ordinary phone service.
12 Cellphone systems must be kept up and running. Cellphones
13 are the way most people are doing business now. Yes, I
14 realize there are some people, particularly elderly, that
15 do not have them, and that's unfortunate, because it's
16 also changing rapidly. If anyone looks at the statistics
17 on the decline in hard wired telephones throughout the
18 United States, the numbers are very impressive. As people
19 move out of existing homes, into other homes, they are not
20 getting hard wired phones. And, that includes people in
21 my age bracket, not just the 20 something people.

22 And, public education for generator use.
23 As an electrician, I've hooked up many generator
24 connections, especially in the last several weeks. And,

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1 it's nonstop, every week I get a phone call from somebody.
2 And, I only do this work part-time, electrician work, and
3 I'm getting a call a week. The public is doing a number
4 of very dangerous things with generators. You hear all
5 the talk about carbon monoxide poisoning. The other issue
6 is how they are connecting them to the homes. The lack of
7 proper transfer switches, and the prevalence of the double
8 male cords. Those are the cords that have male prongs to
9 plug in the generator and the male prongs to plug into
10 some receptacle in the house, frequently a clothes dryer
11 or a kitchen range or something like that. Those are not
12 just illegal, but incredibly dangerous, both to the users
13 who have exposed prongs of electricity coming out of them
14 and to the utility company crews that may grab hold of a
15 wire and get electrocuted. Very few people realize that
16 the transformers out on the poles work backwards. If you
17 put 120 volts in from your home generator, 19,000 volts
18 goes down the street, and will certainly kill someone.
19 And, these safety issues need to be dealt with.

20 I happened to actually be in a Home
21 Depot a few weeks ago when I caught the clerk in the
22 Electrical Department teaching a customer how to make one
23 of these double male cords. I promptly -- I happen to
24 know and promptly called the manager of that department, a

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1 licensed electrician, and politely gave him hell. He said
2 he had instructed his people not to do that, although he
3 was not too convincing in his comments to me. I also
4 mentioned it to one of our -- one of our State Electrical
5 Inspectors, and he was almost incredulous, because he had
6 already sent out a letter back in December, he said
7 "December 14th", to all of the home supply stores telling
8 them not to teach people how to make double male cords,
9 because they're extremely dangerous and illegal. And, he
10 said he would be in touch with them. I don't know what
11 came of that, but I hope he jumped on them.

12 So, public education on all of that
13 generator use is very needed, very much needed, and way
14 beyond just the CO hazard. Related to using generators, I
15 think people need to realize that there are a number of
16 critical systems in a home that could be put on cords,
17 rather than hard wired, and particularly the heating
18 system. This is something I did for a number of people in
19 the -- during the week of the outage. You simply go to
20 the boiler system, put a regular cord on it, that plugs
21 into a receptacle, run it out through an extension cord to
22 a generator, and very quickly the house has a heating
23 system, which is the critical issue in most homes in the
24 winter. You notice all our major outages have all been in

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1 the winter. Of course, the same thing can be done with
2 the water pump.

3 And, finally, during this event I was
4 flat out busy keeping power generators going for my
5 apartment building and several neighbors and so on. On
6 Saturday of the outage, my wife and I went out looking for
7 gasoline. That was a trick. We spent three hours looking
8 around trying to find a gas station, and then spent an
9 hour in line at the gas station to get power -- to get
10 gasoline. The gas station was running on a generator that
11 somebody had gerry-rigged to keep the place going, which
12 we were thankful for. I didn't look to see how good or
13 bad the set-up was.

14 I think the State should seriously
15 consider mandating or otherwise encouraging the higher
16 volume gas stations to have auxiliary power, built-in,
17 automatic. These stations are amazingly expensive. One
18 built in our town recently, a basic gas station/market
19 type place, was \$2 million to build this. To add
20 substantial, fully automatic emergency power would cost
21 less than 5 percent of that, less than 5 percent added to
22 the cost. Why can't these places have that? It should be
23 strongly encouraged in some areas. And, with that, thank
24 you.

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1 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you. Renee
2 Weiland.

3 (No response)

4 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Kerri Singh.

5 MS. SINGH: Hi. My name is Kerri Singh.
6 I live at 4 Indian Trail, in Exeter, also known as
7 Pickpocket Woods, off of Pickpocket Road. And, we were
8 without power for eight and a half to nine days, and, even
9 after, how frustrated you are. I apologize, I was here
10 late for the meeting, so I did not get to hear your
11 comments. And, I know some of this is repetitive, but I
12 promised my kids that I'd tell our story today. When we
13 went out to see on Friday, we knew that our street was
14 bad. We saw the power lines. We knew we were one of the
15 last to get service. So, we were thinking days. When we
16 came back, and stayed at hotels, and had my kids uprooted
17 and went to friends' houses. And, finally, on Wednesday,
18 I went to the town office here and I said "is there any
19 word?" Because Unitil keeps telling me "by midnight
20 tonight", "by midnight tonight". And, so, he said "well,
21 I can't get word, but, you can talk to the Police Chief."
22 I went to the Police Chief, he called the special number,
23 he said "There's a truck there they just told me." I said
24 "I just came from there, there's no truck." "There's a
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1 truck there." "There's no truck." There were no trucks
2 at all.

3 I think that, along with the lack of
4 communication we got for the first five days, was worst
5 when we got inaccurate information. It was "the truck's
6 there", there's no truck. Then, it was "by midnight
7 tonight". I relied heavily on the Seacoast media groups,
8 because they were the only people that really returned my
9 calls, gave me accurate information, and basically said
10 they "didn't know", and that they would find out and call
11 me back. Along with the Police Chief here and some of the
12 firemen in Exeter.

13 Thursday there was still nothing there.
14 That's when we made signs on Thursday. And, miraculously,
15 Channel 9 showed up, and that was the first time I saw a
16 Unutil pickup truck was when the news crew came out and
17 Channel 9 was there. Unfortunately, that didn't follow
18 with a bucket truck.

19 Friday, let's see, we're still without
20 power, no electricity, no heat. My neighbors wouldn't
21 leave their houses, an elderly woman wouldn't leave her
22 house because she was in fear of looting. It was widely
23 known that our neighborhood had no electricity, no lights,
24 no power, most people couldn't by generators at that point

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1 or afraid to install them. And, so, the act of looting at
2 someone else's house is a very real possibility, even
3 though we were assured otherwise. There was no one to
4 come around really to check on the elderly.

5 Pipes had burst in our neighborhood.
6 And, then, let's see, Friday night we got word that there
7 was a truck coming out at about five clock to Pickpocket
8 Road. Ironically or not, it may have had to do with
9 something that the AP service picked up and CNN was
10 running on their website. I don't know, but, after this,
11 I was a little bit of a skeptic. And, then, finally, on
12 Saturday, about noontime, we got electricity and our heat
13 and water.

14 I think that to say "there wasn't a
15 plan" was pretty accurate. To say that, you know, in
16 schools, we -- in our workplaces, we have to do "worst
17 case scenario" planning all the time, regardless what that
18 is. And, it's startling to me that Unitil did not have a
19 plan. And, the woman said to me on the phone, "Well, we
20 have actually no way of communicating with the guys in the
21 truck to see actually if they're there at that time." By
22 the eighth day, by the ninth day, why wasn't middle
23 management or upper management out there helping those
24 guys in the trucks, communicating. They, obviously, have

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1 cellphones. If the guys didn't in the trucks have
2 cellphones, then upper management did. Why weren't they
3 following around, going back and communicating to customer
4 service, so that they gave us accurate information, and
5 not just the same old lines?

6 It's startling to realize that, although
7 we pay some of the highest rates in the country, there's
8 seven trucks for this service area, and not any kind of
9 backup, and who gets it, who doesn't get it. It's just
10 startling to me. Three months later I am still so
11 frustrated. That this costs, you know, a lot. And, I
12 wasn't alone, we weren't exorbitant, but it cost us well
13 over a thousand dollars, between the generator, the gas,
14 the hotel, food, the eating out. And, we were the ones
15 that could afford it. What about the people that couldn't
16 afford it?

17 So, to say that, in a full page ad, and
18 to pay that money for a full page ad, to say "We had some
19 problems, we know we did, and we're going to try better",
20 just wasn't good enough to us. I think that we deserve
21 more as a community. I think that, in a state like New
22 Hampshire, where our motto is "Live Free or Die", I didn't
23 think that we needed the Legislature to say to our public
24 utilities "You need to come up with an emergency response

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1 plan and work with the fire department and work with the
2 police department." When the police department had the
3 same information that I was given as a citizen, I knew
4 something was dangerously wrong. When I read in the
5 Seacoast media that they didn't even know that the
6 Seabrook Fire Department didn't have electricity or was
7 without power, I just don't trust what's going on. I
8 think that, not only does Unutil need to look at their
9 problems, but they need to come back to the community and
10 say "this is what we did step-by-step", not a full page
11 ad, not a media thing, but "this is what we're doing."
12 And, we, as citizens, need to get involved and develop and
13 help communicate the needs of the elderly or the needs of
14 the very young, then we can do that as a community. But
15 we need some answers, real answers, not a PR thing. And,
16 that's it. Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you. Annette
18 Pazzani.

19 MS. PAZZANI: I'm Annette Pazzani. I
20 live on Colonial Way, in Exeter. I have several
21 questions. The first is, you mentioned that a report is
22 going to be issued in September, how will that be
23 disseminated?

24 CHAIRMAN GETZ: It will be available on
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1 our website.

2 MS. PAZZANI: And, what if we don't have
3 Internet access?

4 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Then, well, it can be
5 made available to the town clerk's office. If you want to
6 give us your name and address, then we can get you a copy.

7 MS. PAZZANI: I might not be the only
8 one that doesn't have access to the Internet, that isn't
9 here, that isn't going to watch this replay. Why can't
10 something go out in our bills with your report in it? We
11 get a bill every month from Unitil. Why can't they
12 include your report in it?

13 CHAIRMAN GETZ: My expectation, ma'am,
14 would be the report would be something fairly substantial
15 that it would be expensive to mail to every customer in
16 the state.

17 MS. PAZZANI: Then, why not give us the
18 option, give us a notice in the bill, saying that we can
19 write you for it, send you a postage paid envelope?

20 CHAIRMAN GETZ: That's a very good idea.

21 MS. PAZZANI: Again, we're back to the
22 point of communication, which is very, very poor. If we
23 were a metropolitan area, we would not have been ignored
24 the way we've been ignored in this town. And, I will not

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1 discuss my feelings about the Exeter political system. As
2 far as the Emergency Alert System is concerned, I heard --
3 the only station I could get was 107.1, WERZ. I heard
4 Governor Lynch's communication on Friday and Saturday.
5 After that, any alert system, our Governor was absent. We
6 could have used his moral support those other days.

7 Now, I didn't get power back until
8 sometime on Tuesday. So, I was lucky, it was only five
9 days. I was also lucky I had a wood stove. But I'm also
10 a senior citizen. Nobody, there was nothing coming down
11 my block to say if anybody needed help, but that's another
12 point.

13 As far as Unitil is concerned, I have a
14 cellphone. I had no other phone. But any time my
15 cellphone was running down, I had to put on coat, put on
16 my boots, lift my garage door, get in my car, pull it out
17 so I can charge my cellphone. Not an easy thing to do
18 when you're 73. Anyway, I tried to get Unitil. Because
19 I'm dialing from a cellphone, and not my home phone, you
20 go on hold, you go on hold, and then you get disconnected.
21 Then, you start again. And, you go on hold and you go on
22 hold, and you get disconnected, and your cellphone is
23 running down. What was the reason that they couldn't
24 acknowledge that I wasn't calling from my own phone?

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1 Don't understand that.

2 As far as the electric bill is
3 concerned, I happen to keep records, so I know what I paid
4 last year at the same time, the year before the same time,
5 this year, I also keep records of the temperature. So, I
6 know why I used more one year than another. Very
7 interesting when I got my bill, I called a representative
8 and asked why it was so much higher than the previous
9 year? And, I get all this gobbledygook about, "once your
10 phone -- your utilities are off, it takes so much power to
11 come back up, as far as the heat is concerned." Very
12 interesting. In discussing this with her, she could also
13 tell me the date I turned on my decorative Christmas
14 lights. So, Unitil knows how much power is drawing into
15 my house, they must know how much power is drawing into my
16 neighborhood, into the whole area. And, then, we hear
17 they were unclear -- they didn't know who was out? If
18 they can tell me the day I turned on my Christmas lights,
19 they certainly know where power is drawing and in what
20 areas. And, I think a little bit of an explanation of
21 that should also be made to us.

22 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you. Jayne
23 Veilleux.

24 MS. VEILLEUX: Am I the last one?

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1 CHAIRMAN GETZ: I believe so.

2 MS. VEILLEUX: Whoo-hoo. Party on. All
3 right. I'm Jayne Veilleux. I live at Louisburg Circle,
4 in Exeter, it's off 111A. We are at the very end of 111A.
5 The next town is Brentwood, just so everybody knows. My
6 story is very similar to everybody else in the crowd.
7 Went out on Thursday night/Friday morning; 111A, everybody
8 got power, except for Louisburg Circle, on Sunday night.
9 So, I had called all weekend long: "Do you know", "Do you
10 know", "Do you know"; "No." There was no news from the
11 town, no news from Unitil, nobody. I called WMUR-TV
12 newsroom, because I couldn't get an undate on the radio.
13 I had no TV. WMUR said "Unitil is not reporting to us.
14 Just PSNH." I thought, "Wow, that's shocking." So, I had
15 to go back to every hour calling Unitil.

16 Finally, I think it was on Tuesday, I
17 got a supervisor; they were no help. But I got irritated
18 because they said "There were only 50 houses down." There
19 are 22 houses in my cul-de-sac alone. So, that meant that
20 we're pretty much it, which is not true, because friends
21 that live on Colonial Way were still down, there were a
22 lot more houses down. So, I called the PUC and said "Help
23 me out a little bit here. There are more than 50 houses
24 down. Unitil is giving wrong information, as far as I'm

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1 concerned." So, then, somebody nicely got involved and
2 emailed Unitil and said "your information is wrong." So,
3 finally, they got me somebody else at Unitil, a manager,
4 to get involved to help me out. So, back and forth,
5 "Midnight tonight", "Midnight tonight". I said "All
6 right." Woke up the next morning, no power.

7 So, Thursday I called this guy back,
8 because I had his private line, cellphone, whatever. I
9 said "You know, the Governor's coming at 5:00. Either I
10 hear back from you that I'm getting power or I'll be
11 chatting with the Governor, and I'm sure the TV will be
12 there." So, at 5:00 I hear back "Tonight by 11:00."
13 Amazingly, I did have power by 11:00.

14 My issue is, poor communication. Unitil
15 flipped the line one night. One day it was Concord's
16 report we had on the line, it wasn't Exeter area. So, you
17 know, we're thinking -- oh, I was getting reports from
18 people in Manchester that heard what we had out. So, I
19 think that Unitil didn't try. And, I am shocked that they
20 only have seven trucks, too. You know, maybe the guys
21 that got the \$300,000 should give back that money and buy
22 more trucks, you know? Maybe we should ask for it back.
23 I don't think that my rate should go up, because they
24 can't do their jobs. And, then, they kept saying to me on

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1 the phone "everybody needs to call us and let us know
2 you're out." I'm like, "I'm telling you that there are 22
3 of us out, not 1, but 22." And, they're like "we can't
4 help you unless everybody calls us." "Look, I can't tell
5 my neighbors to call you, because there's nobody here. We
6 have no power. I'm on my cellphone." So, they need to
7 know that we're out. And, they have to know when we're
8 out and when we're not. And, the guy said to me "I can
9 see on the grid that you're not out." I said "come and
10 meet me, I'll show you exactly where we're out." Every
11 day I said "I'll show you where it's out. I'll point to
12 you where it's out." And, they fixed it right where it
13 was out, but they wouldn't come, and left us from Sunday
14 until Thursday night. And, I blame Unitil for not fixing
15 that problem. So, they need to pay, and it's up to you
16 guys or somebody to make them.

17 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Thank you, ma'am.

18 MS. VEILLEUX: Yes.

19 CHAIRMAN GETZ: And, I think that really
20 does represent a theme, we've heard it a few times
21 tonight, we heard it in Peterborough last week as well.
22 And, I guess it was Mr. Rice who spoke about that before
23 about pockets of homes, whether it's 2, 3, 4, a dozen, or
24 a couple of dozen, in some cases, that the information

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1 wasn't getting back and forth between the -- between the
2 utility and the homeowners and the towns. And, I think
3 the issue of better patrolling certainly need to be
4 addressed, and that is a recurring theme, and it will
5 certainly be one of the issues that we're going to be
6 taking a really close look at to make sure that that's not
7 the case in the future. And, I appreciate you speaking
8 about that tonight.

9 The only other sheet I had was, and
10 maybe she left, was Renee Weiland?

11 (No response)

12 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Okay. I want to thank
13 everyone for coming out this evening. I think we learned
14 a lot. It was very helpful to us. And, again, I
15 certainly want to, you know, make clear that our report
16 will be available online. And, I think Ms. Pazzani has a
17 very good idea about how to make sure that folks who don't
18 have access to the Internet will have an opportunity to
19 get copies of the report. And, I want to thank everyone
20 for coming.

21 (Whereupon the hearing ended at 9:30
22 p.m.)

23

24

