

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

5
6 April 30, 2009 - 7:06 p.m.
7 Spaulding High School
8 130 Wakefield Street
9 Rochester, New Hampshire

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

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13 PRESENT: Chairman Thomas B. Getz, Presiding (NHPUC)
14 Commissioner Graham J. Morrison (NHPUC)

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16 ALSO PRESENT: Reptg. the New Hampshire PUC Staff:
17 Jan Quint, Consumer Affairs Division

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

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

2 CHAIRMAN GETZ: Okay. Good evening.
3 For the record, it's 7:03, and we'll open the public
4 statement hearing with respect to the December 2008 ice
5 storm. My name is Tom Getz. I'm the Chairman of the
6 Public Utilities Commission. And, on my left is
7 Commissioner Graham Morrison. Also here this evening from
8 the Public Utilities Commission is Jan Quint, from our
9 Consumer Affairs Division.

10 The public statement hearing this
11 evening is a joint effort of the Public Utilities
12 Commission and the Division of Homeland Security &
13 Emergency Management as part of our after action review of
14 the ice storm, which will review the preparedness and
15 response of both the public utilities and State government
16 to the ice storm that began on the evening of December 11,
17 affected approximately 60 percent of New Hampshire
18 customers at its peak, and resulting in some customers
19 going without service for as long as two weeks.

20 In very general terms, an after action
21 review is focused on analyzing what happened, why it
22 happened, and how things can be done better in the future.
23 And, in order to effectively analyze what happened, we are
24 systematically gathering data, and that effort began
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1 during the ice storm with the records and notes kept by
2 the various individuals involved in responding to the ice
3 storm.

4 In addition, the Public Utilities
5 Commission Staff has submitted over 400 data requests and
6 requests for documents to the utilities that were
7 involved, and the questions and answers are available on
8 our website, at www.puc.nh.gov. Some utilities have also
9 submitted information and reports on their own, which can
10 be found on our website and which will be part of our
11 review. And, we've also posted a comment form on our
12 website for public input, and over 150 people have
13 responded to that comment form to date. And, this is the
14 tenth and final of our public statement hearings that
15 we've been holding around the state as part of our
16 information-gathering effort. And, the intent of the
17 public statement hearings is to hear experiences that
18 individuals had during the ice storm and to gather
19 recommendations for corrective measures going forward.

20 The Division of Homeland Security &
21 Emergency Management has also been holding a series of
22 meetings with local public safety and community officials
23 around the state, and they have initiated a review process
24 for State agencies as well, which is well underway.

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1 And, as we collect what is obviously a
2 large amount of information, we will be analyzing the data
3 to identify issues that need attention and remediation.
4 It is not our intention to prejudge anything, but it has
5 been clear from the beginning that communication has been
6 a key issue and must be improved on many levels. And, the
7 Public Utilities Commission is conducting and facilitating
8 a review of utility communication practices, and that is
9 being conducted by the Director of our Safety Division,
10 and with the intent of identifying model practices that
11 should be adopted by all utilities prior to next winter.

12 We'll also be looking at particular
13 substantive issues, including the effect of tree-trimming
14 on customer outages, the status of mutual aid arrangements
15 among utilities, protocols for prioritizing restoration,
16 and decisions on allocating work crews. Depending on what
17 emerges, we can proceed in a number of directions,
18 including required changes to the practices and protocols,
19 institute rulemakings, or formal adjudicative processes to
20 address certain issues.

21 We have not reached any specific
22 conclusions at this point, and that's because our job is
23 to take an objective look at all of the facts, but we will
24 follow the information we receive wherever it leads. And,
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1 we intend to issue a report in September that will set
2 forth the results of the after action review and
3 recommendations for specific proceedings that may be
4 required as a follow-up.

5 At this time, it's an opportunity for
6 anyone who would like to speak on the record and make a
7 public comment?

8 (No verbal response)

9 CHAIRMAN GETZ: And, it's my observation
10 that there is no one who seeks to speak on the record.
11 It's 7:07 at the moment. And, I'll just note for the
12 record that I will stay for another 15 or 20 minutes, in
13 the event someone finds their way here and would like to
14 make a comment for the record. So, with that, I would
15 recess the public statement hearing. Thank you.

16 (Whereupon the hearing ended at 7:08
17 p.m.)

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