



Agenda Date: 5/29/13
Agenda Item: 6B

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
Board of Public Utilities
44 South Clinton Avenue, 9th Floor
Post Office Box 350
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0350
www.nj.gov/bpu/

RELIABILITY & SECURITY

IN THE MATTER OF THE BOARD'S REVIEW OF)
THE UTILITIES' RESPONSE TO HURRICANE SANDY) ORDER REQUIRING
)) ELECTRIC UTILITIES TO
)) IMPLEMENT
)) RECOMMENDATIONS
))
) DOCKET NO. EO12111050

Parties of Record:

Stefanie A. Brand, Esq., Director, New Jersey Division of Rate Counsel
Ralph LaRossa, Public Service Electric & Gas Co.
James Fakult, Jersey Central Power & Light Co.
Vince Maione, Atlantic City Electric Co.
William Longhi, Rockland Electric Co.

BY THE BOARD:

The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (Board or BPU) initiated this matter to investigate the adequacy of communications provided during Hurricane Sandy by Atlantic City Electric Company (ACE), Public Service Electric and Gas Company (PSE&G), Jersey Central Power & Light Company (JCP&L), and Rockland Electric Company (RECO) (collectively EDCs). By this Order, the Board directs action following further consideration of the Board's prior Order dated January 23, 2013 In the Matter of the Board's Review of the Utilities' Response to Hurricane Irene, Docket EO11090543. The Board will continue to review EDC responses to Major Events and may issue additional Orders to address communication, preparedness and response issues. Major Events include extreme weather events and other expected periods of extended service interruption.

BACKGROUND

As a result of Hurricane Sandy, over 2.9 million electric customers lost power. Entire communities were disrupted, and their emergency management capabilities were extended to the limit. Critical facilities activated emergency contingency plans, schools and businesses were

closed, family routines disrupted and government operations were severely impacted. Following this storm, the BPU held three public hearings designed to receive input regarding the EDCs' preparations and restoration performance relative to Hurricane Sandy. In addition, members of the public contacted the Board by letters, e-mails and phone calls. In reviewing all comments received, the Board found that there were repeated remarks regarding the EDCs' poor communications with local officials concerning estimated restoration times. This lack of clear communication was particularly troublesome to local officials working to manage the storm's aftermath, as it hindered providing timely and accurate information to residents who were anxious to make decisions about shelter, sustenance, and property security.

In its January 23, 2013 Order, the Board directed the EDCs to implement extensive recommendations regarding how they prepare and respond to major outage events such as Hurricane Sandy.

It is clear that communications is an area where improvement between the EDCs and government officials and the public is still needed. Board Staff convened a number of meetings with EDC representatives to develop additional communications recommendations beyond those spelled out in the Board's January 23, 2013 Order. In addition, Staff met individually with the EDCs to review in detail their outage restoration processes.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

An EDC's communications with its customers, the public and governmental officials is especially critical during major service interruptions. Clear and consistent messaging to the public and local officials before and after a storm is crucial to help in planning for the possibility of long duration outages. Additionally, providing regular restoration progress reports to the public drives better decision-making and reduces the stresses caused by uncertainty. With the availability of the Internet, mobile communications and social media, the external communication process is no longer restricted to office hours; frequent updates are expected. In addition, utilities must educate the public on the importance to the restoration process of customers reporting outages to assist the utilities in providing accurate restoration estimates.

The Board **HEREBY FINDS** that the following New Requirements are necessary to ensure continued provision of safe, proper and adequate service to help develop more effective communication among the EDCs, municipal officials, customers and the Board during extreme weather events and other expected periods of extended service interruption.

1. EDC Municipal web pages (created pursuant to BPU-24 on page 48-49 of the Board's January 23, 2013 Order) shall include (or link to) information describing why customer calls and outage reporting are critical to the restoration process, a description of the damage assessment process and any repair prioritization process used by the utility.
2. EDC Municipal web pages (created pursuant to BPU-24 on page 48-49 of the Board's January 23, 2013 Order) shall include (or link to) an Estimated Time of Restoration (ETR), including, posting a global ETR within 24 hours and an individual ETR within the time period specified in item 3 below. When determining how to post ETRs, the EDCs should consider any appropriate security concerns.

3. ETR for Individual Customers shall be developed by the EDCs and made available as follows; within 48 hours for outages projected to last up to 7 days, within 72 hours for outages projected to last 8 to 10 days and within 96 hours for outages projected to last over 10 days
4. Individual customers shall be able to obtain their ETR and the status of restoration efforts (e.g. damage assessed, crew assigned, crew on-site, repair complete) from the EDC Municipal web pages on the EDC's website. Additionally, this page shall include (or link to) a method to permit the customer to report an outage.
5. Within 24 hours after a weather event or other major event has exited the service territory, an EDC shall provide the following information to municipal officials, including daily updates: a Global ETR, the total number of customers out of service in the service territory, system wide number of substations out, system wide number of switching stations out, system wide number of circuits out, impact of flooding, and any other information useful to government in forming a common operating picture and situational awareness.
6. Within 48 hours after a weather event or other major event has exited the service territory, EDCs shall make available to municipal officials; the number of customers out of service in the municipality, the number of circuits that provide service to the municipality and are damaged, the number of tree cutting locations in the municipality, the number of utility poles damaged in the municipality, the number of damage locations on the circuits that provide service to the municipality, the number of confirmed street closures due to wires down, the number of circuits scheduled to be worked on that day that provide service to the municipality, with a note on the webpage that the crews working on the circuits may actually be working in another municipality, the number of customers in the municipality to be restored per day until the restoration is complete based upon the individual ETRs and a link so the customer can find their individual ETR. (for outages lasting over 7 days this info would be provided based upon the schedule above)
7. In addition to the information posted on EDC Municipal web pages, EDCs shall make information regarding the status of an outage available to customers via at least one of the following methods: SMS text messaging, through mobile app and/or through another push or messaging notification. Participation in receiving such notifications shall be available to customers on an opt-in basis. Information available shall include: notice of the global ETR, customer specific ETR, and notification when the utility has completed the repair which it believes will restore service to that customer. EDCs may also use such technology to permit customers to confirm that service has been restored.
8. EDCs shall submit a written report to Board Staff detailing the plans, including timetables for the specific technological advancements and upgrades to OMS and computerized support systems, workflow process and workforce changes for the technological upgrades necessary to capture and report damage and outages on a municipal basis.

Any information described above that is available to municipal officials, shall also be made available to applicable County, and State officials, including Emergency Management officials and Board Staff.

The Board has taken into consideration the findings and recommendations contained in the January 23, 2013 Board Order and the input received from the public. The actions ordered of the EDCs above are intended to improve the EDCs' communications relating to Major Events.

The Board **HEREBY FINDS** that the requirements detailed in this Order are necessary to ensure continued provision of safe, proper and adequate service, to help mitigate future outages, and to help develop more effective communication among the EDCs, municipal officials, customers and the Board during Major Events, including extreme weather events and other expected periods of extended service interruption.


The Board **HEREBY ORDERS** the EDCs to implement requirements 1- 8 within the time frames specified below.


Requirements 2-7 shall be completed within one year. Requirement 1 shall be completed within 30 days and Requirement 8 shall be completed within 60 days, noting the deadlines are from the effective date of this Order.

The effective date of this order is June 10, 2013.

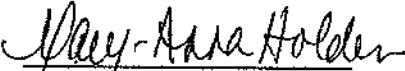
DATED: 5/29/13

BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES
BY:


ROBERT M. HANNA
PRESIDENT

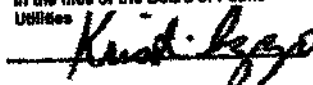

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I HEREBY CERTIFY that the within document is a true copy of the original in the files of the Board of Public Utilities



IN THE MATTER OF THE BOARD'S REVIEW OF THE UTILITIES'
RESPONSE TO HURRICANE SANDY

DOCKET NO. EO12111050

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