

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 6, 2020

Chairman Marissa P. Gillett
Connecticut Public Utilities Regulatory Authority
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
10 Franklin Square
New Britain, CT 06051

Dear Chairman Gillett:

As residents across the state reel from the effects of Tropical Storm Isaias, we write in support of your timely decision to open a comprehensive investigation into the preparation and planning by Eversource and United Illuminating (UI). We are exasperated and frustrated with facing the same delayed response by Connecticut utilities this year as we have endured during the October 2011 snowstorm, Hurricane Irene and Superstorm Sandy. This hurricane season will undoubtedly bring more storms to our cities and towns, so now more than ever, Connecticut residents have a right to know whether these companies are meeting the standards set by PURA for thoroughly preparing, and quickly responding to, a significant weather event.

In particular, we are concerned with reports that Eversource dramatically underestimated the resources it would need to respond to the storm. Those reports suggest that Eversource's "worst case" estimate for this storm undercounted the actual damage by half. Specifically, the company planned for an outage of between 125,000 and 380,000 customers, requiring 500 to 1,600 line crew to restore power within a week. As of August 5, 2020, more than 618,000 Eversource customers were without power, and the company had only 450 line crews and more than 250 tree crews working to restore power. UI's estimates, by contrast, were much more accurate. The modeling and estimates the companies used should be scrutinized to determine how future preparations and responses can be improved.

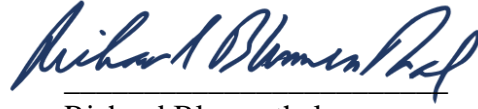
Additionally, we urge you to examine whether the additional rate increases for resilience and hardening the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority approved in the wake of the October 2011 Nor'easter were spent in the most effective manner. Connecticut already has some of the highest electricity rates in the country, and these rate increases constitute a substantial burden on many customers. Accordingly, Connecticut residents should know that these dollars are being well spent to harden the grid and to better prepare for the next storm.

We thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



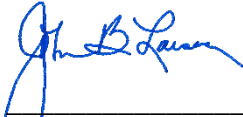
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