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6 NASSAU COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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8 RICHARD NICOLELLO

9 PRESIDING OFFICER

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11 SUPERSTORM SANDY REVIEW COMMITTEE

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13 LEGISLATOR DENISE FORD

14 CHAIR

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16

17 Theodore Roosevelt Building

18 1550 Franklin Avenue

19 Mineola, New York

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21

22 August 17, 2020

23 10:21 P.M.

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2 A P P E A R A N C E S:

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4 LEGISLATOR DENISE FORD

5 Chair

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7 LEGISLATOR STEVEN RHOADS

8 Vice Chair

9

10 LEGISLATOR HOWARD KOPEL

11

12 LEGISLATOR JAMES KENNEDY

13

14 LEGISLATOR DELIA DERIGGI-WHITTON

15 Ranking member

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17 LEGISLATOR DEBRA MULE

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19 LEGISLATOR JOSHUA LAFAZAN

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2 LEGISLATOR FORD: I would like to
3 call this committee to order. Good morning
4 everybody, and I will ask Legislator Kennedy
5 to lead us in the pledge of Allegiance.

6 I will ask the clerk to call the
7 roll.

8 MR. PULITZER: Thank you madam.
9 Legislator Debra Mule.

10 LEGISLATOR MULE: Here.

11 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Joshua
12 Lafazan.

13 LEGISLATOR LAFAZAN: Here.

14 MR. PULITZER: Ranking member
15 Delia DeRiggi-Whitton.

16 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:
17 Here.

18 MR. PULITZER: Legislator James
19 Kennedy.

20 LEGISLATOR KENNEDY: Here.

21 MR. PULITZER: Deputy Presiding
22 Officer Howard Kopel.

23 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: Here.

24 MR. PULITZER: Vice Chairman
25 Steven Rhoads.

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2 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Present.

3 MR. PULITZER: Chairwoman Denise
4 Ford.

5 LEGISLATOR FORD: Here.

6 MR. PULITZER: We have a quorum
7 ma'am.

8 LEGISLATOR FORD: Thank you very
9 much and welcome all of you to this hearing.
10 So, I'm not going to give an opening remark
11 because I think it's more important to listen
12 to PSE&G and the other testimonies from our
13 OEM, Nassau County PD and our DPW.

14 So gentlemen, I really appreciate
15 you coming here. Mr. Daniel Eichhorn and
16 Mr. Jeff Greenblatt. I had the wrong name and
17 I'm sorry.

18 Before we start, I would just like
19 to say publicly that I do want to extend my
20 gratitude to the workers that answered, that
21 went out into the field to help restore power
22 for the many hundreds of thousands of people
23 that were without power. I know that at times
24 it can be very dangerous and very time
25 consuming, very strenuous type of job. The

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2 fact that they worked 18 hours a day or 16
3 hours a day to be able to bring people back to
4 service, I know it was a long time for many
5 people to be without service, but I, as
6 somebody who had been a technician, I really
7 do want to recognize the work they did on
8 behalf of so many people here in the Nassau
9 County.

10 So, we know that, as I said, so
11 many people without service. It's something
12 that the storm came through. So we're going
13 to ask you to please let us know how you
14 prepared for the storm, what you did during
15 the storm and then of course after the storm.
16 What happened to let us know what you put into
17 place and hopefully where you felt that things
18 could have been better. Then we will follow
19 up with questions. Thank you.

20 MR. EICHHORN: Good morning
21 Chairperson Ford and distinguished members of
22 the committee. My name is Dan Eichhorn. I'm
23 the president and chief operating officer for
24 PSE&G Long Island.

25 Thank you for inviting me to speak

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2 before your committee on behalf of PSE&G Long
3 Island regarding our preparation and response
4 to tropical storm Isaias. I have five areas
5 that I will cover while we are here. The prep
6 that we performed, our restoration efforts,
7 some issues we encountered and then our next
8 steps. With me today is also our CIO, Zeeshan
9 Sheikh. Zeeshan is sitting back in the
10 audience.

11 So, really to start off we
12 recognize why we're here. When we experience
13 weather events and storm knocks out power it's
14 our responsibility to restore electricity in a
15 timely and safe manner. We know why we're
16 here. Unfortunately, the Isaias restoration
17 process did not meet our customers
18 expectations. It didn't meet your
19 expectations nor ours. It also put our hard
20 working, dedicated employees in a difficult
21 position. Thankfully, we are not alone and
22 PSE&G Long Island appreciates the support we
23 received during the Isaias recovery from
24 government officials, including state, county
25 and municipal officials we work with preparing

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2 and responding to major storm events.

3 Our mission includes providing our
4 customers with excellent customer service. So
5 the accuracy and timeliness of restoration
6 information our customer received during this
7 storm was not acceptable and it will be
8 improved. The issues our customers
9 experienced in contacting us during this storm
10 were also not acceptable and that also will be
11 addressed.

12 Superior work and dedication to
13 addressing the needs of our customers
14 especially when severe weather strikes has
15 been a hallmark of PSE&G Long Island. We are
16 not satisfied with our customers experiences
17 in the aftermath of Isaias, and we are
18 conducting our own comprehensive after-action
19 review to evaluate our preparedness and
20 restoration performance. Rest assured, we
21 have many of the same questions that this
22 committee has concerning the issues we and our
23 customers encountered during this storm. We
24 fully appreciate and respect your roles and
25 responsibilities. You are entitled to answers

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2 to your questions.

3 What I would hope is that you can
4 appreciate that our singular focus has been
5 restoring service to our customers. Now that
6 that has been accomplished, we have turned our
7 attention to getting answers to your
8 questions. Answers that PSE&G Long Island,
9 LIPA and you can have confidence that these
10 issues have been properly identified and
11 addressed. It is in everyone's best interest
12 that we be given the opportunity to accomplish
13 this now in a focused, methodical and
14 comprehensive manner and once we have the
15 answers we will provide them to you.

16 We will learn from this experience
17 and we will remain committed to being
18 recognized as providing best in class electric
19 reliability and storm response for your
20 constituents, our customers and for LIPA. A
21 little bit about our preparation.

22 Tropical storm Isaias was an
23 incredibly fast moving storm that moved across
24 our region in less than a day leaving a path
25 of danger we haven't seen since Superstorm

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2 Sandy. The wind driven nature of tropical
3 storm Isaias presented an unusual challenge.
4 This storm was unique with multiple layers of
5 nested outages. Nevertheless, our planning
6 and preparation was effective. Based on the
7 anticipated damage we secured mutual
8 assistance crews through the North Atlantic
9 Mutual Assistance Group. We refer to that as
10 NAMAG. PSE&G Long Island accepted any and all
11 resources made available throughout the North
12 Atlantic, the Great Lakes area and the Midwest
13 mutual aid groups.

14 In fact, PSE&G Long Island was the
15 first utility participating in NAMAG to
16 request crews and secured nearly 1600 line
17 workers based on requests for over 2,400 from
18 NAMAG and other sources in an environment
19 where utilities in New York and other states
20 were also competing for these resources.

21 These 1600 line workers, which is
22 more than three times we usually have to
23 respond, that's our crews and contractors that
24 are on the island, were ready for restoration
25 the day the storm hit. So we were prepared

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2 for a major event. We expected this to be a
3 major event. We continued to secure
4 additional resources during the storm period
5 based upon our projections. We ultimately
6 secured in excess of 4,000 line workers during
7 the storm's peak.

8 A robust communication engagement
9 plan was prepared and executed. Advisory
10 emails and updates were issued for the
11 duration of the storm and provided to local
12 media, news and news outlets. Our liaison
13 organization was activated to communicate and
14 coordinated with municipal leaders. Local
15 emergency operation centers were provided with
16 dedicated liaisons as requested. Our
17 municipal liaisons worked closely with elected
18 officials and municipal calls were conducted
19 to proactively inform elected leaders of storm
20 preparations and response efforts and to
21 respond to elected officials questions.

22 PSE&G Long Island's Make Safe to
23 Clear protocol was also activated and
24 coordinated closely with local towns and
25 villages on roadway debris removal issues.

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2 Proactive outreach was initiated to
3 life support equipment customers enrolled in
4 our critical care program. Communications
5 with these customers continued throughout the
6 storm with efforts aligned between the company
7 and local emergency operation centers to
8 perform required well visits for those life
9 support equipment customers with continuing
10 electrical outages.

11 Going to turn my comments now to
12 our restoration.

13 While the hardening measures to the
14 transmission and distribution system we
15 implemented post-Sandy mitigated the potential
16 severity of the impacts of this storm on
17 electric to our customers, tropical storm
18 Isaias impacted the backbone of our electric
19 system. Despite the issues we encountered,
20 our initial restoration efforts were not
21 impacted. The storm caused damage to
22 interconnection lines that bring power on to
23 the island, our transmission system and
24 substations as well as significant damage in
25 the neighborhoods.

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2 Our first priority in the storm is
3 to stabilize our infrastructure and ensure the
4 backbone of the system is restored. We relied
5 on a combination of our outage management
6 system, a system we called SCATA, that alerts
7 us to transmission and distribution systems
8 that trip out and our smart meters to verify
9 outages and direct our response. We responded
10 effectively to restoring interconnection
11 lines, major transmission lines, substations
12 and the major circuits running throughout the
13 island in the first 48 hours.

14 I'm just going to speak about some
15 of the issues that many of our customers
16 experienced.

17 Our storm restoration performance
18 was negatively impacted by the poor customer
19 communications and inaccurate estimated
20 restoration times. Our communications as the
21 storm landed our call center became overloaded
22 and failed. As did text messaging
23 functionality, our website and our customers
24 facing outage map. Actions taken to address
25 these issues were largely effective in

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2 bringing these systems back online in the
3 first 24 hours. However, intermittent
4 failures of all these digital communications
5 channels continued throughout the entire storm
6 restoration period impacting in the accuracy
7 of our estimated restoration times.

8 We are investigating the facts but
9 we clearly know that one of the key
10 contributors was the failure of our outage
11 management system to perform as designed at
12 the beginning of the storm and the instability
13 of this system throughout the entire storm
14 period.

15 Among the consequences, each day
16 manual processes were necessary to be executed
17 in order to filter through new outage
18 management system generated work that was not
19 included in the previous day's storm plan.
20 Additionally, some of this new work that
21 appeared each day was duplicative of existing
22 work and a significant effort was required
23 each morning to separate and rationalize the
24 legitimate new work from the duplicate work.
25 Followed by modifications to the storm work

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2 plan which ultimately resulted in customers
3 seeing us miss our estimated restoration
4 times. These changes to the storm work plan
5 resulted in frequent changes to certain
6 customer restoration times.

7 Restoration times were also
8 impacted by inaccurate estimates for the time
9 it would take for crews to restore power.
10 Particularly within the local neighborhoods.
11 Prior to extending restoration times to
12 reflect this pace of work efforts to increase
13 output through additional resources and other
14 measures were implemented. While these
15 actions resulted in improvement, given the
16 extent of the damage and the pace of the work
17 they were not enough to avoid individual
18 customer ETRs from being exceeded.

19 Essentially, in short, the amount
20 of new work that we saw coming in the days
21 after storm Isaias was material. In most
22 storms we expect it. When a storm of that
23 magnitude goes through the island it creates a
24 lot of damage. Could be leaning poles,
25 leaning trees, hanging branches. We expect a

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2 certain amount of work in the days following a
3 major storm. In this storm the work that we
4 saw was much more material. Could not be fit
5 into our work plan and had an impact on our
6 estimated restoration times.

7 As far as next steps, we realize
8 that extreme weather, as evidenced by topical
9 storm Isaias, is becoming more prevalent and
10 more unpredictable. We also fully appreciate
11 that customers expect better communication and
12 an overall better response. We are committed
13 to meeting these expectations and providing
14 best in class service. We are working
15 diligently to prepare for the next major
16 weather event and ensure that PSE&G Long
17 Island's response to this storm was an
18 anomaly.

19 As I mentioned, we are conducting a
20 thorough after-action review to determine what
21 went wrong and why. As I said at the outset,
22 I know you have questions and once we have
23 answers we will be sure to provide them to
24 you.

25 We also recognize that we're not

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2 alone. The findings, observations and
3 recommendations from various stakeholders
4 across New York State provide an opportunity
5 for implementing improvements for the benefit
6 our customers. Our senior leadership team and
7 all of our dedicated employees are committed
8 to cooperating and collaborating with this
9 committee of Nassau County as well as the
10 Public Service Commission, the Department of
11 Public Service, LIPA and other stakeholders to
12 develop recommendations that once implemented
13 will improve and enhance our storm response
14 and restoration process.

15 As frustrating as this storm was
16 for everyone, I can tell that you our
17 employees put their heart and soul into this
18 response.

19 I would like to thank all employees
20 who persevered throughout this storm and
21 maintained focus on restoring service
22 notwithstanding the issues we experienced. We
23 are a company dedicated to providing
24 exceptional customer service and this
25 experience is not in keeping with our

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2 expectations. We will learn from our
3 mistakes, correct them and do better. I would
4 like to thank you very much for your time.

5 LEGISLATOR FORD: Thank you very
6 much. I know we all have questions so we will
7 bounce around and everything. But for me,
8 moving up to the -- as we are getting prepared
9 for the storm season, like, during the spring
10 or winter or whatever, do your crews go out to
11 inspect where the power lines are, to like
12 take a look at like trees that you would maybe
13 judge that may have a possible impact on the
14 line should a storm occur? Do you do that on
15 a regular basis? A daily basis?

16 MR. EICHHORN: Yes, we do. We
17 have the tree trim program where we tree trim
18 the island over a four-year period. We do 25
19 percent of the Island each year. Our
20 transmission lines we do them on an annual
21 basis. We do helicopter flyovers. We have
22 drone flyovers and we make sure that our
23 transmission right of ways are clear. We also
24 have inspection programs where we perform
25 inspections in substations. We do pole

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2 inspections and pole replacements based on the
3 need.

4 LEGISLATOR FORD: I know that
5 aside from the trees that fell down there was
6 talk that some of the poles also may have
7 fallen as well. Especially those that were
8 like what we call double pole situations that
9 may have not been properly -- maybe they were
10 broken or something like that. Was that
11 something that was true or you didn't have
12 that happened at all?

13 MR. EICHHORN: I'm not aware of
14 poles themselves just falling over. I am
15 aware of trees that came down on lines and
16 brought poles down. There were a number of
17 poles that we had to replace during the
18 restoration efforts.

19 LEGISLATOR FORD: I don't want to
20 jump all over the place. Let me go to one of
21 the questions from -- while I get my thoughts
22 together on this. I guess when we look at
23 what happened before this storm, you said that
24 you do diligence in regard to looking at the
25 trees that would have the greatest impact on

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2 the power lines. With a storm like Isaias,
3 that as we saw how many trees that came down,
4 how many lines that came down and over 420,000
5 people were without power. A lot of them
6 basically for a week. I guess right after,
7 when you mobilized the crews, how many people
8 did you say that you had currently on standby
9 so that once the storm passed you were able to
10 mobilize these crews? How many did you say
11 that you had?

12 MR. EICHHORN: We had all of our
13 internal employees and contractors were in
14 full storm mode. We requested prior to the
15 storm 2500 off-island resources. We had
16 commitments for about 1600 and roughly about
17 1300 were on the island on Tuesday ready to
18 start restoration once the storm passed.

19 LEGISLATOR FORD: Then how many
20 did you have employees and contractors did you
21 say? I missed that.

22 MR. EICHHORN: Our line
23 department that would do most of the
24 restoration is roughly 200 employees and we
25 have 300 contract employees that work on the

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2 island continuously to help support our normal
3 operations. So, 500 internal employees and
4 then we were looking for 2500 external
5 employees that would do the same restoration
6 work.

7 LEGISLATOR FORD: You actually
8 had about 1800 line workers, correct?

9 MR. EICHHORN: That was at the
10 beginning of the storm. We continued to
11 request and accept additional line workers.
12 Ultimately, between our internal employees,
13 tree trim employees that we brought on from
14 off the island, as well additional high
15 voltage line workers, it was over 6,500 people
16 working on restoration efforts.

17 LEGISLATOR FORD: Then I guess
18 aside from that I guess one of the biggest
19 issues we have found was the communications.
20 That residents were calling in, as you had
21 said, that your call center had a failure. So
22 that I guess either people were not getting
23 their calls answered or they were getting busy
24 and the calls dropped. Before something like
25 this, do you test your communications to see

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2 when you have the most egregious situation?

3 Do you take a look to see how many calls like

4 your call center would be able to handle

5 during an emergency or do you just wait to see

6 when the emergency occurs?

7 MR. EICHHORN: No. We do a

8 certain amount of testing. We also do

9 hurricane drills. We have storm prep. We

10 have summer preparedness procedures that we

11 look at. So we go into the summer with a

12 bunch of activities that we perform. A bunch

13 of drills and a lot of testing of our

14 equipment.

15 LEGISLATOR FORD: So then where

16 do you think the failure was if you did this

17 type of testing? Do you test it like based on

18 like if everyone in Nassau County called you

19 or do you take like a certain percentage of

20 the number of residents or businesses that

21 would call after an outage?

22 MR. EICHHORN: That is a question

23 we have ourselves that's going to be a big

24 part of our after-action review. We know the

25 impact of what happened. Customers couldn't

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2 call us. They were getting busy signals. Our
3 digital channels didn't work and part of our
4 after-action review is to understand why
5 exactly that happened. What do we have to do
6 better in the future to test these systems
7 that we have and really take a look at our
8 preparation procedures as well as what
9 particularly happened in this event.

10 LEGISLATOR FORD: Then you also I
11 guess when you were talking about like even
12 with people who texted messaging or I guess
13 maybe emailing or was it just texting when we
14 do the app where people can report the
15 outages. I know that people like just reading
16 different articles and hearing from different
17 people they said that they texted and then all
18 of a sudden they'd get a response from you to
19 say that they're going to be repaired or this
20 is what's happening and then all of a sudden
21 the next day they wait, they text again, they
22 get a different message. It seems like maybe
23 the messages that you were sending out
24 text-wise when people texted were more of a
25 general response rather than an individual

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2 response. Do you think that that was the
3 case?

4 MR. EICHHORN: That's what we
5 have to look into. We know customers -- our
6 restoration times changed multiple times.
7 Sometimes that's the result of what we call
8 embedded outage. But we also feel some of the
9 issues that we had with the communications
10 systems at the start of the storm created some
11 of those multiple ETRs. But that's part of
12 what we really have to understand better and
13 do that after-action review so we can take
14 actions that are going to prevent it this the
15 future.

16 LEGISLATOR FORD: Then I know you
17 mentioned about the smart meters where you're
18 able to then take a look at who is out of
19 service at that time. Is there any way of
20 coupling that like if you see that my house, I
21 live on Ohio Avenue, you see my address is out
22 of service. The system will report that
23 myself and everyone else on my block is out of
24 service. Is there any way that perhaps you
25 can then take a look at that and work out a

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2 system so that a message can be generated to
3 me. Like even to my home phone or like maybe
4 do a reverse text to let me know that we know
5 that you're out of service. We're in your
6 area. We're hoping that maybe by Wednesday if
7 we are able to get there.

8 Rather than having the resident
9 trying to reach you that perhaps if you do a
10 reverse communication it may cut down on the
11 backlog of people trying to reach you. Or
12 even if you made a phone call, like generated
13 a call so that -- because it seemed like your
14 incoming was the problem not so much the
15 outgoing. So that if you have these meters
16 where you are able to identify people and
17 where they live that perhaps then you would be
18 able to then reach out to us, be more
19 proactive than reactive then letting us know
20 that you're aware that I have no service and
21 you're looking to make sure that we can get
22 back in service.

23 MR. EICHHORN: That will be a big
24 part of our after-action review. We did use
25 our smart meters in this event to really

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2 supplement our outage management system. We
3 were pinging meters. We can do that at any
4 time. If we suspect a customer is out of
5 service we are able to send a signal. If that
6 meter responds to us then we get confirmation
7 that it's in power. And that was something
8 that really was beneficial during this storm.

9 As I mentioned, some of the
10 communication issues, the IT issues, made it
11 difficult for us to distinguish what work in
12 our system was actual and what work was
13 duplicative. We used our smart meters to help
14 sort through that but it was a manual process
15 compared to in the past it would be more
16 automated.

17 LEGISLATOR FORD: Right. I think
18 that from what I gather like just reading some
19 things even in the papers that people because
20 they weren't getting a response. So that you
21 had people that were constantly texting you or
22 constantly calling you. It might have been
23 the same person who may have sent like maybe
24 ten or 20 messages. So maybe if you could
25 work out something so that you could cut down

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2 on that so it would be a better flow of -- so
3 that when people who are just making the
4 initial complaint. But sometimes if you could
5 like let them know before they reach you that
6 you're aware that they are out of service I
7 think that would give a level of confidence to
8 the residents knowing that you are aware that
9 they have no power.

10 MR. EICHHORN: Correct. I think
11 it's going to be one of our items that we'll
12 look at. I do think there's a great potential
13 there to use the smart meters to avoid
14 customers even having to call us at some point
15 in time.

16 LEGISLATOR FORD: Do you have a
17 disaster recovery plan? Do you have something
18 where you can set up like say if your
19 infrastructure was badly damaged, say the
20 storm came through at one of your central
21 locations -- we remember the blackout in the
22 northeast what was it, 14 years ago or
23 something like that, do you have a backup plan
24 for yourself? So that if something happens
25 you would be able to switch to something where

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2 you'll still be able to keep up your
3 communications so that you can respond to the
4 residents and the businesses?

5 MR. EICHHORN: We do. All of our
6 departments and all of our systems have we
7 call them business continuity plans. We have
8 plans if our system goes down, if a building
9 is without power or damaged, we have business
10 continuity plans that we would use to kick in
11 and provide the service to customers.

12 LEGISLATOR FORD: I have two
13 questions from one of the other legislators
14 that sent it in to us. He writes on Friday,
15 August 7 at 1:53 I received the following
16 email from PSE&G indicating that the vast
17 majority of work would be completed by
18 Saturday August 8th. Looking at the outage
19 map of my district alone there are hundreds of
20 outages. It is physically impossible to
21 repair the majority by Saturday. Why was the
22 information sent out when it could not
23 possibly have been correct and who made the
24 determination to send out this information?
25 This is from Legislator McKevitt.

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2 MR. EICHHORN: Sure. One of the
3 unique things with this storm was just the
4 amount of damage. We have work flow models
5 that we use when we are in a storm. We look
6 at the amount of work we are holding and we
7 project out and make an estimated restoration
8 time for customers. We then divide those
9 customers by the day and when we're going to
10 restore their power and we notify them of when
11 we'll restore their power.

12 In this storm, what we found is
13 when our crews were out working, instead of
14 finding one damaged location to restore a
15 neighborhood it was multiple damaged
16 locations. And those models that we were
17 using proved to be much more optimistic than
18 what our crews were seeing in this damage and
19 we were roughly getting about a third of the
20 work done that we had projected and what we
21 had accomplished in past storms.

22 Coupled with a constant influx of
23 new work. The days proceeding this storm we
24 got as much work on a Wednesday and a Thursday
25 as we would typically in a major storm. That

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2 was unprecedented. It was something that we
3 built into our forecast a certain amount of
4 work because we know that a hanging tree, a
5 hanging limb, a leaning tree could fall over
6 at any time. But the amount of new work that
7 was coming in was really unprecedented
8 compared to any other storm we had. And then
9 just the sheer volume of work that needed to
10 be done to restore each area was much greater
11 than past storms.

12 We did make adjustments in our
13 model. Every day we had more crews coming in
14 from out of state. We changed some of our
15 processes trying to make sure we were getting
16 the work out to people. They made
17 improvements but not enough to counter for the
18 two things, which was new work coming in then
19 in a typical storm it's nominal and we will
20 prioritize it with the day's work and we
21 typically can get it all done. In this case
22 it wasn't nominal and the restoration that we
23 were seeing was just so extensive our past
24 models really did not work.

25 LEGISLATOR FORD: You were saying

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2 that then I guess when you were giving this
3 information out like saying that people would
4 be restored by like Wednesday or Thursday it
5 basically was a model that you had set up
6 based on past occurrences with storms that you
7 would anticipate?

8 MR. EICHHORN: Correct.

9 LEGISLATOR FORD: When did you
10 then switch over I hope then to reaching out
11 to the linemen, the crews that were outside
12 working and asking them how much did they
13 accomplish and what were they seeing so that
14 you could then -- did you incorporate that
15 information into the model that you were then
16 looking at?

17 MR. EICHHORN: We did. Where
18 that had the biggest impact, we were pretty
19 much on our restoration schedule through
20 Thursday. We had restored many of the
21 transmission lines. Our substations were back
22 online. The interconnection lines were back.
23 We had 384 major circuits throughout the
24 island that were restored and they're
25 typically the lines that run on the major

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2 roads throughout the island. They were all
3 restored by about 4 p.m. on Thursday.

4 Where we really got into that area
5 where we started to find tremendous damage was
6 when we were in the neighborhoods. We call
7 then area outs and it could be anywhere from
8 ten customers to 500 customers. In those
9 areas that's where we started to hear back
10 from the crews that there was significant
11 damage. The time it was taking them even to
12 restore five customers on a dead end street
13 was significant. That they had multiple
14 locations of clearing trees, putting wires
15 back up in the air, replacing poles. And at
16 that point we already had set many of the
17 estimated restoration times for customers.

18 As I mentioned, we had more crews
19 coming in each day and we were doing work load
20 meetings to see how much we were completing.
21 We were doing those twice a day and probably
22 in the Friday, Saturday time frame we realized
23 that the amount of damage was not working with
24 our models and we adjusted from there.

25 LEGISLATOR FORD: My last

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2 question because I know that many people, one
3 of the big issues that a lot of people did
4 write to us about was that moving forward what
5 is the possibility of starting to move some of
6 our power lines underground so that we're not
7 subjected to these outages for long periods of
8 time? Considering that a lot of times the
9 reason why we are without power is tree limbs
10 are taking these lines down. Is that
11 something that PSE&G will consider and is
12 looking into?

13 MR. EICHHORN: Every time we run
14 a new line we look at the considerations of
15 whether that line should go underground or
16 overhead. We primarily are an overhead
17 utility where we would put the line overhead
18 unless there were certain circumstances where
19 we felt for liability, for esthetics that we
20 would put the line underground.

21 To start to bury all the lines is
22 something that would be extremely expensive
23 and would take many years, more like decades
24 to do. It's something that I think if
25 customers really wanted that it's something

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2 that we would look at, but it would be an
3 expensive proposition.

4 LEGISLATOR FORD: But I guess
5 maybe you could look at some of the areas
6 where they seem to have the most outages due
7 to the trees that it might be something
8 that -- so you could lessen the number of
9 people without service. It might be worth
10 looking into. I'm going to yield. Legislator
11 Rhoads.

12 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Thank you for
13 your presentation president Eichhorn. We
14 certainly appreciate you being here. Just a
15 couple of follow-up questions. I know that a
16 bunch of legislators have questions as well so
17 I will keep my questions brief.

18 PSEG's presence here on Long Island
19 was born out of really the failures during
20 Superstorm Sandy. Yet we seem to see many of
21 the same mistakes that were made during
22 Superstorm Sandy and the response duplicated
23 in the response here.

24 Coming in, obviously PSE&G Long
25 Island I'm sure one of the first things that

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2 you did is take a look at the Sandy response
3 to try and find things they did well, things
4 that they didn't do as well and to try and
5 plan for those. What did you view as being
6 the weaknesses of the prior response to
7 Superstorm Sandy and how did you try to make
8 the outcomes from -- I always hate to try and
9 pronounce this, you did well with it -- Isaias
10 different?

11 MR. EICHHORN: So, from 2014 we
12 have a very detailed storm response plan. We
13 have been extremely successful in past storms,
14 the nor'easters in 2019. We had four
15 nor'easters in the month. We've had 125,000
16 customer outages. I know it's difficult to
17 just accept this but we really feel this storm
18 was an anomaly. It's not the expectations we
19 have. It's not what we pride ourselves on.
20 We were prepared. The IT issues and system
21 issues that we had really had an impact on
22 many of the things that we discussed.

23 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I understand
24 that but I don't necessarily understand how we
25 would consider this storm to be an anomaly.

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2 We do sit on Long Island. We do periodically
3 receive hurricanes, receive tropical storms.
4 Obviously Superstorm Sandy was essentially a
5 superstorm, tropical storm slash level one
6 hurricane. So it's not unprecedented that we
7 would have a storm of this type and of this
8 magnitude. I'm struggling to understand why
9 it was that we had such what was perceived to
10 be a slow response and such poor communication
11 in response to this particular storm.

12 I think one of the most frustrating
13 things from the standpoint of a customer is
14 the fact you couldn't get accurate information
15 and you couldn't get timely information. So
16 it feels as though you are literally out there
17 on an island. You have no idea what's
18 happening. No way of being able to plan. And
19 then the little bit of information you get
20 from PSE&G turns out being wrong.

21 I know from my own standpoint we
22 received notifications that our power -- we
23 went out actually the day before the storm on
24 Monday night. There was a little thunderstorm
25 that knocked our power out. We were told

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2 power would be restored by five o'clock the
3 next morning. We were told it would restored
4 by Wednesday, then Friday, then Saturday, then
5 Sunday. Actually wound up for us being
6 restored on Thursday. But it's that
7 frustration that's really driving some of the
8 anger out there.

9 I know you said you are going to be
10 analyzing the system and ways that you can
11 improve but we've had since 2014 and you have
12 been here since 2014 working on your
13 communication system. What are you going to
14 do differently that's going to prevent a
15 failure of not only your text messaging
16 system, your online system and telephone
17 system as well. It was a trifecta of
18 disastrous communication at every level. And
19 then if you could get answers that information
20 was incorrect. What specific plan does PSE&G
21 have to address that in future storms? We are
22 actually early in hurricane season now.

23 MR. EICHHORN: Just to clarify, I
24 meant our response to the storm I think you
25 will find was an anomaly, not the storm

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2 itself. We agree we expect more storms and we
3 expect to be prepared. Part of our action,
4 after-action review is really to look at
5 that. Our digital channels have really been
6 adopted by our customers. We see as many
7 customers use those channels as they do call
8 us. We know the outcome, right, that they
9 weren't performing. What we really have to do
10 is understand why. We've taken interim
11 actions. We're monitoring our systems to make
12 sure they're not getting overloaded and we're
13 doing a deep dive after-action review to
14 understand exactly what occurred so that we
15 can fix the root cause of the problem.

16 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: How long do
17 you anticipate that after-action review taking
18 place? When is PSE&G going to have concrete
19 steps that they're taking to be able to
20 address some of the clear deficiencies that we
21 saw in the response here?

22 MR. EICHHORN: We are diligently
23 working on that. We're working 16 hours a day
24 trying to identify those root causes. It's
25 difficult to say exactly the time frame of

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2 them because we haven't identified the root
3 causes of the fixes as of yet. But we are
4 committed to making sure we get those changes
5 in as soon as possible.

6 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I understand
7 that but we're in a situation here as we said
8 we're in the middle of hurricane season now.
9 You could have the next major storm a week
10 from now, two weeks from now, a month from
11 now. We don't have the benefit of having time
12 to sort of learn on the fly here. I
13 understand this may take time and I understand
14 you can't give a clear time frame as to when
15 that's going to happen but I want to stress
16 the urgency behind identifying the problems,
17 fixing the problems to make sure this doesn't
18 happen again.

19 MR. EICHHORN: We understand that
20 urgency. The other thing that if a storm was
21 coming tomorrow we know what to expect now
22 internally. We would be staffed, we would be
23 implementing some of our business continuity
24 plans and we would know what to expect.

25 In this storm there were things we

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2 mentioned did not perform as expected. We
3 know going forward until those root cause
4 analysis after-action reports are completed we
5 will be operating with increased monitoring on
6 the system with the interim changes we've
7 already made to stabilize the system and we
8 will be implementing some of the manual
9 processes so we are ready in the short term
10 and more ready in the long term.

11 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: In terms
12 of -- I know that you have an aggressive tree
13 trimming program that takes place certainly
14 during the summers. Did the tree trimming
15 program at all benefit the response to this
16 particular storm?

17 MR. EICHHORN: We believe all the
18 work we've done over the last six years had a
19 great benefit in this storm. We have data
20 that shows in the year after we tree trim it's
21 about a 45 percent reduction in outages. That
22 as time goes on gets a little bit lower but it
23 has a significant benefit.

24 We also storm hardened about a
25 1,000 miles of the system. That was through

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2 FEMA funding that was granted after Superstorm
3 Sandy. And we have data that has similar
4 results. When we storm harden we tighten the
5 span of the wires. Shorter cross arms, more
6 sturdy poles, better hardware. And we see the
7 same thing in those storms. If a lot of that
8 work was not done and we didn't do the tree
9 trimming that we did we really believe
10 strongly that this storm would have had a much
11 bigger impact on the island and the number of
12 customers that lost power.

13 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Is there
14 going to be any changes as a result of the
15 storm to the tree trimming program?

16 MR. EICHHORN: That will be part
17 of our after-action review. We will look at
18 that amongst many other things.

19 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Having
20 communicated with other levels of government,
21 one of the frustrations in this response is
22 not only is it a question of power but it's a
23 question of inconvenience to residents that
24 the response from many of the town, even the
25 county, the townships in the county, was

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2 slower for example in clearing roadways
3 because of the Made Safe to Clear program.

4 So, my district lies entirety
5 within the Town of Hempstead. Town of
6 Hempstead was having difficulty as was
7 reported to me being able to get permission to
8 clear roadways. So we had residents that not
9 only didn't have power but depending on where
10 the particular tree was down had no way to get
11 in or out of their community or in and out of
12 their block or out of their development. What
13 were the failures in the Made Safe to Clear
14 program in your estimation and how are those
15 going to be remedied?

16 MR. EICHHORN: We will look at
17 that as part of our after-action review as
18 well. Just the sheer volume. Typically in a
19 storm we will use our on-the-ground employees
20 to do the Make Safe to Clear work and have
21 them work with public works and town and local
22 county officials to clear the roads.

23 In this storm we actually added
24 some of the off-island crews to that process.
25 In some areas I think it was very successful

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2 and in other areas people would have liked to
3 have had more crews. We are going to take a
4 look at that. It was a balance. The more
5 crews we put on the work to clear the roads
6 the fewer crews that we had to restore power.
7 But this storm was one of the first times that
8 we used line personnel coming from out of
9 state to team up with the municipal workers
10 and clear those roads.

11 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: What's
12 involved in Make Safe to Clear? I'm assuming
13 somebody has to go out, inspect the lines to
14 see whether it's live and remove the line
15 theoretically from whatever is entangling it.
16 Is that essentially what the Make Safe to
17 Clear program is?

18 MR. EICHHORN: Correct.

19 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: In your
20 estimation from this storm was it that
21 sufficient that you didn't have enough people
22 doing that?

23 MR. EICHHORN: I really have to
24 wait to do the review to have a better handle
25 on that.

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2 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: When you're
3 doing your after-action review that is
4 critically important not only from the power
5 restoration standpoint but, as I said,
6 residents were trapped on their blocks but
7 more importantly emergency vehicles couldn't
8 get access to them if there was a problem
9 because you couldn't make access to the
10 roadway.

11 Several more questions on that but
12 I'm going to move on because I know we're
13 limited on time.

14 In terms of identifying critical
15 care customers, what outreach efforts are made
16 by PSE&G to put people on that list? Because
17 I was receiving phone calls in my office from
18 individuals that were on oxygen, from
19 individuals that had motorized wheelchairs
20 that needed to be charge, individuals that for
21 a variety of medical reasons needed to have
22 their power restored. What kind of outreach
23 efforts are made to customers so that they can
24 get themselves on that list and to communicate
25 with customers in the event of an emergency to

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2 give them enhanced updates or information as
3 to when they can expect power to be restored?
4 Because it's critically important for them to
5 be able to plan for their own safety and
6 families when they have special needs.

7 MR. EICHHORN: We do have a
8 critical customer list. It's customers that
9 are on life support equipment. Prior to a
10 storm we will notify every one of those
11 customers about the storm. So, when a storm
12 is coming we will call them, let them know,
13 make arrangements, preparation in case they do
14 lose power they're prepared. After a storm we
15 look at every one of those customers who lost
16 power and we call them. If we don't reach
17 them after three calls we will make a wellness
18 visit or coordinate with local social services
19 to make a visit out there.

20 That information is available on
21 our website, and I would have to check as to
22 how often do we communicate the process and
23 the availability of that program. I don't
24 know that off the top of my head.

25 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Given the

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2 number of outages that there were and the
3 amount of repairs that had to be made, how
4 confident are you as we sit here today in the
5 integrity of the overall system to be able to
6 withstand another storm? Again, drawing on my
7 own personal experience, as I told you my
8 power went out on Monday night, was out until
9 Thursday night. But it went out again I
10 believe on Sunday for five hours. Then any
11 power went out again during a gust of wind
12 basically for 45 minutes yesterday. It seems
13 as though if we get another storm, I don't
14 know what repairs were made in my area but
15 what efforts are being undertaken to harden
16 those repairs? And do you believe the system
17 as it stands right now can withstand another
18 storm?

19 MR. EICHHORN: That's a wide
20 variety of questions. This storm clocked
21 winds at 75 miles-an-hour. Very damaging
22 storm. I do believe the system is back to its
23 original configuration. We do have follow-up
24 work which we have in every storm. Our focus
25 in a storm is to restore customers. Sometimes

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2 we will put things up temporarily. We will
3 make a note. We go back. Usually takes a
4 week or two weeks to make all permanent
5 repairs. But many of the repairs we make
6 during the storm are permanent as well.

7 I think the system is in good shape
8 to withstand the next storm. It really
9 depends on the characteristics of the storm.
10 Each storm has a little bit different
11 challenges. This storm was more wind. The
12 rains were relatively minor. The flooding was
13 minor. If you were to compare that to Sandy
14 one of the big challenges in Sandy was the
15 flooding and we raised all of our substations
16 in flooded areas. That was a great move.
17 Something that will protect the system. But
18 in this particular storm that really had no
19 benefit because this storm didn't bring the
20 flooding that Sandy did.

21 I do believe our system is in a
22 good position to withstand the next storm, but
23 with any storm we always would expect outages
24 somewhere.

25 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: In terms of

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2 critical infrastructure, what efforts does
3 PSE&G take to identify critical infrastructure
4 and how is your response different with
5 respect to that infrastructure?

6 MR. EICHHORN: Critical
7 infrastructure internally or critical --

8 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: For example,
9 Empire Hose Company Three on Merrick Avenue in
10 Merrick. Merrick was a community that was
11 heavily impacted by this particular storm. I
12 had reached out to PSE&G on three different
13 occasions because that firehouse was out of
14 power and at one point in time their generator
15 failed. So essentially that fire station is
16 dead in the water and that particular fire
17 station services all of basically Merrick
18 south of Sunrise Highway. Theoretically
19 couldn't even open up their doors, couldn't
20 charge their equipment.

21 What steps does PSE&G take to
22 identify places like that firehouse and try
23 and restore power as quickly as possible so
24 that they can get out and protect the
25 community?

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2 MR. EICHHORN: We have many
3 efforts that we do. We do have a critical
4 customer list. They are identified in our
5 system. They're broken into several
6 priorities. Some of the ones in the top
7 priority is what you would expect. Hospitals,
8 municipal buildings. The next tier down would
9 be nursing homes. Other facilities of that
10 nature. So we have multiple tiers.

11 What we really look to rely on is
12 having our municipal liaisons, having our
13 external government affairs groups work with
14 the local town officials to prioritize them.

15 We also have what we call the
16 municipal portal which allows any municipal
17 official that's registered to go in and see
18 the critical facilities in their town that are
19 impacted by the storm. They can prioritize
20 the critical facilities and we will take that
21 into our prioritization so that we prioritize,
22 align with the normal restoration process as
23 well as what our government officials are
24 asking us to prioritize.

25 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I have been

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2 an elected official now for five and a half
3 years. This is the first that I'm hearing
4 about our ability to have input into that
5 process. How do we actually access that?

6 MR. EICHHORN: We can get you
7 that information and we can train you and show
8 you how to get into that system.

9 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Please do.
10 If you can get us that information we would
11 like to get that done as quickly as we can.

12 Just two last questions and then
13 I'll move on and if there's time I will
14 follow-up at the end.

15 My understanding is Con Edison, for
16 example, has for customers that lost the
17 contents of their refrigerators during the
18 course of the storm, which given the
19 challenging times that we have now and given
20 the fact that so many people purchased
21 additional supplies with concerns about food
22 certainty as a result of COVID, wherein they
23 can get reimbursed for some of the food that
24 they lost. Does PSE&G have any plans to do
25 that for its customers here on Long Island?

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2 MR. EICHHORN: We are in
3 discussion with LIPA to have a policy
4 similar. That could have been resolved as we
5 are sitting here today but I don't have a date
6 on that. We are discussing it and working
7 through some of the details with LIPA on that.

8 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Can we
9 anticipate that there's going to be some sort
10 of program announced within the next week,
11 within the next two weeks? I know you just
12 said you are in the process of discussing
13 that. But is there some sort of time table
14 for when you can go out with the public --
15 they're spending the money now to replace what
16 they lost -- is there some idea as to when
17 they can have an expectation of being able to
18 get reimbursement?

19 MR. EICHHORN: I would say there
20 would be a decision sometime this week if not
21 sooner.

22 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Would that
23 come in the form of a bill credit or would
24 that come as an actual direct payment to
25 customers seeking reimbursement?

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2 MR. EICHHORN: I would have to
3 get the details on that. As I mentioned, it's
4 in discussion but as of the start of this
5 meeting it hasn't been resolved.

6 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: My final
7 question for this particular round. Will
8 there be some sort of bill credit for
9 customers with respect to the days that they
10 were out of power? For example, as part of
11 your base bill or base rent I guess for the
12 service, base local service, there's a per day
13 charge for that base level service. So for
14 the days that customers weren't provided that
15 service are they going to see some sort of
16 impact on their bills?

17 MR. EICHHORN: We have not had
18 that discussion to date. Obviously customers
19 pay by their usage. When they're out of power
20 they're not using power they wouldn't be
21 charged for anything there. But we have not
22 had discussions on a credit for the base fee.

23 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I know they
24 pay for their usage but there's also a basic
25 service fee on the delivering system charges

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2 based on I guess per day fee for operation.
3 It looks like it's 42 cents a day based on the
4 rates that are approved by the Public Service
5 Commission. That's specifically what I am
6 referring to. For the days that are lost will
7 there be any credit with respect to that? I
8 know if they're not using power they don't get
9 charged for it. But there is a specific basic
10 service charge which is a per day charge not
11 based on usage.

12 MR. EICHHORN: Correct. No, we
13 have not made any decisions on that as of
14 today.

15 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: When do you
16 anticipate the decisions would be made? Just
17 out of curiosity though, from a philosophical
18 standpoint how can you charge somebody for a
19 service that's not provided?

20 MR. EICHHORN: It's something
21 that we can look at as part of our
22 after-action review. But as we kind of
23 alluded to in my opening, many of us just
24 finished restoration last week. There's a lot
25 of things we want to look at and we can

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2 include that in our after-action review as
3 well.

4 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I
5 understand. I just hope you understand you
6 guys are the only game in town. That puts an
7 additional obligation on you to make sure you
8 get things right. And when things go wrong to
9 put in the work and put in the effort in
10 trying to make improvements to make it right.
11 It's not as though normal market forces apply
12 here where there are multiple choices and if I
13 don't like the service that you're providing I
14 can go to somebody else. I can't do that.
15 Just the reality.

16 So, we need you guys to step up to
17 the plate to really take a deep dive to use
18 your term into what went wrong here and what
19 you can do to make it right for customers not
20 only in response to this storm but in response
21 to future storms. I hope you understand that
22 obligation.

23 MR. EICHHORN: We understand.

24 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Thank you
25 Madam Chairwoman.

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2 LEGISLATOR FORD: Take a hard
3 look at that and make it a priority. A lot of
4 the people who lost their food probably have
5 been out of work because of coronavirus. That
6 stimulus check, that \$600 extra a week for
7 those unemployed is gone now. They're living
8 just basically day-to-day. A lot of people
9 don't have enough food. I urge you please at
10 least take a look at those that are having
11 problems paying their rent, trying to live
12 here and trying to make due and make them a
13 priority to try to get them -- at least give
14 them a check so that they can purchase their
15 food.

16 Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton.

17 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:
18 Thank you Madam Chair. Hi. I represent the
19 Glen Cove area, North Shore, which also was
20 hit pretty hard in this storm. From what I
21 understand with this storm it was very fast
22 moving. The average wind was approximately 35
23 miles-per-hour with gusts of 70 and we had
24 between two to three inches of rain. Is that
25 the statistics that you have as well?

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2 MR. EICHHORN: We had winds
3 clocked at McArthur Airport at 75 and also,
4 forget which airport, one of the New York City
5 airports, had winds in the same range.

6 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: But
7 the average winds from what I have been told
8 was around 35 miles-per-hour for the three
9 hours that this storm was in our area.

10 MR. EICHHORN: Sustained.

11 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:
12 Sustained winds of 35 miles-an-hour. Two
13 inches of rain, gusts to 75. I think we're
14 all up here saying this was not the big storm
15 that we're afraid of getting and the reaction
16 to it was much more difficult than we would
17 expect. We can't say, like Legislator Rhoads
18 said, that we're not going to have another one
19 or even a hurricane category one or anything
20 even bigger. We could have it in the next
21 couple of weeks.

22 To have a three-hour storm -- I was
23 actually outside for part of it. There were
24 some gusts and we did get some damage
25 definitely. I'm not mitigating the damage we

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2 received. But there could be much worse
3 coming and we just feel the reaction to this
4 one was extremely poor. Especially after the
5 anticipation of hearing that we were
6 anticipating this storm, we were ready for it.

7 I know we spent millions and
8 millions of dollars on tree trimming. We pay
9 like the third highest in the nation for our
10 energy and our electric. So, it's not only
11 that we expect more but we've been told to
12 expect more. That we were going to be able to
13 handle this type of thing. This is not a
14 hurricane. It wasn't close even to Superstorm
15 Sandy.

16 I just have a couple of
17 suggestions. I agree with everything that my
18 co-legislators discussed. When some of the
19 crews came from out of state we had a few stay
20 in a parking lot of North Shore High School
21 pretty much at least the whole day. I think
22 it was Wednesday possibly Thursday. They were
23 actually asking municipal people locally what
24 they should do or where -- they really had no
25 direction whatsoever.

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2 I really think you have to come up
3 with some plan as soon as they come across the
4 border you are in contact with them and they
5 know where to go and what to do. They also
6 have to be met by some local person. It
7 really delayed the repair time in my opinion
8 by days probably because we did see a number
9 of them. They weren't obvious. We saw them
10 in certain places. It wasn't even the crew
11 people's fault. They didn't know what to do
12 or where to go. I think that's something we
13 can figure out very quickly with
14 communications. You know they're coming.
15 They have to know where to go and someone has
16 to meet with them immediately so they can go
17 out and not even miss four or five hours.
18 That could be hundreds of homes.

19 My other point is, some of the
20 trucks it sounds like, our local trucks, are
21 not equipped to fix certain things. We had
22 some show up and then say we don't have this,
23 we don't have that. It seems like our local
24 trucks are not ready to do the work as
25 decently as the out of town trucks. Are you

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2 aware of that, that some of the trucks go to
3 research it and look at it and don't have any
4 equipment on there to fix the problem?

5 MR. EICHHORN: A lot of things
6 you mentioned we will look into in our
7 after-action review. Our process during the
8 storm is once all of our crews are assigned
9 work we send out people to survey the area and
10 they're not equipped and they're not expected
11 to be equipped to fix the problem. What
12 they're really doing is trying to identify the
13 type of wire, the pole size and the equipment
14 and really make it more efficient for the
15 crews that will follow-up.

16 So we have a certain number of
17 office people, engineering folks, who will go
18 out ahead of the job so that the crew's not
19 inefficient. Our focus in a storm is really
20 to keep the crews as efficient as possible.
21 If we can front run those jobs, identify the
22 material and have that ready for the crews it
23 will make the crews be able to do their work
24 faster.

25 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I

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2 think the frustration came in the fact that
3 those crews that were just basically
4 evaluating the damage were there four days
5 after the storm when people were desperate to
6 have their power turned on and then to only
7 find out that the crews couldn't repair it.

8 Just a couple of quick things.

9 Legislator Birnbaum mentioned in one of those
10 conference calls that we were on with the
11 elected and I will say that Kim Kaiman and a
12 number of them did a very good job. They were
13 messengers and they got beat up. So are we.
14 That's our role in this too.

15 So, I was coming home on Thursday
16 evening crossing over Glen Cove Road from the
17 Northern State, a pretty busy intersection,
18 and the light was out still. That was 48
19 hours plus after the storm. That's a
20 dangerous intersection. When we spoke on the
21 call we asked how do you go about prioritizing
22 traffic lights? We were told, I don't know
23 I'm if it's true or not, that you had no idea
24 what traffic lights were working and not
25 working based on your information. Is that

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2 true?

3 MR. EICHHORN: I would have to
4 look into that. Most traffic lights are on
5 those main circuits that I mentioned. So they
6 typically are prioritized and get back sooner
7 just by virtue of the circuit they're
8 connected to. I'd have to look into the
9 details in that specific case. It could have
10 been connected to a secondary line. I really
11 don't know. I'd have to look at those
12 details.

13 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I
14 think having a good way to trace traffic
15 lights is basic. Just talk about safety.

16 The other thing they said is that
17 they can't -- this is just from the call and I
18 don't want to get anyone in trouble -- they
19 said they couldn't really identify where the
20 traffic lights were looking at the grid. That
21 they would have to work with our DPW to try to
22 get a map to overlay. If you go on GPS coming
23 home you see where all the traffic lights
24 are. I don't see how a company that's
25 spending millions and millions of dollars in

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2 preparation for a storm you don't have the
3 basics like even as to where the traffic
4 lights are on a major roadway. It has to be
5 improved. We really expect it to be a higher
6 level with the amount that we're spending.

7 Glen Cove lost water because the
8 wells were also affected. They had no power.
9 We had a water crisis in the middle of all
10 this. It was just a major issue. I know that
11 there was an accident in someone's backyard in
12 Roslyn who still had a live wire four or five
13 days after the storm. These are just in my
14 district. I can imagine what everyone else
15 has.

16 We lost the phones. People were
17 calling they lost the phones. Then we had the
18 emails. Email went out on your system. How
19 does an email crash I don't know but it did.
20 Then we had the port which worked for a couple
21 of days but that also crashed. So all three
22 mechanisms crashed during the storm.

23 I almost believe like kind of what
24 Legislator Ford, to tell someone they're
25 getting their power back on Friday night at

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2 three or Friday afternoon at three and then
3 not have it come through is almost worse than
4 saying all right, we have your report we'll --
5 you know, almost worse to give a definite time
6 and not make it then to not give a definite
7 time in my opinion because then our
8 credibility, which was what I was depending
9 on, went down the tubes.

10 The last thing I want to also
11 piggyback on with my co-legislators is
12 reimbursing. I think it would be a good faith
13 effort for your company to reimburse our
14 customers for at least the food they lost. I
15 hope it's not going to be a very difficult
16 process. I know I don't keep my receipts from
17 King Kullen. I think it should be basically
18 maybe a like general good faith effort as to
19 what people lost. Everyone lost food. It
20 would be, I don't know, I think like the
21 frustration is really what is so difficult
22 right now. People have lost trust. And
23 again, this was not the big storm we're
24 worried about going forward. I think it would
25 be a good gesture. That's all I have. Thank

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2 you.

3 LEGISLATOR FORD: Legislator

4 Kopel.

5 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: Thank you

6 Madam Chair. Good morning Mr. Eichhorn.

7 People have been talking largely about what
8 happened during this storm and efforts to
9 restore matters. I'd like to focus just a
10 little bit on prevention going forward. It's
11 more important what happened happened and we
12 can learn from it. So, PSE&G is basically a
13 northeastern utility, right? The various
14 branches?

15 MR. EICHHORN: We operate mainly
16 in New Jersey.

17 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: New Jersey and
18 New York now and Long Island, right. So, when
19 you develop your planning procedures how is
20 this done? Who does it? Planning the storms.

21 MR. EICHHORN: We have an
22 emergency preparedness group that focuses on
23 it for the most part year round. We also have
24 what we call asset management team that looks
25 at best practices across the utility and

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2 identifies how frequently we should be
3 inspecting poles, what should our tree trim
4 standards be, how often do we trim and do
5 maintenance work in substations and the
6 trimming on transmission lines.

7 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: As you
8 mentioned quite early on in your presentation,
9 the storm seemed to be getting to be more
10 frequent and more severe. Wouldn't it be
11 useful at this point to maybe adopt on a large
12 scale some of the southeastern utility best
13 practices manual? They've been going through
14 this for many, many years and it seems like
15 they're dealing with it quite effectively.
16 Would that not be a good plan?

17 MR. EICHHORN: I'm not 100
18 percent sure what those procedures are.

19 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: That's my
20 point.

21 MR. EICHHORN: We look at the
22 best practices in the industry. We feel we
23 follow them. Our reliability on Long Island
24 has been greatly improved. I know this storm
25 lots of damage, but if you were to look

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2 outside of this our reliability was in the top
3 25 percent in the country. So, all the work
4 that we've done has made a tremendous
5 improvement on the day-to-day reliability.

6 And a storm of this nature, I know
7 this gets into some of the utility speak,
8 there's a lot of factors that play into the
9 amount of damage that occurs in the middle of
10 the summer when the trees have full leaves on
11 them and they're nice, big, healthy leaves,
12 they act as a sail. I'm sure you've seen
13 pictures of some of the size of the trees that
14 have come over. We can tree trim and clear
15 around the wires to where we call a box, but
16 when a tree that's 30 feet away from our wires
17 and it's 50 feet tall and it's on a customer's
18 property falls over that's something that's
19 tough to avoid.

20 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: I recognize
21 that as long as we have overhead wires and the
22 cost of burying them is prohibitive, it's
23 unrealistic certainly on an island-wide basis
24 I get that. But as long as we have trees, big
25 trees and storms and overhead wires we're

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2 going to have outages. I get that.

3 If you go down south what I've
4 noticed in my travels over the years is that
5 they've got overhead wires in many places
6 too. But what they also have are concrete
7 poles. In other words, if a tree comes down
8 it may knock a wire off a pole but it's not
9 going to knock down the pole and cause a
10 domino effect on a bunch of other wires and
11 poles.

12 Meanwhile, we seem to have a lot of
13 rickety, old wooden poles and sometimes the
14 double poles, which have been mentioned, which
15 are certainly prone to -- they're old and
16 decayed. Wood poles are going to decay
17 inevitably. Those are the kind of best
18 practices that I'm talking about. Are we
19 looking into different materials with better
20 foundation so that these poles don't fall
21 over?

22 MR. EICHHORN: So that will be
23 part of our after-action review. We have
24 considered those in the past. The poles that
25 we're using are much sturdier than the poles

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2 that have been used in the past. But we can
3 look at that as part of our after-action
4 review.

5 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: I would urge
6 you to consider, as I say, looking at what the
7 southeastern utilities, they face these storms
8 all the time in Florida, Texas and so forth,
9 in Louisiana, you know where it is.

10 Moving on a little bit to the
11 critical facilities which have been discussed
12 a bit. For facilities such as hospitals or
13 most of them do have backup generators but
14 other critical facilities don't. Some fire
15 stations may not. Some police stations may
16 not. Do you have any emergency generators, a
17 stock of those that you can rapidly distribute
18 to some of the most critical facilities and
19 should you have them if you don't?

20 MR. EICHHORN: We do have some
21 generators and we did use some of them.

22 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: Maybe not
23 enough?

24 MR. EICHHORN: For the damage in
25 this storm not enough.

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2 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: As you say,
3 they may be more severe. Will you look at
4 perhaps maybe enhancing that stockpile?

5 MR. EICHHORN: Yes, we can look
6 at that as part of our after-action review.

7 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: You mentioned
8 also the smart meters, which are a great
9 thing. What percentage of the meters that are
10 currently deployed are smart meters?

11 MR. EICHHORN: Almost 60
12 percent. We have about 625,000 smart meters
13 of 1.1 million customer.

14 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: What is your
15 anticipated schedule for going all smart
16 metered?

17 MR. EICHHORN: That program was a
18 four-year program. We're ahead of schedule.
19 It was supposed to be completed at the end of
20 2022, but it is also something that we will
21 look at as part of our after-action review.
22 It might be something that we make a decision
23 to speed that up to assist in an event like we
24 had.

25 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: Because

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2 obviously at that point you'll know who's out
3 and who's not. We understand that the
4 facilities are -- you're dependent upon maybe
5 Verizon or whatever phone facilities you use
6 as well and customers calling in and not
7 enough people maybe to handle the calls and so
8 forth. This would eliminate that issue,
9 wouldn't it? Or largely eliminate it?

10 MR. EICHHORN: It would
11 definitely be a help.

12 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: I would once
13 again urge that perhaps you look at that. All
14 these things obviously whatever we do is going
15 to factor into the new bills. That's how it
16 works, right? Into the your rate
17 calculations?

18 MR. EICHHORN: It does. LIPA is
19 a government-owned utility. There's no profit
20 base. So essentially --

21 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: Any
22 reimbursements that was mentioned by a number
23 of people and certainly the enhancement of
24 facilities those are all going to go into your
25 right base I would imagine, right?

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2 MR. EICHHORN: In general, the
3 FEMA hardening work that we did one advantage
4 LIPA has is it's government owned. It's
5 available for FEMA funding. Superstorm Sandy
6 much of the cost for restoration was paid for
7 and reimbursed by FEMA. And when we talk
8 about the hardening work we did that was a
9 \$730 million program that FEMA funded.

10 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: That was great
11 but this storm won't be eligible for that?
12 This storm and the aftermath as far as we
13 know, right?

14 MR. EICHHORN: I would have to
15 check on that. I thought this storm was
16 eligible for FEMA funding but I would have to
17 check.

18 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: You've got
19 some specialized state tax taxes which act as
20 a multiplier. Sort of like the gross receipts
21 tax. A special hidden state taxes that you've
22 got in the rates. Does that apply here?

23 MR. EICHHORN: I don't know
24 specifically what you're talking about. I can
25 get that information for you. Part of the

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2 bill includes taxes.

3 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: It's just that
4 the state taxes do tend I understand in these
5 case as I say act as multiplier and make
6 things more expensive. I think that's it.
7 Thank you.

8 LEGISLATOR FORD: Legislator
9 Mule.

10 LEGISLATOR MULE: Thank you Madam
11 Chair. I'm going to be piggybacking a bit on
12 what some of my colleagues have brought up. I
13 want to start out with the people who have
14 talked about having chronic outages. So not
15 just necessarily from this storm but we've
16 certainly been reading about and getting calls
17 and emails from constituents who feel that
18 they always get outages. So, I'm wondering
19 what it is that you can do to address those
20 issues?

21 We got a notice from a Hamilton
22 Park that was on the north shore. And then
23 certainly there are individuals who have
24 contacted us stating that this is just kind of
25 the last straw for them. Not that they can do

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2 anything about it. They feel that they're
3 always going out not just necessarily with a
4 storm. What can you do to harden the
5 structures around them so that they're not
6 subjected to chronic outages?

7 MR. EICHHORN: We do have several
8 programs that address that. We measure the
9 number of customers that have had four or more
10 extended outages over a rolling 12 month
11 period. When we identify those customers
12 we'll inspect the circuit, the area. We'll do
13 additional tree trimming. We'll look for any
14 damaged or worn equipment that we replace. We
15 have a program that we refer to as the Next
16 Outage program where we anticipate customer
17 maybe has three outages. Before they have
18 that fourth we will go out and do similar
19 activities. We inspect the lines. Do any
20 type of line mitigation. Additional tree
21 trimming. Looking for cross arms. Different
22 equipment that might be deteriorating but
23 hasn't failed to the point where it's caused
24 an outage yet. It's something that we look
25 at.

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2 We know it's frustrating when
3 customers lose their power multiple times.
4 That metric has actually greatly improved over
5 the last few years the number of customers who
6 have had multiple outages.

7 LEGISLATOR MULE: Is that
8 something that the customers need to report or
9 something that you are able to generate
10 yourself?

11 MR. EICHHORN: No, we generate
12 that ourselves.

13 LEGISLATOR MULE: If a customer
14 wanted to report that would they be able to?

15 MR. EICHHORN: Sure.

16 LEGISLATOR MULE: If they felt
17 hey, our power goes out a lot, who would they
18 contact? Customer service?

19 MR. EICHHORN: Yeah. They would
20 contact our customer service department.
21 We've had customers in the past call us and
22 tell us that they've had frequent outages and
23 we will do the same, inspect their area, look
24 at the records and look to make improvements
25 in their circuit.

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2 LEGISLATOR MULE: Moving on to
3 people who are the aged or the critically ill
4 people who rely on power for say oxygen or to
5 keep their medicines cool. That's a
6 necessity. You testified that outreach is
7 done for the people who you know about; is
8 that correct?

9 MR. EICHHORN: Correct.

10 LEGISLATOR MULE: Prior to the
11 storm and then after the storm?

12 MR. EICHHORN: Correct.

13 LEGISLATOR MULE: So, if people
14 are not on that list, again, how do they get
15 on? Do they have to contact? Do they have to
16 make that outreach?

17 MR. EICHHORN: There's a
18 process. It's on our website. They do have
19 to notify us. There's a couple of steps they
20 have to follow. It's a program that's been
21 reviewed and approved by LIPA and the DPS.
22 But there is a process that customers have to
23 follow to get on that list.

24 LEGISLATOR MULE: My final
25 question has to do with 911 calls. Was there

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2 ever -- do you have any notification or
3 knowledge that people were not able to make
4 911 calls or to get emergency services when
5 they needed it as a result of the power
6 outages?

7 MR. EICHHORN: I haven't heard
8 those issues. I don't have any knowledge of
9 that.

10 LEGISLATOR MULE: Thank you.

11 LEGISLATOR FORD: Legislator
12 Kennedy.

13 LEGISLATOR KENNEDY: Thank you
14 Madam Chairwoman. Good morning. Still is the
15 morning. Obviously today I think there have
16 been obviously problems that have been exposed
17 and I know that you're working on those. One
18 thing I'm curious is I know it seems there
19 were four, 500 fewer workers that you
20 requested. Do you think that had anything to
21 do with the virus that we are currently living
22 in or what do you attribute that to?

23 MR. EICHHORN: COVID-19 might
24 have had a small impact in the number of
25 workers that were willing to travel. I think

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2 the most impact was the storm came up the East
3 Coast. Many utilities were not releasing
4 employees because they wanted to see what the
5 impact was on their service territory. Many
6 states don't allow workers to leave until all
7 the utilities within that particular state
8 have restored their customers. So the bigger
9 impact really was the path of the storm and
10 the wide impact that it had.

11 We were fortunate, as I mentioned,
12 we were the first ones to request crews
13 through our North Atlantic Mutual Assistance
14 Group. If we weren't requesting those on
15 Sunday prior to the storm hitting it's a good
16 chance we would have never received them.
17 After the storm passed, many of the utilities
18 in our area had similar damage and similar
19 problems. So, a lot of the local utilities
20 were competing. There's a process that we go
21 through. You request the crews. There's
22 multiple utilities requesting them. So
23 there's a certain amount of crews that each
24 utility will get. We continued to increase
25 our request and as other utilities were

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2 releasing or the storm damage was cleaned up
3 we never turned away any crews that were
4 offered to us.

5 LEGISLATOR KENNEDY: Thank you.
6 Also the critical customer list, I had several
7 calls, and I'm sure everybody did, I'm
8 thinking of one phone call from a woman who is
9 86 years old. She came to my office. She had
10 lost Optimum service and she was without her
11 phone and also was unable to activate the
12 emergency button around her neck. She is a
13 woman who is capable of getting around. She
14 was 86 years old and lived alone. She had
15 certain issues she was concerned about.

16 I am curious, my first question,
17 about that critical customer list. How does
18 someone get on that? Are there certain health
19 guidelines that are followed? Couple of other
20 questions. But if you could tell me that that
21 would be great.

22 MR. EICHHORN: It's a life
23 support equipment list. Customers that are on
24 that list typically have a doctor
25 certification that they need to have certain

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2 medical equipment for life sustaining. They
3 submit the form to us. We go through a review
4 process. We approve and put them on the
5 list.

6 I think your question and a lot of
7 the questions we received in the storm is,
8 does that give customers priority? And we do
9 a lot of outreach for those customers. We let
10 them know ahead of time that a storm is coming
11 so they can plan. In a big storm like we
12 experienced those customers they're identified
13 and if we get to a point in the storm where we
14 are restoring all single customer housing we
15 would give priority to a customer who is on
16 life support equipment over a customer who's
17 not.

18 But we have an overall priority
19 that we manage to in a storm. So a hospital
20 and the critical customers that we talked
21 about earlier is what we're focused on. So
22 we're focused on stabilizing the system,
23 transmission lines. Those customers that are
24 on our critical customer list will get
25 priority but they will get priority when we

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2 are at that level of restoration.

3 LEGISLATOR KENNEDY: I would like
4 to see it extended. I know for a fact that my
5 mother when she had one of those around her
6 neck she actually fell in the garage and she
7 was able to activate it. If she hadn't been I
8 don't know what would have happened. In
9 instances like that, someone who is fairly
10 capable but someone who is old, someone who is
11 by themselves, someone who for whatever
12 reasons they have concerns and of course
13 they're going to be much more fearful in any
14 kind of situation like that. I would love to
15 see that extended to not just people who are
16 in critical care. People who are at risk is
17 basically what I'm talking about. Not just
18 older people but people who could be at risk
19 in a different way. However the guidelines I
20 think would be looked at again. Maybe
21 redefined. I think that would be tremendous
22 help to the many people that were affected.

23 MR. EICHHORN: Understood.

24 LEGISLATOR KENNEDY: Also, I was
25 wondering the inability of people to get

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2 through. Communications of course was an
3 issue. Is it PSEG's policy that people should
4 call 911 or -- it seemed like there was a
5 tremendous amount of people that reached out
6 to 911 which of course then could cause issues
7 with other life-threatening occurrences that
8 are happening elsewhere. I was just curious
9 what PSEG's policy was about that.

10 MR. EICHHORN: Our recommendation
11 if a customer saw a downed power line,
12 especially something that was sparking, we
13 want them to call us. And we also encourage
14 them to call 911. But if a customer just lost
15 power and there's no evidence of a wire down
16 and sparking we do not direct them to call
17 911.

18 LEGISLATOR KENNEDY: Also for the
19 critical customer list, which of course I
20 would prefer to see expanded, I think it would
21 be better if that were a specific number, a
22 specific line that was for those people who
23 are on that list. Is that something that you
24 think could be implemented?

25 MR. EICHHORN: We can take a look

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2 at that as part of our after-action review.

3 LEGISLATOR KENNEDY: One other
4 question. I know when repairing an area
5 that's down, do you have to shut off a grid in
6 order to go in?

7 MR. EICHHORN: Sometimes we will
8 take a circuit out for safety. It all depends
9 on the circumstances. What work needs to be
10 done. Sometimes there's two circuits on the
11 pole line and one needs to come out for our
12 workers to work safely on the other one.

13 LEGISLATOR KENNEDY: So I was
14 just wondering if it would be possible, like
15 it was said before, that someone lost power
16 and then a couple of days later they lost it
17 again for several hours, if that kind of thing
18 did happen would it be possible to notify
19 people who are going to be losing their power,
20 say you are going to be losing your power for
21 a few hours at this time? So people are not
22 alarmed and not concerned. Who are not then
23 calling. So if you know certain area, a
24 certain grid map area will be going down for a
25 certain amount of time those people could be

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2 informed so they can prepare and everything
3 would go smoothly.

4 MR. EICHHORN: Right. We can
5 take a look at that as well.

6 LEGISLATOR KENNEDY: Great.
7 Thank you. That's it for now.

8 LEGISLATOR FORD: Legislator
9 Lafazan.

10 LEGISLATOR LAFAZAN: Thank you
11 Madam Chair and thank you for coming to
12 testify today. I just want to draw a
13 distinction. The ire from this committee is
14 not directed at the thousands of workers, many
15 of whom are not from Long Island, who went out
16 in dangerous conditions. Quite frankly, the
17 ire from this committee is directed at the
18 management of the utility and that's an
19 important distinction.

20 Before I'm a legislator I'm a son
21 and family member. My home in Woodbury didn't
22 have power restored for almost seven days. I
23 slept in my car for several nights. So with
24 due respect, before we're legislators we're
25 also customers and I'm not a satisfied

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2 customer with all due respect.

3 First I want to talk about
4 seniors. Woodbury Gardens is in my district.
5 We had hundreds of seniors in perilous
6 conditions. We had seniors trapped upstairs
7 as they couldn't use electronic lifts. We had
8 seniors whose medication spoiled. We had
9 seniors who lacked anything but a land line.
10 My office staff called PSE&G. Seniors called
11 PSE&G. I called PSE&G. Nothing seemed to
12 happen until the media truck showed up on
13 Saturday.

14 So my question here is, what do you
15 say to seniors living in these communities and
16 will restoration be prioritized in these
17 communities going forward?

18 MR. EICHHORN: Yeah. Any time we
19 have an escalated job of that nature we do
20 have an escalations process. In this storm
21 there was a tremendous number of jobs being
22 escalated. But we do try to get our people
23 out there as soon as possible. So we do take
24 that input. It's part of the reason why we
25 have the robust external affairs group. We

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2 supplement that with about 30 municipal
3 liaisons. And our intent there is to really
4 get feedback on specific circumstances like
5 that so we can escalate them. I'd have to
6 look into that particular one to really know
7 the details behind it.

8 LEGISLATOR LAFAZAN: My ask is to
9 please look into this specific case at
10 Woodbury Gardens. Tuesday the storm hits.
11 Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday we're
12 told no action. No trucks. Nothing.
13 Saturday a cadre of media pulls into Woodbury
14 Gardens and all of a sudden within a few hours
15 power is restored. So the seniors are looking
16 at me and saying does PSE&G have to be shamed
17 into taking care of our most vulnerable.

18 So I ask you to please look into
19 the Woodbury Gardens because the escalation
20 from Tuesday to Saturday is pretty concerning
21 for seniors and I hope this takes action next
22 time.

23 I next want to talk about
24 preparedness. You had stated that 1600 line
25 workers were here. What time on Tuesday were

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2 those 1600 line workers physically here and
3 checked into their rooms on Long Island? What
4 time on Tuesday?

5 MR. EICHHORN: I would have to
6 get that information. They arrived at various
7 times. It was multiple companies. They were
8 coming from multiple states. Some as far away
9 as Florida. Throughout the day we have a
10 process where we check them in, we give them
11 material, we give them safety review, we set
12 them up in hotels. It was throughout the day
13 they started to arrive.

14 I believe it was 1600 we had
15 commitments on and roughly about 1300 were
16 here on Tuesday.

17 LEGISLATOR LAFAZAN: Sure. The
18 reason I would like to know and if you could
19 get back to me, if we knew the storm was
20 coming why wouldn't they be here on Monday
21 night checked into their rooms? I understand
22 logistically to coordinate that type of
23 response is difficult. Perhaps that will be
24 looked at in the report that you guys do.
25 Because if we knew a storm of this magnitude

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2 was coming and perhaps for the next one they
3 would all be checked in Monday night. So
4 instead of coming in Tuesday and then being
5 dispatched, they could be checked in Monday
6 night and be dispatched Tuesday after the
7 storm.

8 I know I went outside 5:30, six
9 o'clock. It was nice in Woodbury. Perhaps
10 they could have been dispatched then and had
11 all of Tuesday evening to work for these
12 crews. I would like to see that in the
13 report.

14 I want to talk about expedited
15 response for vulnerable customers. Legislator
16 Rose, Kennedy and Mule brought this up but I
17 want to talk about vulnerable customers. From
18 the thousands of calls our office took what
19 concerns me most are the stories that someone
20 finds themselves in a vulnerable state.
21 They're on a medical device that needs power.
22 They just had surgery, et cetera. They are
23 not on the critical customer list. They are
24 told by a PSE&G rep that, this is a quote,
25 they need to get a doctor's note to update

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2 their file to get placed on the list otherwise
3 it can't be changed.

4 I understand there's a protocol in
5 place to get on this list before a storm. But
6 emergencies happen. And with COVID, health
7 situations are more fluid than ever. My
8 question is, do you find this as a reasonable
9 protocol in the 21st century and in the age of
10 COVID?

11 MR. EICHHORN: We will definitely
12 be -- we received a lot of feedback on our
13 critical customer care program. We hear the
14 concerns. We will definitely be looking at
15 that as part of our after-action review.

16 LEGISLATOR LAFAZAN: Just from a
17 place of empathy, somebody loses their job or
18 somebody is in a financially difficult
19 position the last thing on their mind is am I
20 on the critical customer discuss list for
21 PSE&G. It's the last thing on their mind.

22 And then health situations happen
23 so they call my office and say Josh, I
24 literally had surgery yesterday. Or Josh, my
25 father is on life support or oxygen and

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2 they're not on the list. I, as the
3 legislator, can't certify them. I would sign
4 anything. If you want legislators to certify
5 that these situations are accurate we'll do
6 it. But there has to be a change because life
7 happens. The last thing on our constituents'
8 minds is are they on this list. So I
9 definitely would like to see that on the
10 report.

11 I want to talk about emergency
12 response systems. What is PSE&G's plan to
13 coordinate with Verizon and with local
14 emergency response systems, including the 911
15 system, to ensure that outages have the least
16 impact on those systems?

17 MR. EICHHORN: We will have to
18 take a look at that. We do coordinate with
19 Verizon and cable companies when there is pole
20 work that needs to be done. The communication
21 systems I would have to get back to you on
22 that.

23 LEGISLATOR LAFAZAN: I want to
24 talk about generators next. How many
25 generators does PSE&G have on hand?

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2 MR. EICHHORN: I don't have that
3 number.

4 LEGISLATOR LAFAZAN: If you can
5 get back to us. And the other question is,
6 are those generators -- you don't have a
7 number -- are those generators maintained and
8 placed at the ready in prestorm preparation?
9 And additionally, can you look to purchase
10 portable generators with FEMA funds for use in
11 emergencies going forward?

12 MR. EICHHORN: I'll have to get
13 back to you on that.

14 LEGISLATOR LAFAZAN: I think
15 those are important questions.

16 I want to talk about cell towers.
17 It's often inconvenient to lose power but it
18 can be exceptionally dangerous to not have
19 cell service in case of an emergency. So
20 thousands of my constituents couldn't make
21 phone calls from their homes because their
22 local cell towers died and had no power. They
23 literally walk across town to find free WiFi
24 from a Dunkin Donuts to message me on
25 Instagram. That is not crisis management.

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2 So, would you be open to working with the
3 telecom companies to install some generators
4 by some cell towers?

5 MR. EICHHORN: We are willing to
6 work with anybody. We want to make sure that
7 the infrastructure of Long Island is restored
8 as soon as possible. I think it's more of a
9 question for some of the phone companies. I
10 do believe that they are supposed to and
11 required to have backup generation for their
12 towers.

13 LEGISLATOR LAFAZAN: Because it
14 seems when it comes to -- I appreciate your
15 magnanimity in coming here. It seems that
16 there's finger pointing. The telecom
17 companies to PSE&G, the PSE&G to the telecom
18 companies. All the while the conversation
19 doesn't happen. So perhaps my office will
20 make outreach to local reps from PSE&G and the
21 telecom companies to have that conversation.
22 Because having somebody trapped in their home
23 and not being able to make calls whether it's
24 for a health situation or to a loved one is
25 unacceptable. I will be happy to take the

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2 lead on that and I look forward to contacting
3 your office to move that forward.

4 I want to talk about geographic
5 response. My district is northeast Nassau
6 County, Syosset, Woodbury, west to Roslyn,
7 north to Bayville everything in between. As I
8 said, I lost power for almost seven days in my
9 home. I understand that resources are
10 concentrated in certain areas for efficiency.
11 It seems that there wasn't a single truck on
12 the north shore for all of Wednesday and all
13 of Thursday. So can you speak about
14 geographic response in Nassau County and where
15 resources were concentrated?

16 MR. EICHHORN: Our restoration
17 process, and I mentioned this, at the high
18 level is to stabilize the backbones of the
19 system. Once we have that completed, we
20 essentially prioritize our work based on the
21 number of customers out per problem. If we
22 have a thousand customer outage that would be
23 our priority. We want to get our crews
24 working to restore the most amount of
25 customers in the beginning of the storm. And

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2 we essentially work our way down from there.
3 Some areas where you didn't see trucks were
4 areas where the customer account was likely
5 lower and it took us that long to get to that
6 level of the jobs.

7 LEGISLATOR LAFAZAN: Lastly, I
8 appreciate the time madam chair, many of my
9 colleagues have asked the same question but
10 this seems to be the question that we're
11 asking and we're not getting the answer we
12 want. Again, we appreciate the magnanimity,
13 the take accountability and to come here and
14 answer questions. But these words are hollow
15 without specific on-the-record assurances. So
16 what specific on-the-record assurances can you
17 give my colleagues and I that what transpired,
18 the communication blunders, the delayed
19 responses, the errors, I understand there will
20 be a comprehensive report and I look forward
21 to delve into that report, but what assurances
22 can you give us today on the record that what
23 happen won't happen again? Other than we're
24 going to look at it, what assurances are we
25 going to get?

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2 MR. EICHHORN: The assurance I
3 can give you is that we admit we were not
4 happy with our communication. We're not happy
5 with the impact it had on customers and your
6 constituents. It's not the level of service
7 we expect to provide and we're going to fix
8 it. We're going to do the after-action
9 review. We're going to make sure that things
10 are improved. So there's no hiding from the
11 issues. We take full responsibility for what
12 occurred. It wasn't what we expected to have
13 happened. I think we've performed well in
14 other storms and we really got to get to the
15 root cause of what happened here and make
16 those improvements. There's no denying it.
17 The restoration and the communications was
18 unacceptable.

19 LEGISLATOR LAFAZAN: Thank you
20 and I appreciate that. I studied crisis
21 response at Harvard. There's a two steps and
22 you've done the first which is to take
23 accountability. I appreciate that. The
24 second step is action. I ask in that report
25 that we have specific action items and

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2 assurances and look forward to reading that
3 report. Thank you Madam Chair.

4 LEGISLATOR FORD: You've heard
5 from all of us and soon we will open up.
6 There might be some people in the public that
7 may have questions and then hopefully we will
8 be finished with you.

9 I guess just to summarize and
10 looking at some the other comments that some
11 of the other legislators gave in regard to I
12 guess the response and when people were given
13 false hope to the fact that they were going to
14 be turned on after a certain amount of time
15 and they weren't. I think that the loss of
16 credibility that people had to PSE&G is very
17 paramount because of that. I guess sometimes
18 people don't understand, as you explained,
19 that you may have a crew go out to assess what
20 the damage is so that you can make a better
21 determination as to which crew will follow
22 through.

23 But then also then I guess
24 Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton had brought up
25 about the out-of-state workers and that some

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2 of them were like sitting, maybe waiting to go
3 someplace. I would hope that in the future
4 that you would then set up maybe like a grid
5 so that you would have -- that they would work
6 with the local people. That they would be
7 teamed up with crews that are already here.
8 But I guess we only have 200 or 500 linemen.
9 So that maybe you can utilize your management
10 so that they will then be in charge of a crew
11 and they will be out in the field with them
12 directing them to the proper neighborhoods
13 knowing where they have to go.

14 I guess if you come from Florida
15 some of the streets in the Long Island,
16 especially the north shore, are very windy and
17 end up in dead ends and whatever. So there
18 could be a lot of confusion and delay in the
19 restoration of service.

20 I think that when we talked about
21 even with the billing, that we hope that we
22 take a look at the billing as well for people
23 who are on balanced billing that they lost
24 service for so many days. And once again even
25 with the food and whatever type of assistance

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2 that you may be able to provide to the
3 residents that were hard hit.

4 The stress on our most vulnerable
5 population. In the old days despite power
6 outages the phones used to work. The phone
7 company had battery backup. The plain old
8 telephone service. People were still able to
9 communicate. I guess now with the changes in
10 the type of services that we're getting from
11 both Optimum and Verizon it is now power.
12 That if we lose power we're going to lose
13 service. I think that's something that we
14 need to have a dialogue with these companies
15 to find out how do we maintain it? How is it
16 that if somebody has a phone in their house,
17 not so much whether or not they have -- I
18 still have a land line, but it goes out when
19 Fios is not working. I think that that's
20 something that needs to be discussed amongst
21 all the communications. Because if we have
22 residents that, like Legislator Kennedy said,
23 his mother fell in the garage, if we have
24 somebody who can't reach you to let you know
25 or if they can't reach the outside world that

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2 is something that is very, very critical and
3 it has to have a priority.

4 I think communications, when we
5 look now at all of this, communications is the
6 most important aspect of what this response
7 was during the storm. After the storm.

8 So we look forward to your action
9 plan, and I'm hoping though that you
10 communicate quite effectively with everybody
11 so that hopefully, not to put a time frame,
12 but that maybe within a couple of weeks we'll
13 be able to have some idea of what your
14 responses would be in regard to this action
15 plan. Because we are getting very close to
16 September. Let's pray to God we don't have
17 anything -- I think Irene came on August
18 28th. We know that there could be storms
19 brewing right now.

20 But I would hope that we would try
21 to work faster on coming up with a plan so
22 that we know moving forward we can hope to
23 minimize the outages for our residents and
24 especially for our most vulnerable.

25 But I thank you very much for

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2 showing up. You came here to speak with us
3 and address our questions and our concerns and
4 we will be going after our communications
5 companies as well because I think that they
6 also need to answer to the public as well as
7 to what happened and where was the breakdown.
8 Especially with their cell towers.

9 While it's nice to have you go to
10 restore the power as fast as you can, it
11 really is, in my estimation, it is their
12 responsibility to make sure that they have
13 battery backup and they have enough storage so
14 that people do not lose their cell phone
15 service. That is something we all share
16 responsibility and we have to make sure
17 everybody lives up to what they are
18 responsible for.

19 At this time I don't know if there
20 is anyone in the public. Anyone in the
21 public? Yes ma'am. Would you like to come up
22 and state your name and address.

23 MS. PAULIS: Good afternoon
24 legislator and legislators. My name is Dr.
25 Cynthia Paulis. I live in Massapequa Park.

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2 I'm a long-term resident. I grew up there. I
3 was six years old when I moved there from
4 Merrick. I'm also a military physician
5 retired. We learned about drills. We learned
6 about preparation. I lived in Oklahoma. I
7 lived in Texas. I lived through tornados. I
8 lived through earthquakes in Japan. I lived
9 through tornados in Texas. We never lost
10 power. We had multiple power companies. We
11 had powers -- power was always underground.

12 I would like to share with you my
13 experience with your company so you understand
14 what I went through. And I'm just a fraction
15 of what some of the people have gone through
16 and some of the legislators have articulated
17 it so well.

18 It was 1:20 in the afternoon on
19 Tuesday. I was in my house and I heard an
20 explosion and all of a sudden power went out.
21 I said okay. We knew a storm was coming. But
22 I had faith because you had informed me the
23 day before and said we have this app and if
24 you lose power you contact this app. So I
25 said great. I put it on my phone. I was

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2 ready. I had faith in you. I had confidence
3 in you because I lost power for two and a half
4 weeks during Superstorm Sandy. It was
5 freezing cold. But I said this is the
6 summer. That's okay. I had faith in you.
7 Which failed.

8 So what happened is that my
9 neighbor started texting me and I looked and I
10 said what's going on? He said you have a live
11 wire on your roof that's sparking. I had just
12 put a new roof on a few years ago. I said oh
13 my God, we're going to have a fire. I ran out
14 and I saw this wire. It was sparking. It
15 went down the street. Immediately I started
16 contacting you. I couldn't get through by
17 phone. I tried texting you. That failed. I
18 called 911. I got a busy signal. I called
19 again and again. I called my neighbor. I
20 said Mark, keep trying to get through, I'm
21 trying to get the police.

22 I called the Seventh Precinct. I
23 told them where I was. I said look, this is
24 an emergency. There's a live wire in the
25 street. As I said, I'm a ER physician and I'm

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2 concerned about people's safety. What
3 happened is that the wires started bouncing
4 around because the wind started picking up.
5 This is the beginning of the storm.

6 Then the Seventh Precinct said
7 okay. I just wanted someone to cordon this
8 off so that nobody would get injured. They
9 never showed.

10 I called the fire department. The
11 fire department went sailing by my house. I
12 think there was another disaster down the
13 road. They didn't stop. Again I kept
14 trying. Again and again and again. And
15 fortunately, by the grace of God, this power
16 wire then eventually just went by the curb.
17 At that point the wind started picking up.
18 Branches started going. A chair literally, a
19 lawn chair, went by me. I said okay, I better
20 get in for my own safety. I said okay, it's
21 by the curb. We're just going to have to hope
22 by the grace of God it stays there.

23 I kept trying your company again
24 and again and again. Couldn't get through.
25 It kept saying the number's not working. I

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2 tried the app again and again. And this went
3 on and on and on. I said okay, you know
4 what? It's going to work out. Power will be
5 restored.

6 The next day, the next day, the
7 next day. And like Legislator Lafazan, I
8 slept in my car. That was fine. It had a
9 sunroof. I was able to plug in. I was able
10 to get my phone. I still kept trying to get a
11 hold of you.

12 I actually drove down to your
13 company in Seaford on Merrick Road. I said
14 surely there will be people there. Because we
15 have a lot of seniors in our community. We
16 have a lot of veterans and we have a lot of
17 people that are disabled. I was in a
18 wheelchair for two years before I got
19 reconstructed. Through good surgeons who
20 basically have helped me. And I live by
21 myself.

22 I have been one of those people
23 that you talked about here such as Legislator
24 Kennedy, who represents our district. We have
25 so many people that rely on you.

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2 You said we've got 1500 people, we
3 have 2,000 people. I have something on my
4 phone right now that talks about 4,000
5 workers. I'm like wow, this is great. Where
6 are they? You said they were on the north
7 shore. They weren't on the south shore.
8 Nobody saw a truck. We all kept saying where
9 are these people?

10 We understand there are problems.
11 But my wire wasn't brought down by a tree or a
12 limb because I've been through that already.
13 I already had a tree go through my house. It
14 went through my neighbors over the past
15 years. I really don't have anything that's
16 affecting that. But there were trees, not the
17 branches and I must say your company has done
18 a wonderful job trimming the trees and taking
19 care of the wires. The problem was these
20 trees they've been there since I was a child,
21 I'm 68 years old, they flipped and brought the
22 sidewalk up with them. That was a problem.

23 But the thing is nobody saw
24 anybody. It seemed there was no action. To
25 answer your question because you didn't seem

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2 to have the answers which was very troubling
3 to me to listen to this saying we'll get back
4 to you, we'll get back to you.

5 Madam legislator, you talked about
6 the poles. I have photos on my phone if you
7 would like to see. The poles they weren't
8 disturbed by the trees. They're literally
9 right angled. They snapped. And that was on
10 the south shore where trees were cut down.
11 There was nothing there but the pole snapped.
12 These are antiquated poles that have been
13 there since I was a kid. They do need to be
14 replaced. It's great to do the trimming of
15 trees and the wires but you got to replace the
16 pole. You got to be proactive.

17 This gentleman here, I can't see
18 your name, you had some wonderful points that
19 you brought up. I never heard about that
20 list. We have so many vulnerable people on
21 Long Island. They love Long Island. They
22 stay on Long Island. You're a monopoly and
23 that's a problem. You're the only game in
24 town. If we have competition, and I
25 understand Freeport and Rockville Centre have

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2 their own power companies and they said they
3 never lose power, my recommendation to this
4 legislators is that we need to decentralize.
5 This way you're just going to take care of
6 Massapequa Park or the Massapequas if they
7 lose power. So you have people that are
8 concentrating in that area.

9 I'm disturbed to hear that you
10 don't have generators and that you don't know
11 the amount of generators this is troublesome.

12 LEGISLATOR FORD: Doctor I hate
13 to but can you wrap it up soon?

14 MS. PAULIS: What I'm saying is
15 preparedness. Did you have power? I'm just
16 kind of curious just for own edification, did
17 you have power where you lived?

18 MR. EICHHORN: I did, yes.

19 MS. PAULIS: But you had so many
20 of these seniors who couldn't get into lifts.
21 I have a lift in my basement because I can't
22 do stairs. Stairs are very difficult for me
23 to do. We need to take care of our community
24 and that means preparedness. And I would like
25 to see your commitment that you're going to

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2 come back to this legislature and say okay,
3 this is what we're going to do now to fix
4 these problems. I think you, as the head of
5 the company, should go out to the communities
6 and talk and have town hall meetings and speak
7 to the people.

8 I have friends around Huntington 11
9 days. And your company -- the tree fell down
10 into their backyard and a wire -- and it
11 electrified the backyard. They were told not
12 to go in there. The fire department came
13 because there were two fires. Your company
14 came and literally dragged the tree into their
15 yard and left it there. This is an 85 foot
16 tree. These people are 80 years old. They
17 said well, it's their responsibility to take
18 it out. It wasn't their tree. It was the
19 next door neighbor's tree that was dragged
20 down and they sent me a video of the power men
21 bringing these trees down from an outside
22 company. They want to know what to do. I
23 said contact your legislator. Contact the
24 insurance company. I think the legislator is
25 the first way to go.

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2 But these are some of the things
3 you need come out to our community and listen
4 to. There are only 20 people that were
5 allowed in here but there are a lot of angry
6 people in the community. I want to see you
7 succeed and we want to see you work with our
8 community. Thank you.

9 LEGISLATOR FORD: Thanks for
10 coming down. Do we have any other speakers?
11 Yes sir.

12 MR. MCKENNA: My name is Kevin
13 McKenna. I am a Syosett resident and also the
14 founder of Town of Oyster Bay News on
15 Facebook. I appreciate the gentleman on the
16 right having the courtesy to turn around and
17 look at the prior resident speak. It's very
18 nice.

19 The point I want to make that is we
20 all realize that this storm was a terrible
21 storm. I happen to drive all over Long Island
22 during the day of the storm. You guys were
23 dealt a major, major blow with the amount of
24 trees that have come down. I drive Uber and I
25 saw every hamlet, especially in the Town of

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2 Oyster Bay if not Nassau County. But what I
3 want to get to is the communications.

4 With the technology today that's
5 available, having spent 25 years in the
6 technology field, do you even need customers
7 to call you and tell you that there is a power
8 outage?

9 MR. EICHHORN: We have multiple
10 systems to identify when customers are out.
11 An individual customer if they don't have a
12 smart meter we do need them to call us. But
13 anything that's a transmission line, a
14 substation, a major circuit on a road we have
15 a system that sends us an alert when the
16 circuits trip out. Be equivalent if you
17 tripped a breaker in your house, an alarm went
18 off in your kitchen, we have that system. The
19 big problems we know about. The smaller
20 individual customers we do rely on them right
21 now to call us and notify us that they lost
22 power.

23 MR. MCKENNA: So is it an
24 advantage for all these customers to call you
25 and crash your system? Is that an advantage?

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2 Do you need them to call you?

3 MR. EICHHORN: We need the
4 individual customers to call us. In the
5 beginning of this storm we knew most of the
6 major damage just from our other systems that
7 we had reporting. So customers at that time
8 did not necessarily need to call us.

9 MR. MCKENNA: My point is, I
10 compliment a lot of the legislators that had
11 to play customer service rep. But what I
12 don't understand, this is directed at Nassau
13 County, Nassau County has an Office of
14 Emergency Management and I went on the Office
15 of Emergency Management website and I cannot
16 understand what the purpose of the Office of
17 Emergency Management is.

18 And my question to you gentlemen
19 is, what support, what coordination, what
20 preparation did you make with the Office of
21 Emergency Management and the Town of Oyster
22 Bay and the Town of Hempstead, who has public
23 safety departments. I did not see, with all
24 the traffic lights that were down, I didn't
25 police departments at traffic lights. The

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2 Town of Oyster Bay spends almost \$2 million a
3 year on a public safety department. The Town
4 of Hempstead's probably larger than that. Did
5 you prepare with those three entities that I
6 just mentioned? Beforehand did you sit down
7 with them and coordinate what assistance they
8 were going to provide you in the event of a
9 catastrophe?

10 MR. EICHHORN: Yes. We have
11 multiple levels that we prepare. We place
12 individuals in the county EOCs. We do the
13 same for New York City in the Rockaways.

14 MR. MCKENNA: Sorry to interrupt
15 you. Could you be specific about what the
16 Office of Emergency Management of Nassau
17 County --

18 LEGISLATOR FORD: Mr. McKenna
19 redirect over to here.

20 MR. MCKENNA: Ms. Ford, could you
21 explain to us what the purpose of Emergency
22 Management is and how they assisted these
23 gentlemen? Could you explain that?

24 LEGISLATOR FORD: We are going to
25 have the commissioner of Office of Emergency

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2 Management speak after this. So you can
3 direct that question to him. We will have a
4 representative from the Nassau County Police
5 Department as well as our DPW. So those
6 questions that would pertain to the county's
7 response and coordination in all fairness --

8 MR. MCKENNA: When will that take
9 place?

10 LEGISLATOR FORD: Right after.

11 MR. MCKENNA: Fortunately for you
12 I will be gone.

13 LEGISLATOR FORD: If you want to
14 wait.

15 MR. MCKENNA: I can't. I have to
16 be somewhere. Lastly, I will just close up.
17 I'll end it right now. As I pulled into the
18 parking lot here, directly across the street,
19 on a side street across the street, when you
20 leave walk across the street and look at five
21 trees that are Nassau County trees that are on
22 top of your power lines across the street.
23 And I'd like to know at some point in time,
24 and I'm sure all the residents would, what is
25 Nassau County and the Town of Oyster Bay and

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2 the Town of Hempstead doing to help you?

3 Thank you very much.

4 LEGISLATOR FORD: Thank you very
5 much. We have just one last speaker. Mayor
6 Spinoso.

7 MS. SPINOSA: Thank you Madam
8 Chairman and thank you to the members of the
9 legislature. My name is Teresa Spinoso. I'm
10 the mayor of the Village of Massapequa Park.
11 Representing over 10,000 residents.

12 First, I want to thank Legislator
13 Kennedy, he's our representative, for all the
14 work he did and the assistance he gave us
15 during the storm Isaias. As was mentioned
16 before, we have elderly residents. Over 30
17 percent of our population are elderly people.
18 During the storm it was very difficult. We
19 had Whitewood Landing that was out without
20 power for several days. Thanks to the
21 intervention of representative Kennedy and Kim
22 Kaiman, who became our best friend throughout
23 that whole period, we were able to get the
24 power restored but it did take two days. Some
25 of those residents are over 80, 90 years old

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2 and it's very difficult for them and scary for
3 them to be alone and to be in the dark for
4 that amount of time.

5 The one frustration as a village
6 official was that the municipal hotline
7 basically was not in effect the entire week.
8 Was just a busy signal the whole week. I
9 understood that there was a complete crash of
10 the communication system.

11 Going forward, I think that all the
12 villages and towns should have one liaison
13 that's dedicated to them that can say mayor, I
14 have some good news and some bad news. This
15 Smith Street is going to be without power for
16 several days because of the downed trees.
17 Yes, we had extensive damage to our village.
18 Bordering the South Shore we're used to
19 storms. We lived through Sandy. Extreme
20 damage. Thankfully we didn't get the rain
21 that Sandy gave us so we didn't have the
22 flooding, which would have made the tree
23 situation much worse. We would have lost many
24 more trees. We had a lot of downed trees that
25 just pulled the power lines down and blocked

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2 many of the streets.

3 We have a lot of first responders
4 as well in our village, so it was very
5 difficult for those folks to get out and get
6 to work.

7 But going forward I would just
8 welcome all the ideas that were presented
9 today and wish you luck. I really hope that
10 you hear all of our concerns and address them
11 and we want to work with you as a village and
12 as a community to improve whatever we can.
13 Thank you very much.

14 LEGISLATOR FORD: Thank you
15 ma'am. One last question. Legislator Rhoads
16 one question, right?

17 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Just one last
18 question. Obviously in your opening statement
19 you said as a legislature we're entitled to
20 answers. I know that many of the questions
21 that we asked you could not answer because you
22 have to conduct your after-action review,
23 which is certainly understandable. In terms
24 of a time frame, do we think that that
25 after-action review, given the fact that we

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2 are in the middle of hurricane season right
3 now and that we could have a storm at any
4 point in time, is that after-action review
5 going to be done next week?

6 MR. EICHHORN: I can't give you
7 an exact date. I can tell you what we will do
8 as we identify the root causes and the fixes
9 we'll implement those immediately and we can
10 keep you up to date as to what we find as
11 opposed to making you wait months for a
12 report.

13 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: What I would
14 like to do is I'd love to, with the permission
15 of the chairwoman, I would love to have you
16 back once you've completed that after-action
17 review or substantially completed that
18 after-action review so we can get answers to
19 some of those questions. Some of which
20 weren't even asked just because of time and
21 I'm assuming that we can still submit
22 questions to you either via email or however.

23 What would be a good time for frame
24 for that to take place? Can we have you back
25 in three weeks? Can we have you back in a

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2 month? When do you think you're going to have
3 a lot of those answers?

4 MR. EICHHORN: We are more than
5 willing to come back and talk to the
6 committee. What I would just ask is let us go
7 back and get a feel for when would be the most
8 available time to come back so we do have
9 answers for you and substance and not coming
10 back saying that we're just continuing with an
11 after-action review.

12 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I appreciate
13 that but we know it's not going to be six
14 months from now, right?

15 MR. EICHHORN: No.

16 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: We think
17 within a month?

18 MR. EICHHORN: Like I said, it's
19 tough for me to say. A month doesn't sound
20 unreasonable but let me go back and we can get
21 you a date.

22 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Because our
23 concern is, look, we've all got residents that
24 we represent. Between all of us we represent,
25 the 19 of us, all of the residents, 1.4

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2 million residents of Nassau County, we could
3 have a problem next week and there are issues
4 that need to be addressed, that need to be
5 addressed quickly and we just can't have it
6 sit out there for any indefinite period of
7 time. So we take your suggestion in good
8 faith but we would hope that sooner rather
9 than later we can have you back here and get
10 answers to some of those questions and see
11 what the plan is after you have been able to
12 complete your after-action review.

13 MR. EICHHORN: Understood.

14 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Thank you Mr.
15 Eichhorn.

16 LEGISLATOR FORD: Thank you very
17 much for joining us. I just want to put a
18 note on the record that town of North
19 Hempstead Supervisor Judi Bosworth did send a
20 letter to us echoing a lot of the questions
21 and concerns that many of the legislators
22 had. I just want to let everyone know that
23 she did reach out and I'm sure she probably
24 reached out to you as well.

25 And then we did receive a lot of

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2 emails from representatives part of the
3 Hamilton Park Civic Association as well as
4 others.

5 But I thank you. We will be
6 following up on this action report and in the
7 mean time we will be in touch with your
8 liaisons that interact with us. They have
9 been helpful in the past. I look forward to
10 making sure that we keep in touch with them
11 following along to find any updates as to any
12 improvements that you may be putting in right
13 away would be very good for us to know.

14 But I thank you very much gentlemen
15 for joining us and answering our questions as
16 best as you can and let's just pray that we
17 don't have too many storms coming in the near
18 future. Thank you very much. Stay healthy
19 and stay safe.

20 MR. EICHHORN: Thank you.

21 LEGISLATOR FORD: In about three
22 minutes we will have our representatives from
23 OEM, Nassau County PD and DPW up here.

24 Good afternoon gentlemen. Thank
25 you very much for attending today. I guess

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2 we're going to start with the Nassau County
3 PD. From what I understand you don't have
4 prepared statements and that you're just open
5 to our questions, am I correct? Just identify
6 yourself for the record.

7 MR. LEAHY: Inspector William
8 Leahy. Currently assigned to the support
9 division working with OEM.

10 LEGISLATOR FORD: I guess you
11 heard the testimony. I'm sure that you were
12 here with PSE&G and some of the questions and
13 concerns that we had with PSE&G. And for me,
14 I think that one thing that stands out in my
15 mind is that I had received calls from --
16 during the storm and after the storm with the
17 number of downed trees that were blocking
18 roadways.

19 I know that I reached out to my
20 precinct in the hopes of trying to get
21 officers out there to help direct traffic
22 because they were major roadways and because
23 of the enormity of the storm and damage that
24 was done even the high level officers,
25 superior officers, out in the streets

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2 directing traffic and we seemed to have a lack
3 of personnel to be able to go out and stand by
4 these places.

5 So, I think, for me, when the storm
6 was coming did we prepare to bring in any
7 additional resources, if necessary, say in
8 regard to the fact that maybe intersections
9 didn't have power or trees may be blocking
10 major roadways to maybe post officers there to
11 direct traffic? Did we bring in any
12 additional officers above and beyond what was
13 on call?

14 MR. LEAHY: We follow our 120
15 hour coastal storm plan which we began to
16 evaluate on Friday as the storm came up and
17 worked its way up to coast. We take some
18 preemptive actions and then we look at our
19 coastal storm plan. We were fully staffed for
20 this event. We did see an increased volume of
21 calls beginning on Tuesday night through
22 Wednesday. That 48 period we had over 17,000
23 calls with a peak on Tuesday at 2 o'clock of
24 2,000 calls in an hour. A large majority of
25 those storm-related calls. TSL, traffic

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2 lights out, wires and trees down including
3 well checks. We do evaluate those.

4 We work with the officers to
5 evaluate those. If we do need to bring in
6 extra people we do shift and pull people out
7 of nonpatrol functions at that point. So we
8 will utilize extra officers that will go out
9 and assist and evaluate those things. It's
10 constant shift as those calls come in and
11 prioritized we move personnel.

12 LEGISLATOR FORD: Did it generate
13 like bringing any officers in on overtime in
14 response to this or did you just work with
15 what was on staff?

16 MR. LEAHY: That information I
17 don't have in front of me but I can get back
18 to you with that.

19 LEGISLATOR FORD: I appreciate
20 it. I know this was an enormous event. As
21 short lived as it was it really did a lot of
22 damage.

23 We heard about I guess even with
24 the 911 calls that people I guess were getting
25 busy signals. What is the plan moving

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2 forward? To me, nothing is more aggravating
3 and unsettling actually when somebody is
4 trying to call 911. I know that you were
5 overwhelmed because many people who could not
6 get through to PSE&G were dialing 911 in order
7 to report downed wires, maybe the trees or
8 whatever. People had trees that went into
9 their homes so the concern was there. But
10 moving forward what is the plan?

11 Because we saw that even with PSE&G
12 could not handle the influx of calls that they
13 had. What about us? We have to have
14 something so that the worst case scenario I
15 would think we need to take a look at the
16 response this past when it happened and how
17 many calls you got and maybe to improve the
18 system or build upon the system so they can do
19 maybe 20 percent more than what you received
20 at the high point. Any thoughts on that?

21 MR. LEAHY: Yes. We can
22 certainly evaluate that. We will continue to
23 evaluate after every storm we look at it after
24 action. We see what we can do. We do have a
25 plan for some surge but with this type of

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2 event and the catastrophic failure from the
3 PSE&G lines that was something we hadn't
4 experienced before. We do put them into the
5 queue. We answer all the calls that we can
6 eventually that are still there and we move
7 forward and categorize those. We do answer
8 the calls that we get.

9 LEGISLATOR FORD: Any other
10 legislators? Do you want to go to all of
11 them? They were just going to answer
12 questions. Legislator Mule.

13 LEGISLATOR MULE: Thank you. If
14 a person gets a busy signal on a 911 call are
15 they supposed to hang up and dial again or you
16 mentioned something about a queue. So I'm
17 wondering are they supposed to stay online?
18 How does that work?

19 MR. LEAHY: There's usually an
20 automated line that tells them to hold on and
21 it will put them into the queue.

22 LEGISLATOR MULE: It's not a busy
23 signal per se? It's not the beep, beep,
24 beep? You hear a message; is that correct?

25 MR. LEAHY: Yes.

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2 LEGISLATOR MULE: I'm going to
3 ask you the question that I asked PSE&G. To
4 your knowledge, did you ever have your system
5 crash so that you weren't able to get any 911
6 calls?

7 MR. LEAHY: I don't believe our
8 system crashed. I can check and get back to
9 you with that but I don't believe our system
10 crashed. We didn't receive that information.

11 LEGISLATOR MULE: Thank you.

12 LEGISLATOR FORD: Legislator
13 DeRiggi-Whitton.

14 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I
15 want to thank you also. Coming off of COVID
16 and this it's been a real test for everyone
17 and I appreciate your efforts. We were
18 concerned, as I mentioned before, Legislator
19 Birnbaum and I especially, regarding traffic
20 signals. I know DPW we have a list of where
21 the lights are. Do we know if they're working
22 or not for each light?

23 MR. SCHNEIDER: Brian Schneider,
24 deputy county executive for parks and public
25 works. My understanding is that every signal

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2 is back and functioning.

3 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: But
4 during an emergency like this do we have the
5 knowledge as to whether or not something is
6 online or not?

7 MR. SCHNEIDER: Yes, we do. We
8 have obviously our traffic management center
9 located at 1194 Prospect Avenue in Westbury
10 has direct continuity and communication with
11 each of those signalized traffic devices. So
12 we know when they go down.

13 And I'm just going to kind of
14 contest what Mr. Eichhorn had mentioned that
15 he was not aware or PSE&G was not aware of the
16 devices that were down. We were made aware
17 that their municipal portal went down in the
18 early afternoon and at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday
19 they contacted just about every municipality
20 throughout Long Island to have a list of their
21 most critical needs sent to them. By 8:30
22 that evening we sent them our most critical
23 needs which included every downed traffic
24 signal location. So they were made aware of
25 that and we were then dealing with PD and

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2 Office of OEM about getting at least generator
3 power to the most critical locations as
4 quickly as possible.

5 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: From
6 what I understood from the phone call, they
7 basically said there was no way of PSE&G to
8 track where the traffic lights were and
9 whether or not they were working correctly on
10 the grid.

11 MR. SCHNEIDER: They had that
12 information from DPW directly from numerous
13 people in DPW. Not only the commissioner sent
14 the list but we had our garage foreman
15 reaching out to their contacts. Because
16 basically once the municipal portal went down
17 everyone was kind of scrambling around trying
18 to get the information, the critical
19 information to PSE&G as quickly as possible.

20 In many cases, just as many
21 residents had, making multiple phone calls
22 with no success. We finally did get through
23 and gave them that critical list of locations
24 where either signals were down or trees were
25 blocking roadways. So they had that

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2 information at 8:30 on Tuesday evening.

3 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I

4 don't doubt it at all. I'm wondering if
5 there's any way we could improve, I don't
6 know, I've been trying to think if there was
7 some type of legislation or something we could
8 do to have PSE&G really respond to all of
9 traffic lights. I know we have the
10 hospitals. We have everything else. But
11 maybe as a mom of two new drivers I couldn't
12 believe that it was still out. It was over 48
13 hours after the storm. It's Glen Cove Road
14 and Northern Boulevard.

15 MR. SCHNEIDER: Correct. We did
16 make an effort to get generators out to those
17 critical locations. And I just have to put a
18 caveat out there that it's not as simple as
19 pulling a generator out the truck and setting
20 it on the ground and starting it up. Making
21 the physical connection to the traffic control
22 box presents its own challenges. There are
23 phasing issues. It's not simple plug and
24 play. It's something that we rolled out for
25 this storm really for the first time at I

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2 believe a dozen locations.

3 I did want to make note that
4 post-Sandy recognizing that flood-prone areas
5 along the south shore had particularly
6 susceptible traffic issues with downed
7 signals. We did get a grant from GOSR to
8 install the type of connections that would
9 make the ready connection of the generator
10 much more possible. That contract is actually
11 going to be coming in front of this body in
12 the next month I would say where we're going
13 to look at 122 specific locations all along
14 the south shore, those flood-prone areas,
15 where we can roll out generators with a very
16 easy connection. Not manpower intensive. The
17 only thing you have to do is gas up the
18 generators. So that's going to be looked at.

19 Unfortunately, it's not going to be
20 looked at island-wide but it's really the
21 first step in protecting our infrastructure
22 and the residents going forward.

23 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I
24 think that's great. I was wondering if there
25 was anything -- I think when I was a kid we

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2 used to have if the traffic lights went out
3 there would be like a red light that would
4 blink. Because Locust Valley and some of our
5 areas are so dark and if someone isn't
6 familiar with the area they might not even
7 know there's a traffic signal that's supposed
8 to be in front of you. It's make for an
9 extremely dangerous intersection sometimes.
10 Do you know if we can go back to those?

11 MR. SCHNEIDER: My understanding
12 is that there are some of the newer pieces of
13 infrastructure, specifically the traffic
14 lights, when they do lose power they go into
15 like a flash mode. But that's something that
16 obviously we have thousands and thousands of
17 signals throughout the county. Not every
18 single one is the same type. So, it's an
19 interesting premise, and I think it would take
20 a little bit of time to get that lined up so
21 that if the power does go down something will
22 illuminate. But again, it's something that we
23 have to evaluate going forward.

24 MR. LEAHY: One of those
25 challenges is some of those traffic lights are

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2 not all Nassau County. They're town and state
3 traffic lights and different
4 responsibilities. So, New York State
5 Department of Transportation and INFORM take
6 over some of those major east-west roads and
7 we work with INFORM and the department of
8 transportation to try to get those, when
9 they're out, we work with them to try to get
10 them restored. But the traffic lights that
11 flash is when power is restored the box needs
12 to be reset to reset the timing. That's one
13 of the challenges.

14 LEGISLATOR FORD: Brian, I'm glad
15 to hear that we're finally doing that. I was
16 going to ask because I know we were talking
17 about doing generators because in the south
18 shore. But then thinking about some of the
19 intersections like on the north shore that may
20 not be under this GOSR grant, is it something
21 that we can look at moving forward? I know, I
22 agree, I'm not familiar with all the north
23 shore roads and a lot of them like I feel like
24 I'm in the country when I'm up there. You may
25 not always see the cross streets or whatever.

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2 Especially major intersections. Is it
3 possible to take a look at that and see if
4 there's something that we can maybe put into a
5 capital plan?

6 MR. SCHNEIDER: Yeah. I think in
7 speaking with the commissioner is something
8 that -- when I found out that it was only 122
9 along the South Shore and it was related to
10 that GOSR grant I think it's definitely
11 something that we should and we really need to
12 consider countywide.

13 Getting into the capital plan I
14 think is something that we would need to move
15 forward in 2021.

16 LEGISLATOR FORD: I know we have
17 other questions but Commissioner Morelli, I
18 know that with OEM we're all like intertwined
19 and everything like that. We get your updates
20 and thank you very much for the emails as we
21 are preparing for storms and everything like
22 that. Some of the concerns would be OEM's
23 responsibility or what actions they did prior
24 to the storm hitting and then afterwards. The
25 coordination I guess. Like trying to make

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2 sure that PSE&G was aware of like a lot of the
3 situations that were happening within the
4 county. Whether or not there were down trees
5 or I guess you work with DPW and the police
6 department with traffic signals and so forth.
7 If you care to give us an update.

8 MR. MORELLI: I'm Steven Morelli,
9 commissioner from the Office of Emergency
10 Management. In aligning with what the
11 inspector said earlier, we also have a 120
12 hour plan which we had enacted and I had
13 notified both the administration, all
14 department heads, as well as the legislature
15 that we were going to be activating our 120
16 hour plan to let us know going forward. The
17 plan is available. I may have sent it out to
18 some of you in the past but if not I can send
19 it again.

20 One of our concerns is going
21 forward and you know based on the amount of
22 weather briefs that I do send out and you're
23 all on the weather briefs we focus on the
24 weather on a regular basis. We keep an eye on
25 the storms like these two that just came up

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2 Josephine that dissipated and Kyle that came
3 and went. Again, named storms that are really
4 early in the season.

5 We are always on top of the
6 weather. As soon as the 120 hour plan was
7 activated we get to a point where we have to
8 make a determination whether or not the EOC is
9 going to be activated. And when we did get to
10 the point which I believe was at the 96th
11 hour, about four days out, all of our partners
12 were notified. The police department, the
13 fire marshal -- I'm sorry, the sheriff's
14 office, the ambulance bureau. We have folks
15 from Department of Public Works, Department of
16 Health. We reach out to NICE bus, the MTA,
17 the Long Island Railroad because
18 transportation is a major player. And we did
19 have conversations and we did reach out to
20 both National Grid and PSE&G.

21 We invite them all. Once we told
22 them that the EOC would be activating, we
23 would be opening up at four p.m. I believe on
24 the Monday prior to the storm, so we were
25 going to have a full activation. We were

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2 notified by them that they were going to be
3 doing it virtual. When they do it virtual
4 it's because they either a staffing issues or
5 other concerns. COVID is still a very big
6 concern. A lot of people are hesitant to
7 enter into an environment that has that many
8 people in those close quarters. We do
9 understand that. We did have constant
10 communication with PSE&G on a regular basis.

11 Again, most of the time we sit in
12 support of all the other agencies that are out
13 there, whether they're county agencies,
14 private organizations or anybody that is going
15 to need some support based on what we have the
16 capability to provide to them.

17 We reach out to the towns and
18 villages and we have a robust communication
19 with both towns, villages and the two cities
20 here in Nassau County. So our communication
21 is very good with our partners.

22 The concerns are what their
23 concerns actually end up being. Whether it's
24 road closures or outages or it's a utility
25 failure. We do everything we can to field

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2 that, to support that and to reach out to the
3 people who are going to be able to mitigate
4 that.

5 LEGISLATOR FORD: Speaking with
6 PSE&G it seems like one of the biggest
7 challenges we had with this storm and
8 afterwards is the communications. Everybody
9 wants to know what's going on. They want
10 their voices to be heard. We used to have
11 emergency management meetings. We'd go out to
12 the public and people would come and we do
13 presentations to prepare them for incidents
14 such as these. I know then I guess New York
15 State took them over because then we went to
16 something different.

17 MR. MORELLI: New York State did
18 some of them. Me personally I was going out
19 and doing them myself and one other gentleman
20 from my office. He happens to be out with my
21 surgery. As COVID came along we were
22 handcuffed in what we were able to do. And
23 again, the message that we try to get out
24 there, I know the county executive has gone
25 out and gone on record with trying to give

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2 people the best advice possible. It's the
3 same advice we give them every year. What to
4 do in preparation for, during and post event.

5 LEGISLATOR FORD: Do we have any
6 meetings I guess, because I know when I used
7 to have all these meetings and I guess like
8 everybody was concerned about seniors that --
9 we talk about seniors that are in nursing
10 homes or assisted living. But in my area we
11 have a lot of seniors that are still at home.
12 They have small little cottages or whatever.
13 We're always nervous like who's going to watch
14 out for them? We try to keep an eye on our
15 neighbors. Those that have special needs, or
16 whatever.

17 I know that people had asked if
18 there was a way of coordinating and trying to
19 get a list so that even we can help out
20 whether or not through the fire department or
21 the police department or whatever, so that
22 we're aware of who are the people who may be
23 on oxygen or may need to make sure if PSE&G
24 can't reach them to make sure that they're
25 okay that we can send personnel out to check

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2 on these people. Is there any way of being
3 able to accomplish this?

4 MR. MORELLI: You make a very
5 good point in that the volunteer fire service
6 is fantastic when it comes to that. Being in
7 the volunteer fire service now 39 years, we do
8 have a tremendous outreach with our
9 constituents, with the people that we
10 protect. And I know most if not all of the
11 volunteer fire departments do that as well.
12 They're best to handle certain aspects of
13 that, the one or two individuals within their
14 communities. Everybody should be presenting
15 that information to PSE&G. And I know it
16 seems kind of antiquated how we are able to
17 get on the list so to speak, but then again
18 there's a lot of people and it's not to say
19 that somebody's emergency is worse than
20 another.

21 I received 35 phone calls at my own
22 home from people in my own community. My air
23 conditioning is out. So is mine. That's all
24 I can offer you. There's only so much we can
25 do. We can offer you emergency shelter in a

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2 hotel, which a lot of people said I don't want
3 to go to a hotel. I understand that. But
4 beyond that, all we can do is to work with the
5 utility as well.

6 We did receive a lot of phone calls
7 in our office. We did have three primary
8 liaisons that we dealt with PSE&G and they
9 were all very receptive. But all they could
10 do is take the information from us and whether
11 it was critical or not they could escalate
12 it. That one more time did not guarantee that
13 they were going to get service.

14 LEGISLATOR FORD: Do we have
15 emergency generators that we can also loan out
16 to facilities? I know that Legislator
17 Lafazan, Woodbury Gardens a group of seniors
18 that were without power. Do we have any type
19 of backup systems that we can provide --

20 MR. MORELLI: We do have
21 generators yes -- I'm sorry. They're
22 generally not for residential. Should there
23 be a consideration or concern that is
24 something that we will work, I promise you, we
25 will work out. We do have a number of

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2 circumstances where I did have one woman call
3 me up. She has what they call an LVAD, it's a
4 left ventricle assist device. It is
5 essentially her beating heart that's on a
6 device. She explained to me her batteries are
7 running low. I said to her one of two
8 things. I'll pick you up and bring you to a
9 hospital or we can bring you to the volunteer
10 fire department. We'll do something to get
11 your battery charged. I'm not going to let
12 that happen.

13 But again, when somebody calls and
14 says that they have no air conditioning or
15 their food is spoiling we're not going to do
16 that. But we do have very large sized
17 generators which we provide to -- early in the
18 storm we received a call from Rockville
19 Centre. Their power was down. I know we said
20 earlier that Rockville Centre has their own
21 power. They are fed by PSE&G. PSE&G shut
22 them down and the restart failed. Once the
23 restart failed they couldn't get anything.

24 My father-in-law is an 82 year old
25 man with cancer. We had to walk him down six

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2 floors to get out of his senior building to
3 get him to my son's home in Freeport where he
4 had power.

5 We brought a generator to Rockville
6 Centre. The primary objective of that
7 generator was their water supply. Their water
8 system. Once that goes down it affects not
9 just water supply but sanitation as well. So
10 it becomes a bigger issue, a bigger health
11 issue.

12 That generator was in place by
13 about 11 p.m. and they had power restored by
14 PSE&G about 11:15. So it goes to the amount
15 of work that goes into it to get the power to
16 them.

17 We also had an incident in Glen
18 Cove where four of their five pumps went
19 down. They reached out to us. The first
20 thing we did was we found the biggest
21 generators that we could, got it up to Glen
22 Cove, had them all hooked up and everything
23 established. Again, they had power returned
24 shortly.

25 We have plenty of generation when

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2 it comes to critical infrastructure. Let me
3 take that back. We don't have plenty. We
4 have generation when it comes to critical
5 infrastructure. When it comes to residential
6 not really.

7 It's more than just saying can you
8 bring a generator. To lot of people say
9 that. It's being able to connect that
10 generator to something. Unless there is
11 transfer box attached to the building you
12 can't just put a generator there. You have to
13 have something that's going to attach to the
14 building and take over the power supply from
15 the utility to the generator which will
16 generate the building. Those are costly and
17 those are not something that we provide.
18 That's something that the actual facility --

19 So, to Legislator Lafazan's point,
20 I don't know if your facility would be able to
21 handle something to that point. That's not to
22 say that it's something they couldn't look at
23 further. My advice to anybody in that
24 position that has a constituency at that point
25 I would say that's something they should look

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2 at. I made the point to my father-in-law's
3 building because this is the third or fourth
4 time in a village with their own power supply
5 that he's lost power that me in the next town
6 didn't. So I made the point it's a senior
7 citizen building, that's six floors, they
8 should have some way of generating their own
9 power. At least to get these folks out.

10 LEGISLATOR FORD: At least for
11 the elevators. At least one elevator. You're
12 not even asking if there's three elevators.
13 One elevator, just have it working.

14 MR. MORELLI: I agree.

15 LEGISLATOR FORD: That to me is
16 terrible.

17 My question for Brian. In regard
18 to the county facilities, I mean, obviously
19 you lost power in some of the facilities. But
20 do we have -- do you provide generators for
21 the county facilities?

22 MR. SCHNEIDER: Most of the
23 critical infrastructure all have backup
24 generators. For the I think vast, vast
25 majority none of the county governmental

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2 buildings lost power. There are, however,
3 county facilities located in parks that did
4 lose power that are not on emergency
5 generation.

6 I will give you an example.
7 Cantiague Park pool lost power. North
8 Woodmere pool lost power. And that pool leaks
9 a little bit. So, we lost a little bit of
10 water in there. Also the amount of debris
11 that was blowing in those facilities we needed
12 to shut down those facilities for a couple of
13 days just to do cleanup.

14 But for the most part all critical
15 governmental buildings did not lose any power
16 because they have emergency generation.

17 We do have an issue at Museum Row.
18 The Cradle of Aviation specifically. There
19 are bad feeder cables coming from a substation
20 located on Commercial Avenue. So right now
21 the Cradle is operating on an emergency
22 generator that we installed there on Friday
23 and it's going to take a couple of weeks to
24 completely replace all the bad feeder cable
25 that were quite frankly very old. Just the

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2 power surges and the continually on and offs
3 that were occurring through trying to get the
4 power back just damaged those cables beyond
5 repair.

6 We're also having similar issues up
7 at Sands Point Preserve where that building
8 needs to operate on an emergency generator.

9 So yes, the bottom line answer is
10 we do have emergency generators that we can
11 install at these associated facilities but the
12 bottom line is that all the critical
13 governmental buildings did not lose power or
14 service.

15 LEGISLATOR FORD: Legislator
16 Rhoads.

17 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Thank you
18 Madam Chairwoman. Commissioner Morelli, one
19 of the things that you mentioned kind of
20 bothers me a little bit and it's not having
21 anything to do with OEM necessarily, but the
22 whole idea behind having the emergency
23 operation center -- I've been there during a
24 storm response -- is to have representatives
25 from every agency and representatives from

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2 every utility there so that you don't have to
3 pick up the phone and try and reach out to
4 your contacts at PSE&G. Somebody from PSE&G
5 would be there in the EOC so that you can
6 reach out to them when you have an issue. So
7 you can coordinate your traffic signals. You
8 can coordinate your police response. You can
9 coordinate with Verizon. You can coordinate
10 with -- the whole idea behind it is
11 everybody's sitting, a representative is
12 sitting in the same place at the same time so
13 that you don't have these issues of trying to
14 reach out to other people. Did we make the
15 EOC available to them? Which I understand
16 from your response we did, right?

17 MR. MORELLI: Yes, absolutely.
18 As I said, once we notified all the players,
19 PSE&G and National Grid included, we let them
20 know the EOC was going to be open and there's
21 a position for them to be seated in the EOC
22 with us.

23 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: And they
24 opted not to --

25 MR. MORELLI: Like I said, they

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2 at the time chose to work remote or to work
3 virtual which was going to be easier for them
4 at the time.

5 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: It didn't
6 work obviously.

7 MR. MORELLI: Within about two
8 days there was representation in there, the
9 EOC, from PSE&G. They did come about two days
10 later. That was primarily just -- I don't
11 want to say it was customer service but for
12 the most part it was us forwarding them
13 information with respect to outages that we
14 were hearing or live wires that were down and
15 whatnot. Additional calls from people that
16 have lifesaving equipment or life-support
17 equipment rather and having them escalate the
18 information there. But it wasn't to the
19 degree that we had seen in the past where
20 there was an engineer there with a map to that
21 point, no.

22 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Even for the
23 simple exchange change of information it
24 becomes critical to have them there.

25 MR. MORELLI: I agree.

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2 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Is there a
3 way for us to be able to compel them to send a
4 representative when the EOC is activated?

5 MR. MORELLI: I agree it would be
6 a terrific idea. And as the folks from PSE&G
7 also noted, their after-action report I'm
8 anxious to see as well. But we are also
9 completing our own after-action report which
10 we do after any activation to that point.
11 That will be a very big focus of it the fact
12 that -- we tried to get Optimum and Altice.
13 They didn't arrive. Verizon didn't arrive.

14 I can make the compelling argument
15 unless there's something that's going to
16 mandate them I don't know beyond a good
17 argument. But we did have communication both
18 with their emergency preparedness compliance
19 leader and a number of folks within their EOC
20 that were operating with us virtually.

21 I was on several conference calls
22 with their administration and government
23 officials as well trying to make those
24 points. Most of those calls were just a lot
25 of people saying we're still having outages

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2 here, we're still having outages there or them
3 just following up on what the outage map was
4 dictating to us.

5 But beyond that I agree with you.
6 That's a very strong point. Something that we
7 will work to improve next time around, which I
8 hope doesn't come any time soon.

9 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Right. We
10 should all hope that. Can you get us a list
11 of who typically is supposed to have a seat at
12 the table when the EOC is --

13 MR. MORELLI: Absolutely. I can
14 do that.

15 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: --
16 activated. Who actually bothered to show up
17 and who didn't so we can at least have that
18 information?

19 MR. MORELLI: As I said, I can
20 forward you the 120 hour plan which includes
21 all that as well as I can give you a schematic
22 of the EOC itself, the emergency operation
23 center itself and who has a seat where.

24 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Great because
25 I would love to follow-up with PSE&G and

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2 Altice. And when we're talking about
3 communications problems if we can't talk to
4 each other --

5 MR. MORELLI: I agree.

6 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: -- that makes
7 it infinitely more difficult.

8 In terms of the 120 hour plan, at
9 any point in that 120 hour plan, at any point
10 in that 120 hour plan was there a decision
11 whether to open or not to open shelters?

12 MR. MORELLI: Yes. We looked
13 into the sheltering plan at the very
14 beginning. In dealing with the National
15 Weather Service, the American Red Cross, we
16 determined from their perspective -- we just
17 support the shelters. We don't actually open
18 the shelters ourselves. These are directives
19 given by the Red Cross at the insistence of
20 the Red Cross. We support them in that we
21 will stock them with the cots and linens that
22 they're going to need and whatever else
23 they're going to need. Especially at this
24 point now personal protective equipment.

25 But as the storm was being examined

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2 and as the storm was being watched by both the
3 National Weather Service and the Red Cross
4 there was no determination whether shelters
5 should be opened because we weren't going to
6 see surge, we weren't going to see that high
7 tidal period and the idea that we were going
8 to see that amount of water that would be that
9 bad wasn't there. So the decision was not to
10 open shelters.

11 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Who
12 ultimately made that call or was it a
13 collaborative effort?

14 MR. MORELLI: It was pretty much
15 a collaborative effort. It's between the Red
16 Cross, the weather service, my office, the
17 administration. As we said, we took a look at
18 all of this. Let me backtrack. I want to
19 take the administration out of that because
20 they're just going to follow the lead that we
21 have but there was no indication that shelters
22 needed to be opened.

23 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Obviously
24 there wasn't going to be significant storm
25 surge. We knew that going in. But we knew

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2 there would be sustained wind and gusts to the
3 point where we did anticipate that there would
4 be some power outages. I don't know that we
5 anticipated the extent of the power outages
6 but we knew there was going to be some.

7 As part of that 120 hour plan, do
8 we ever consider opening at least one shelter
9 for some critical care -- individuals that
10 have critical care needs to get access to a
11 place that has power so that they can, you
12 know, recharge a wheelchair or, you know, had
13 their oxygen machine going or there's some
14 place that they can go if they can't stay
15 where they are?

16 MR. MORELLI: Again, as I said,
17 the Red Cross pretty much is in charge of the
18 shelters. Their decision was that there were
19 no shelters needed. Should we have to open an
20 emergency shelter in each legislative district
21 there is a trailer that contains 100 cots and
22 linens and whatnot. Should we have to open an
23 emergency shelter somewhere it could be done
24 pretty fast.

25 But as I said, there was no real

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2 need for that at the time. We didn't see any
3 need. Again, based on the list that we were
4 seeing as far as the outages that were coming,
5 most of it was just power. There were no real
6 hazards and no real no risks that people were
7 in jeopardy. And if we needed to, we did have
8 about 150 hotel rooms available should people
9 need to be removed from their homes for even a
10 day or two. If they needed them we could have
11 had these folks relocated to a safer
12 environment.

13 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: How did we
14 communicate that information to residents? In
15 other words, it's great to have them but if
16 people don't know we have them.

17 MR. MORELLI: Understood. As we
18 do during the winter with Warm Bed and during
19 the summer with Cool Bed, that's one of the
20 ways that -- and I'm not dumping it now on the
21 Department of Social Services, but they're the
22 ones that help with emergency housing.

23 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Okay.

24 MR. MORELLI: What we can do, and
25 this is something that's actually in the

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2 works, we're just waiting to have it approved
3 from -- we have to have communications take a
4 look at it -- is a mailing that we do every
5 year to give folks some of the points. I
6 don't want to say it's rote information but
7 it's pretty much the same information every
8 year. As well as some points and some tips on
9 what they can do to keep themselves prepared.
10 We warn everybody please at least be prepared
11 for three to five days. While we hate the
12 idea of that, to be prepared for three to five
13 days and to make some of these arrangements
14 ahead of time.

15 Should you know a storm is coming
16 and you're in a position where you have a
17 piece of life-sustaining equipment and your
18 battery may not hold out for a period of time,
19 I'm not saying that it's your responsibility
20 or my responsibility, but it's somebody's
21 responsibility to make sure that that's
22 addressed.

23 Our office the phone is there 24
24 hours a day. We're available to help give
25 people any measure of advice, give any measure

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2 of advice, give any measure of information
3 with respect to what they can do in an
4 emergency. It doesn't necessarily have to be
5 a storm. It could be for anything. Should
6 they have a problem we are always there to be
7 able to direct them in the right direction.

8 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Obviously as
9 part of the EOC Social Services would have
10 been there and was there --

11 MR. MORELLI: Yes.

12 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: -- at the
13 EOC? So they would have access to --

14 MR. MORELLI: Yes.

15 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: -- to that.

16 I'm curious though whether it's
17 more cost effective to put people in hotel
18 rooms versus having one specific central
19 location where everybody can go, but.

20 MR. MORELLI: Speaking from
21 someone who slept on an army cot in storms
22 like this I wouldn't put any elderly person on
23 that. It's nothing but a piece of very tight
24 canvass. To put somebody on that thing for an
25 extended period of time -- listen, this is

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2 just me spitballing here, if you have somebody
3 that can't afford the hotel here's my credit
4 card. I don't want to see anybody suffering.

5 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: We don't
6 provide the rooms?

7 MR. MORELLI: No, I'm just making
8 the point. I'd be happy to take care of it if
9 somebody had an issue. The point is the rooms
10 are available. Should somebody need a hotel
11 room they are available.

12 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: But we will
13 actually put them up in a hotel room?

14 MR. MORELLI: Yes.

15 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Where we
16 don't expect them to --

17 MR. MORELLI: No. We're not
18 asking for their card. I'm just being smart.

19 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: In terms of
20 generators and other assets, in advance of the
21 storm did we relocate any of those assets to
22 critical areas that we thought might be at
23 risk?

24 MR. MORELLI: As far as
25 generators go it's not so much that they can

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2 be relocated anywhere. Again, a facility has
3 to be ready to receive a generator. A school
4 has to be able to accept a generator if you're
5 going to make it a shelter. One of the
6 critical locations such as the water plant in
7 Glen Cove, such as what they had in Rockville
8 Centre, it has to be ready to receive a
9 generator. So it's not that we can just put a
10 generator in town.

11 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: We're not
12 talking about an 8500 watt generator you can
13 plug into your --

14 MR. MORELLI: We do have a number
15 of generators. But one more time, what are we
16 relocating them for? If it's to power up one
17 of the street lights that we were talking
18 about, again, a lot of that came from the
19 state and we do have generators that we can do
20 that but you can't foresee those things.

21 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Those are
22 small Generac generators thought, right?
23 We're not talking about the big generators?

24 MR. MORELLI: Well right now we
25 have 53 good size generators and about 108

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2 portable generators. When I say portable
3 they're the ones that you see at the fire
4 houses with the light that flips up on them.
5 The Honda generator. But a bunch of good
6 sized Generac generators that we do have.

7 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I didn't know
8 if in advance of the storm we relocated some
9 to Cedar Creek so that they would be on the
10 south shore if we needed them on the south
11 shore. I'm speaking in particular of the
12 example that I gave with Empire Hose Company.
13 Whether we might have been able to provide a
14 generator there if we were aware of the issue
15 a little earlier.

16 MR. MORELLI: If they're able to
17 receive generation and we have a critical
18 infrastructure list here that's got almost
19 1200 locations here in Nassau County.

20 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Great. Any
21 chance we can share that with PSE&G because --

22 MR. MORELLI: This is their list.

23 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: So they had
24 that information?

25 MR. MORELLI: 1189 different

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2 locations where we have -- and most firehouses
3 are on there. Most village police departments
4 are on there. A lot of village halls.

5 And again, it's not so much just
6 send me a generator. It's are they ready to
7 receive a generator. Is it going to be big
8 enough for their needs as well.

9 And we did relocate one high axle
10 vehicle to Island Park. They generally have
11 an issue with respect to flooding. So we
12 wanted to make sure -- I know they do have
13 one. We did send them another in the event
14 that they had to evacuate some of their
15 residents.

16 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: In terms of
17 the -- obviously there were several
18 intersections that were out of power. Two
19 that come to mind are Merrick Avenue and
20 Sunrise Highway and Merrick Avenue and Merrick
21 Road, which were out for a substantial period
22 of time. I think three or four days if I'm
23 not mistaken. As far as I know, the
24 generators weren't sent to that location. I
25 was curious as to why, one.

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2 But two, in the absence of a
3 generator at that location we also didn't have
4 a police officer there directing traffic.
5 Those are pretty major intersections where
6 leaving people to their own devices as to
7 whether or not they can safely make a turn
8 onto Merrick Road from Merrick Avenue or try
9 and cross Sunrise Highway from that location
10 it's a pretty big gamble.

11 Did we not have, one, why was there
12 no generator? Two, did we not have enough
13 manpower to be able to place a police officer
14 at that location? I think it's Sunrise
15 Highway which blocked off the ability to make
16 a left-hand turn from Sunrise either
17 northbound or southbound on Merrick Avenue.
18 But if you were trying to get out off of
19 Merrick Avenue onto Sunrise or Merrick Road
20 good luck.

21 MR. LEAHY: That is a state
22 road. That would be a New York State
23 Transportation. They would be responsible for
24 that.

25 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: But popping a

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2 police officer there is our responsibility.

3 MR. LEAHY: Depending on the
4 calls for service and what their priorities
5 are, they can get pulled off depending on what
6 it is. What we try to do is work with DPW to
7 create roundabouts. We've done that in the
8 past. Put barrels up. Take left-turn lanes
9 out. Everybody makes a right and then
10 mid-turn you will have the opportunity to make
11 a U-turn and continue to make a right turn.

12 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Did we bring
13 officers in on overtime?

14 MR. LEAHY: I said I would check
15 to make sure but I will check when I get back.

16 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: That's
17 something that we would typically do if we
18 were short, right?

19 MR. LEAHY: We have a full
20 staff. We make sure we're fully staffed for
21 these events. We make sure that the units
22 that would be doing other things are pulled in
23 to the response mode. That we have extras on
24 the road. We pulled resources at the height
25 of the storm and 2 o'clock in the afternoon we

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2 had 2,000 calls for service in an hour.

3 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Obviously if
4 we thought that either for calls for service
5 or to protect an intersection you thought that
6 it was necessary to have somebody you'd called
7 them.

8 MR. LEAHY: We have brought them
9 in when the outage is extended. That's some
10 of the importance of being able to have
11 somebody inside OEM. Somebody to have that
12 open line of communication. That
13 communication failure presents challenges for
14 us and for communications bureau when we're
15 trying to evaluate manpower allocations. So
16 it does present some challenges. But we do
17 bring people in to address that.

18 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Just so I'm
19 correct in my understanding Deputy County
20 Executive Schneider, you did mention that
21 PSE&G was provided with the traffic outage?

22 MR. SCHNEIDER: Yes. As of 8:54
23 on Tuesday evening.

24 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Thank you.

25 LEGISLATOR FORD: Any other

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2 legislators? Thank you very much gentlemen.

3 Commissioner Morelli, when you're
4 going to send out this year about emergency
5 preparedness I guess can you let us know when
6 you're going to send it out and hopefully you
7 maybe can include not so much the hotel rooms
8 but how about, which I learned just from
9 talking back here, is that people who have I
10 guess oxygen machines, whatever, correct me if
11 I'm wrong my emergency people, that somebody
12 can come to the house and like provide power
13 for it or something like that or regenerate --
14 what is it? Like give power. Maybe restore
15 the power to the backup generator or to the
16 oxygen machine they can just power it up so
17 that the backup will work and stuff like that
18 so the oxygen will work. Am I saying that
19 right? To charge it up. It's been a long
20 couple of weeks. Thank you very much. Thanks
21 for staying around.

22 MR. MORELLI: That's generally
23 not something that we do. But my point being
24 is if you're having a situation to that point,
25 again, of widespread outages, I'm not going to

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2 be able to solve. Should an individual have
3 that point we would do everything we can to
4 get them back up and running. That's the
5 point that I will make when that brochure goes
6 out.

7 LEGISLATOR FORD: Also I guess
8 even coordination with 911 so that if people
9 are in need of housing for some odd reason
10 that we are able to identify those people and
11 then perhaps have them work with OEM to see if
12 they should be placed in a hotel. People may
13 not have registered but all of sudden they
14 find themselves -- they just came out of the
15 hospital and they need this equipment or their
16 medicine or whatever, just anything to make
17 sure that we can keep them safe during any
18 type of storm.

19 MR. MORELLI: That additional
20 registration information with respect to PSE&G
21 and any other utility as well, and again it
22 goes even just beyond that to Altice and
23 Verizon as well. Because of the fact that
24 some people do have the button. That phone is
25 out the buttons aren't going to be able to

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2 activate. That information will also go into
3 the brochure so they're able to address those
4 needs specifically with the utility.

5 LEGISLATOR FORD: Thank you. And
6 we will be following up with PSE&G to ask them
7 why they weren't up at the OEM center and why
8 they did not acknowledge that they had the
9 list of all the traffic signals during this
10 hearing. But thank you very much. Everyone
11 thank you for --

12 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Last
13 question. I got the instructions to hurry up
14 so I will. Do you have the opportunity once
15 you guys do your after-action report, your own
16 analysis of OEM's response, do you have the
17 opportunity to communicate with PSE&G and
18 suggest changes?

19 MR. MORELLI: Absolutely, yes.

20 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: One of the
21 things that Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton had
22 mentioned was that you had crews coming in
23 from out of state that came in from out of
24 state that had no direction as to where they
25 were supposed to be going. Clearly that's a

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2 failure in leadership on PSE&G's part.
3 Obviously we operate under NIMS. There would
4 never be a situation where on the emergency
5 response side that you would have outside
6 agencies coming in that wouldn't know who to
7 report to --

8 MR. MORELLI: That wouldn't have
9 direction.

10 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: There has to
11 be instruction. Can you work with them on
12 that? Would they accept that input from us?

13 MR. MORELLI: We can certainly
14 breach the topic and offer whatever we can. I
15 agree with you there does have to be some
16 better coordination. We had people actually
17 calling our office saying that the trucks are
18 in front of their house and they don't have
19 the supplies or they haven't been told what to
20 do. Again, most of these folks were from out
21 of state. That's certainly something that we
22 can put together or at least -- we meet with
23 the folks from PSE&G, believe it or not we
24 meet with them regularly and we have regular
25 communications with their emergency

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2 preparedness leader, Brendan Beebe. There's
3 no reason in the world why we can't breach
4 this topic with them and see if we can't
5 collaboratively do something to help mitigate
6 that problem. I agree with you.

7 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Even with
8 their Clear to Call -- Clear to Clear list in
9 coordinating with the town and the county as
10 far as whether a road is safe to clear or a
11 condition is safe to clear, again, having
12 somebody physically in the EOC would have been
13 helpful.

14 MR. MORELLI: Very helpful. I
15 agree.

16 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I appreciate
17 the follow-up. Thank you.

18 LEGISLATOR FORD: Thank you
19 everyone. Have a good afternoon. Thank you
20 very much legislators and everybody else in
21 the audience.

22 (Committee adjourned at 1:29 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATION

I, FRANK GRAY, a Notary
Public in and for the State of New
York, do hereby certify:

THAT the foregoing is a true and
accurate transcript of my stenographic
notes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have
hereunto set my hand this 25th day of
August 2020

FRANK GRAY