

Washington, D.C. – Six members of the Connecticut Congressional Delegation called for an investigation today into the response of Connecticut Light & Power and its parent company, Northeast Utilities, to the October 29 storm that left more than 2 million households without power, including over 850,000 in Connecticut. Six days later, there are still approximately 300,000 without power in the state.

The letter calls for Jon Wellinghoff, the Chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, to investigate whether Connecticut Light & Power and Northeast Utilities violated the Energy Policy Act of 2005 by restoring power to other northeast states more quickly than in Connecticut.

“We are also deeply troubled by the reliability of the electric system in Connecticut, as this is the second major power disruption in the last two months. It has also come to our attention that utility customers in the State of Connecticut waited longer than any other state to have their power restored,” the letter states. “As a result, we request that you investigate Connecticut Light & Power and Northeast Utilities for any potential violations of Section 215 of the Federal Power Act.”

The text of the letter is below.

November 4, 2011

The Honorable Jon Wellinghoff
Chairman
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20426

Dear Chairman Wellinghoff:

As you are aware, the winter storm that ravaged the Northeast on October 29, 2011 left millions of households and business across the region without power. This disruption to our power system stopped commerce and left millions of our constituents vulnerable to freezing temperatures. We are also deeply troubled by the reliability of the electric system in Connecticut, as this is the second major power disruption in the last two months. It has also come to our attention that utility customers in the State of Connecticut waited longer than any other state to have their power restored. As a result, we request that you investigate Connecticut Light & Power and Northeast Utilities for any potential violations of Section 215 of the Federal Power Act.

The Energy Policy Act of 2005, amended the Federal Power Act and charged FERC with protecting and regulating the reliability of the of bulk-power system. Immediately after the storm, we know that roughly 48% of households in Connecticut were without power. In Massachusetts and New Hampshire 20% and 60% of households were in the same situation. However, five days after the storm—the situation in Massachusetts and New Hampshire improved greatly with 25% and 8% of the households that's lost power still down. Conversely, in Connecticut 54% of the customers that lost power were still down five days after the storm.

Therefore, we urge the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to immediately open an investigation into the disruption of the bulk power system in the State of Connecticut that was a result of the October 29, 2011 snow storm.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Rosa DeLauro, Member of Congress

Joseph I. Lieberman, United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal, United States Senator

Christopher S. Murphy, Member of Congress

Joe Courtney, Member of Congress

Jim Himes, Member of Congress

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