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Joe Courtney
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August 7, 2020

Marissa Paslick Gillett
Chairman
Public Utility Regulatory Authority
Ten Franklin Square
New Britain, CT 06051

Dear Chairman Gillett,

I am writing to follow up the August 6 letter to the Public Utility Regulatory Authority submitted by the entire federal delegation concerning PURA's decision to conduct an investigation of the adequacy of storm preparation and response by Connecticut's two largest power companies, Eversource and United Illuminating. I strongly concur with the content of that letter since the district I represent covering all of eastern Connecticut and a large portion of North Central Connecticut was very hard hit by this week's tropical storm. As of today - day three since Isaias struck - thousands of homes and small businesses are still without power and the level of communication and coordination is woefully limited.

The purpose of this letter, is to ask PURA to review not only the agenda my colleagues and I described in the August 6 letter, but also to ensure that the scope of its investigation include the superb response to Isaias by Connecticut's Municipal Public Utilities, many of which are in Connecticut's Second District. While I realize that municipal public utilities are not under PURA's regulatory authority, given the nature of this investigation, comparing Eversource and UI's performance against other local providers that experienced the same weather event would provide valuable information about what customers can and should expect from their electricity providers.

In all the recent weather disasters of the past decade, municipal providers consistently outperform Eversource and UI in power restoration and service. Even a cursory examination of the power outage maps and chronologies shows a lopsided contrast where customers in the Public Utility territory are better served. In every storm there are fewer interruptions and faster restoration. I strongly believe that even discounting factors such as the size of geography and the number of customers, the Public Utilities make a much greater commitment to having the staff and equipment to be self sufficient. Unlike the two companies under investigation, none of the Municipal Utilities have had to rely on the costly and excruciatingly slow process of recruiting crews from far flung states and Canada to serve their customers.

I believe that an examination of the municipal public utilities in Connecticut will provide PURA with a valuable "measuring stick" to conduct its investigation and even more importantly, issue enforceable requirements for these regulated entities to provide Connecticut customers with the type of service they are paying top dollar for.

Thank you for taking on this extremely important and necessary inquiry and my office is willing to assist in any manner you might need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joe Courtney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

JOE COURTNEY
Member of Congress