



State of Connecticut

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Testimony:
**Energy and Technology, Public Safety, Labor and Planning and
Development Committees**
Joint Public Hearing
Regarding the aftermath of Tropical Storm Irene
Monday, September 26, 2011

Thank you for hosting this meeting today, allowing the public to comment on CL&P's response to Hurricane Irene. While I realize that CL&P does not control the weather or the severity of a storm, they are in control of how they respond and the plans they prepare to deal with these types of disasters.

Many of the residents in the communities I represent were without power for many days. They understand that power restoration takes time, however, what was disappointing, was the lack of accurate information shared. We frequently felt that we have been left in the dark and neglected as other parts of the state enjoyed speedier repair and restoration times. Eight days for full power restoration is not a satisfactory timetable and having my elderly left in the dark and without oxygen for 5 days is completely unacceptable.

I cannot help but think that should CL&P not laid off so many employees—or replaced employees who retired—in the past few years, power would have been restored sooner. In fact at times it would appear that CL&P cares more about its bottom line, its shareholders, than the communities that it services.

Connecticut has some of the highest electric rates in the country. Many of us have learned to live with the astronomical amounts we pay, yet at the very least we would expect quality service. I do not fault the employees who work at CL&P. I know many of them work very hard. What I do fault is a company that was so grossly unprepared to cope with this type of disaster.

I have read intently the testimony given by Mr. Butler and others from CL&P. I was not swayed. Moreover, I have requested information from CL&P, as well as a meeting with their President and Chief Executive Officer and have yet to receive a response, or even an acknowledgment that they will be in touch. My constituents were lead to believe if they put in underground services they would not be subjected to long outages. The last neighborhood to be restored in my district had underground service which when the technician open the boxes to work on it said the lines were antiquated and had not had proper maintenance. Why have they paid maintenance fees for 25 years? Where has that money gone? There are many questions that have not been answered and accountability is lacking. All I have heard is excuses.

Thank you for your time today.