

88 Cabin RD  
Colchester CT 06415  
September 9, 2011

Dear Mr. Jeff Butler, President and CEO of CL&P and  
Mr. John Ireland, Director of Claims and Insurance, CL&P

We are writing to inform you of our experiences with CL&P due to Hurricane Irene. We have been lifelong residents of Connecticut and have always been customers of CL&P. On Sunday August 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:30am, our power went out due to a tree on the street line on our property that came down and took the power line from our house down with it. The tree and line fell into our yard not into the street. We immediately called the CL&P hurricane number (1-800-286-2000) to report it and left a message as no one answered. At that time, we did not know if it was our house only or the street that was also out. A short time later, we called again and reported it directly to someone. We specifically told the representative that the line was pulled from our house by a tree. They told us not to touch the tree or the wire. A short time later, we received a call back from our first message and were told the exact same thing. At that point, we also knew that a portion of our street was out and we called the Colchester (1-860-531-8855) hurricane emergency number. They also told us not to move the tree or touch the downed wire.

By Tues August 30<sup>th</sup>, we knew we had many large trees and branches down in our yard. The tree that had pulled the power line was not that large and my husband believed that he could move it. We again were told by a representative not to move or touch the tree and that the estimated time of restoration would be that evening by 10pm. By Thursday morning, our power was not restored but that of our neighbors was. Theirs had been restored Wednesday night. We knew that the reason was, was that our line was not connected. We called Thursday morning around 7am to be told that we should be restored by that evening. In the meantime, we had an arborist come out due to the extent of tree damage to our yard. In his cleanup, he moved the tree that had taken the wire down. When he was done, he called CL&P to indicate that he believed that the wire had "juice" in it. He was told that our house would be moved to an emergency status and instead of being restored by 9pm; it would be restored by 7pm that evening. My daughter also checked by computer and it showed restoration by that evening. 9pm came and went and no CL&P and no power. At 10pm, I called the Colchester emergency hotline to report what we had been told and the fact that we potentially had a dangerous situation in our yard. We were told that since it was dark, that it probably would not be done that night but that the first selectman would bring it to CL&P's attention the next morning. Keep in mind that within 5 minutes (walking distance) from our house that there was a sign that indicated CL&P had a small storm post set up. The back of the CL&P sign read, "Safety is Our Core Value." That night at 10:30pm, a town employee stopped in front of our house to make sure we had turned off the major power circuit to our house. I told him yes.

On Friday September 2<sup>nd</sup>, our power had still not been restored. My husband called CL&P again to speak to a supervisor. He explained the situation to Veronica and repeated everything that we had been told. Now, remember that all this time we have been told not to touch the tree and we have a potentially live wire in our grass. Veronica indicated that she would try to have someone get back to us but that the times we were given all week were estimates and not guarantees, (no one else told us that). No one did get back to us that day. Our neighbor in the meantime, sent a licensed electrician over to see what they could do for us. At this point, we were 2 days past our neighbors, no CL&P truck or tree truck had ever stopped by to check with us and we were not being called back from our morning call. We ended up paying the electrician \$200.00 to hook our house back up and restore power. As far as CL&P was concerned, we still had no power and had a potentially dangerous situation. The electrician also indicated that he felt it was an unsafe wire as when he tested it, it was live.

On Saturday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of Sept. around 4:20pm we received an emergency call back from CL&P asking if we had power. I told them yes, but not because of CL&P. I asked the woman who I could send the bill to (enclosed) for reimbursement and asked her if as far as CL&P was concerned, were we still out of power? She said that we were showing as not restored. She said that full restoration would be done by Weds Sept. 7<sup>th</sup>.

The one positive note is that everyone we spoke to at CL&P and at our town command center was extremely polite and receptive to what we had to say. Our concern is that we were given information that was not followed up on in light of the fact that we could have had a dangerous situation which all parties were made aware of from 6:30 am on Sunday the 28<sup>th</sup>. CL&P at all times indicated that they would take care of both the tree and the wire. Luckily, no person or pet got hurt. Quite honestly, we have no idea how long we would have waited, as obviously it would have been after Saturday at 4:20pm which would have been 3 days after our neighbors were restored.

We feel that it is very important that this situation be brought to your attention and are also requesting that the \$200.00 be credited to our future CL&P bill. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Steven and Joan Gates, homeowners

Cc: Gregory Shuster, First Selectman of Colchester  
Linda Orange, Representative  
Eileen M. Daily, Senator