

TOWN OF VERNON



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Daniel A. Champagne
Mayor

Michael J. Purcaro
Town Administrator

Dawn R. Maselek
Assistant Town Administrator

August 28, 2020

James Judge, Chairman, President and CEO
Eversource Energy
800 Boylston St.
Boston, MA 02199

RE: Demand for Payment – Reimbursement of Costs Incurred Due to Eversource’s Failed Response to Tropical Storm Isaias

Dear Mr. Judge:

Like many towns across Connecticut, the Town of Vernon is recovering from the damage brought by Tropical Storm Isaias and is assessing Eversource’s response in the aftermath of the storm. Vernon suffered a devastating number of customer power outages and downed electrical wires which forced the closure of many roads. Eversource was ill-prepared for Tropical Storm Isaias and it showed with thousands of Vernon residents waiting several days to get their power restored and no sign of Eversource crews to clear downed wires from roads and restore critical circuits. While Tropical Storm Isaias caused significant damage, the acts and omissions of Eversource compounded the problem.

Eversource failed to supply power line repair and clearing crews as promised. Eversource neglected to follow previously agreed upon and fundamental emergency response protocols and did not effectively coordinate its response with municipalities. Eversource was unable to communicate and disseminate critical information to its municipal partners. During the storm, Eversource’s power outage hotline went down causing 911 dispatch centers to become overwhelmed with calls. Eversource failed in virtually every aspect of its response to the storm. It was an inexcusable lack of planning and effort given that Eversource had just dramatically increased the rates it charges customers.

The health and safety of Vernon residents is placed at risk during extended power outages. This is especially true for our most vulnerable residents and our medical facilities that rely on life-sustaining and life-saving electrical power provided by your company. Extended outages also cause damage to property and force businesses to close. It is extremely important that Vernon be in a position to communicate accurate information to its residents and businesses and work with Eversource to restore power and minimize injury to persons and damage to property. This did not happen in the days following Tropical Storm Isaias and as such, Vernon incurred significant costs that would have been avoided had a prompt and coordinated effort been made by Eversource.

The Town of Vernon sustained significant monetary damages directly attributable to Eversource's lack of preparedness and inability to adequately respond to power outages and downed electrical wires. The cost to Vernon taxpayers for the local municipal response to Tropical Storm Isaias in labor, equipment usage and other services currently exceeds \$140,000.00. It is justly estimated that 60% or \$84,000.00 of these costs could have been avoided had Eversource restored the power outages and repaired downed electrical wires in a timely and efficient manner.

While the power is back on in Vernon, we are still in the dark on how this epic failure on Eversource's part will be corrected and prevented from happening again. It will be a long and difficult road for Eversource to travel to regain the trust and confidence of the communities and customers that it serves. Eversource can begin this process by making restitution for damages that it caused.

Demand is made on behalf of the taxpayers of the Town of Vernon that Eversource reimburse the municipality the sum of \$84,000.00. Please send a check for this sum payable to the "Town of Vernon" to this office, my attention. Thank you.

Respectfully,



Michael J. Purcaro

Town Administrator and Emergency & Risk Management Director

cc: Honorable Daniel A. Champagne, Mayor, Town of Vernon
Honorable Steve Wakefield, Deputy Mayor, Town of Vernon
Honorable Town of Vernon Councilors:

Laura Bush
William Campbell
Julie Clay
Thomas DiDio
Ann Letendre
Maryann Levesque
Brian Motola
Pauline Schaefer
James Tedford
Michael Wendus

Honorable Ned Lamont, Governor, State of Connecticut
Honorable Joe Courtney, United States Congressman, 2nd Congressional District
Honorable Richard Blumenthal, United States Senator, State of Connecticut
Honorable Christopher Murphy, United States Senator, State of Connecticut
Honorable Daniel A. Champagne, State Senator, 35th District
Honorable Norm Needleman, State Senator and Chairman, Energy and Technology Committee
Honorable Michael Winkler, State Representative, 56th District
Attorney Marissa Paslick Gillett, Chairman, Public Utilities Regulator Authority (PURA)
Joe DeLong, Executive Director and CEO, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM)
Attorney Louis A. Spadaccini, Town Attorney, Town of Vernon