

April 25, 2024

**VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL**

Luly E. Massaro, Division Clerk  
Rhode Island Division of Public Utilities and Carriers  
89 Jefferson Boulevard  
Warwick, RI 02888

**RE: Docket No. D-11-94 – Review of Preparedness and Restoration Efforts by the State’s Electric Utility Companies Related to Tropical Storm Irene February 3, 2023 Storm Summary Report**

Dear Ms. Massaro:

In accordance with the Rhode Island Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (“Division”) Order No. 20814 (November 20, 2012) in Docket No. D-11-94, I have attached an electronic version of Rhode Island Energy’s<sup>1</sup> summary report on the planning and restoration activities associated with the February 3, 2023 storm. Order No. 20814 directs Rhode Island Energy to file a final written report with the Division within 90 days following major storm events. The Company recently discovered that it had not filed a summary report for this storm event within the required timeframe and apologizes to the Division for this oversight.

The February 3, 2023 storm likely will qualify for inclusion in the Company’s Storm Contingency Fund. Accordingly, the Company is filing this storm summary report simultaneously with the Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission in Docket No. 2509.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please contact me at 401-578-2700.

Very truly yours,



Celia B. O'Brien

Attachment

cc: Docket No. D-11-94 Service List

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<sup>1</sup> The Narragansett Electric Company d/b/a Rhode Island Energy (“Rhode Island Energy” or the “Company”).

# **Rhode Island Energy**

The Narragansett Electric Company

## **Report on February 3, 2023, Storm, Damage Assessment and Service Restoration**

April 25, 2024

Docket No. 2509

**Submitted to:**  
Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission

**Submitted by:**



**Rhode Island Energy™**

a PPL company

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**REPORT ON BEHALF OF  
THE NARRAGANSETT ELECTRIC COMPANY d/b/a RHODE ISLAND ENERGY  
ON THE FEBRUARY 3, 2023, STORM DAMAGE, ASSESSMENT AND SERVICE  
RESTORATION EFFORTS**

**I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Narragansett Electric Company d/b/a Rhode Island Energy (“Rhode Island Energy” or the “Company”) presents the following report on the planning and restoration activities associated with the February 3, 2023, storm (the “Storm”) response, which impacted Rhode Island and other states in the Northeast. For pre-planning purposes, the Company classified the Storm as a Rhode Island Energy Type 3 emergency event, meaning that the Company estimated that restoration activities generally would be accomplished within a 72-hour period, and the event typically would result in up to 28 percent of customers interrupted at peak. The Storm was projected as a short duration event bringing hazardous wind followed by an extreme drop in temperature to below zero. These factors could potentially cause damage to the Company’s electric infrastructure. The Storm interrupted power to 20,355 (approximately 6,226 at peak) of the Company’s customers. Overall, 4.06 percent of the Company’s customers in Rhode Island experienced outages, with 33 of the 38 communities served in Rhode Island impacted.

The Company began monitoring the Storm on the morning of Tuesday, January 31, 2023, as initial weather forecasts identified a storm with potentially strong wind and a severe drop to below zero temperatures. The event was expected to impact much of New England, but substantial uncertainty remained in determining the top wind speeds and how extreme the temperatures would fall as well as the timing of the Storm. The Company continued to review the weather forecasts and prepare for the possibility that the Storm would damage the Company’s electric distribution system.

The Company began preparing for the Storm on Wednesday, February 1, 2023, and conducted two Operations Planning Calls, the first on Wednesday, February 1, 2023, at 11:00 a.m. during which the Company reviewed the weather forecast and began preparing for the possibility that the Storm would impact the Company’s electric distribution system. The Company held its second Operations Planning Call on the morning of Thursday, February 2, 2023, at 10:30 a.m.

The Company followed its Emergency Response Plan and mobilized employees and contractors for the restoration using a damage forecast based on its experience in previous storms. As part of its preparation efforts, the Company also utilized contractors from outside the Company’s service territory to help with restoration. Using its own crews and contractor resources, the Company restored power to 100 percent of its customers impacted in approximately 42 hours from the time of the first customer outage. From the time of peak customers impacted, the Company restored 95 percent of the outages in 19.5 hours. Power was restored to the final customer impacted by the Storm on Saturday, February 4, 2023, at approximately 9:25 p.m.

The Company is grateful for the support of customers, employees, state and local officials, and public safety officials, who experienced the effects of the Storm and were an integral part of the Company’s restoration efforts.

## II. INCIDENT ANTICIPATION

### A. Determination of Incident Classification

As set forth in the Company’s Emergency Response Plan, factors considered in initially establishing or revising the expected incident classification level included the following:

- Expected number of customers without service;
- Expected duration of the restoration event;
- Recommendations of the State Planning Section Chief, Transmission and Distribution Control Centers, and other key staff;
- Current operational situation (such as number of outages, resources, and supplies);
- Current weather conditions;
- Damage appraisals;
- Forecasted weather conditions;
- Restoration priorities;
- Forecasted resource requirements; and
- Forecasted scheduling and pace of restoration work crews.

The Incident Commander is primarily responsible for establishing the projected and actual incident classification level for the Storm. See Table 1 below for Incident Classification Actions.

**Table 1. Incident Classification Actions**

Action Performed	Date and Time
Incident Commander Named	February 1, 2023; approx. 11:00 a.m.
Initial Event Classification Type – 3	February 1, 2023; approx. 11:00 a.m.

### B. Activation of Incident Command System

The Company utilizes the Incident Command System (“ICS”), a component of the National Incident Management System, which is a comprehensive national approach to incident management applicable at all levels of the Company’s Emergency Response Organization (“ERO”) and addresses the operation of Company Emergency Operation Centers (“EOCs”). The ERO required to implement the emergency procedures is activated employing a flexible and standardized management structure. Upon declaration of an emergency, the required EOCs are staffed accordingly. Briefings are conducted with the ERO to maintain situational awareness and relay the specifics of the emergency. See Table 2 below for the Storm ICS Actions.

**Table 2. ICS Actions**

<b>Actions Performed</b>	<b>Date and Time</b>
Operations Planning Call #1	February 1, 2023; approx. 11:00 a.m.
Operations Planning Call #2	February 2, 2023; approx. 10:30 a.m.

**C. Determination of Crew Needs and Pre-Staging**

Given the potential magnitude of the Storm and forecast of hazardous winds and potential for significant rainfall, the Company secured crews in advance from its contractors of choice and other outside contractors to support restoration efforts as part of its regional preparation for the Storm, consistent with its Emergency Response Plan.

See Appendix B for a daily accounting of resource staffing levels from pre-event through complete restoration. Appendix B indicates the number, type, and location of planned resources and the number, type, and location of actual resources secured. Appendix B also specifies whether the resources are internal, external contractors, or resources acquired through a mutual assistance agreement.

**III. THE STORM AND ITS IMPACT**

**A. Forecast**

The Company began monitoring the Storm on the morning of Tuesday, January 31, 2023, as initial weather forecasts identified a potentially strong wind system approaching from the south with freezing temperatures anticipated to combine with this front from the north. The event was expected to impact much of New England, but significant uncertainty remained in determining the Storm’s exact intensity and timing. These initial forecasts also underscored the challenges of predicting the top sustained wind speeds and maximum gusts, and the projected temperature low.

On the afternoon of Thursday, February 2, 2023, the forecast remained consistent that gusty damaging winds, followed by subzero freezing temperatures, would impact Rhode Island the evening on Thursday, February 2, 2023, into early Friday, February 3, 2023. Average winds gusts to the interior of the state were predicted to be between 40-45 mph with the southern part of the state experiencing 35-40 mph with potential maximum gusts up to 50 mph. As a result, the Company completed the final efforts to prepare for the oncoming weather event.

**B. Impact**

Ultimately, the Storm was a short duration weather event that resulted in moderate damage to the Company’s electrical system. The Storm brought strong wind and freezing below zero temperatures throughout the state. Peak wind gusts were generally in the 45-50 mph range, with Providence experiencing a peak gust of 46 mph. The Town of Burrillville was affected most heavily with approximately 41 percent of customers impacted by the event. See Table 3 below for the Storm impact.

**Table 3. Storm Impact**

Total Customers Impacted	20,355
Peak Customers Impacted	6,226
Date and Time of Peak	February 3, 2023; 7:25 p.m.
Date and Time Final Customer Was Restored	February 4, 2023; 9:25 p.m.
Number of Municipalities That Experienced Interruptions	33
Number of Distribution Feeders That Experienced Interruptions	64

Figure 1 below shows the number of customers interrupted and restored, by hour, for the period of February 3-4, 2023.

**Figure 1**

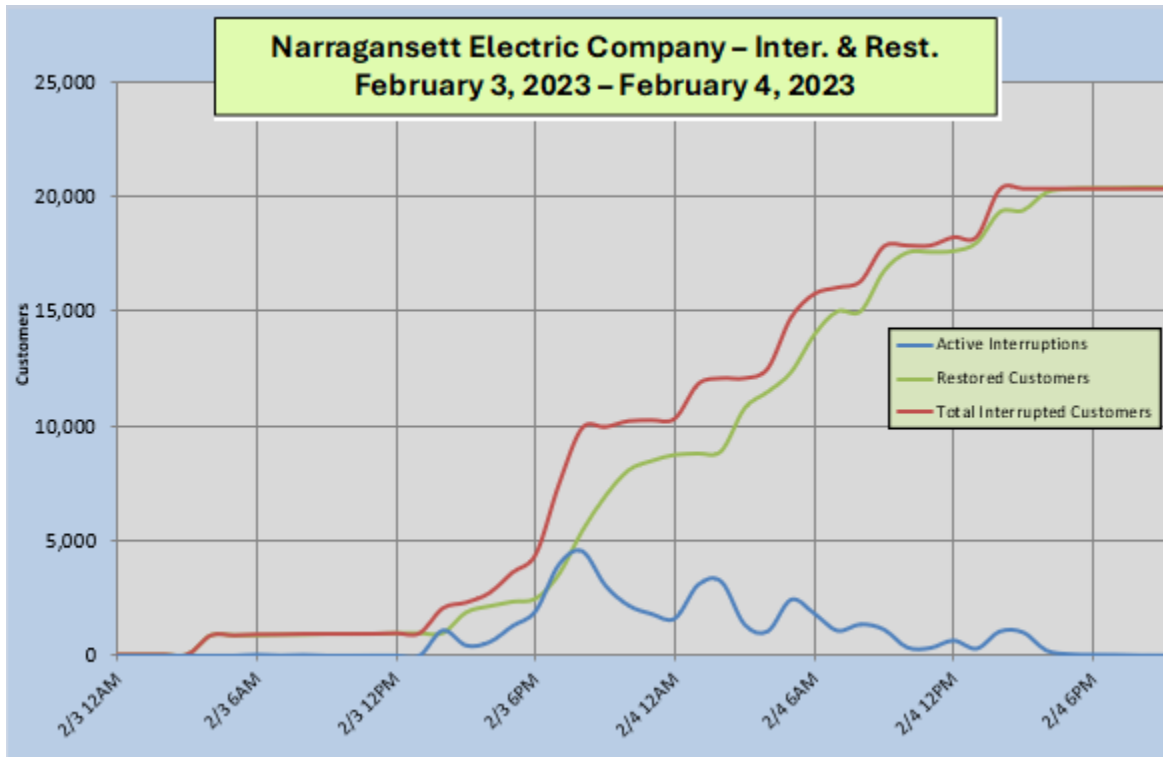


Figure 2 below shows all municipalities that experienced interruptions during the Storm.

**Figure 2**

<b>Town Name</b>	<b>Customer s Served</b>	<b>Total Customers Interrupted</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
BARRINGTON	6,896	331	4.80%
BURRILLVILLE	2,648	1,076	40.63%
COVENTRY	14,369	915	6.37%
CRANSTON	31,787	2,051	6.45%
CUMBERLAND	15,664	1,094	6.98%
EAST GREENWICH	6,389	1,032	16.15%
EAST PROVIDENCE	22,428	987	4.40%
EXETER	3,081	116	3.77%
FOSTER	2,055	53	2.58%
GLOCESTER	4,711	1,069	22.69%
HOPKINTON	3,970	32	0.81%
JAMESTOWN	3,362	23	0.68%
JOHNSTON	14,006	192	1.37%
LINCOLN	10,328	1,570	15.20%
LITTLE COMPTON	2,625	901	34.32%
MIDDLETOWN	8,456	722	8.54%
NORTH KINGSTOWN	13,989	1	0.01%
NORTH PROVIDENCE	16,103	252	1.56%
NORTH SMITHFIELD	5,854	102	1.74%
PAWTUCKET	33,911	1,369	4.04%
PORTSMOUTH	9,315	1,780	19.11%
PROVIDENCE	74,811	1,730	2.31%
RICHMOND	3,668	13	0.35%
SCITUATE	4,638	826	17.81%
SMITHFIELD	9,083	135	1.49%
SOUTH KINGSTOWN	15,090	421	2.79%
TIVERTON	8,317	73	0.88%
WARREN	6,095	66	1.08%
WARWICK	40,499	54	0.13%
WEST GREENWICH	2,841	1	0.04%
WEST WARWICK	14,514	231	1.59%
WESTERLY	14,544	9	0.06%
WOONSOCKET	18,712	15	0.08%



The following sections contain additional details and context regarding the Company's Storm restoration efforts.

#### **IV. RESTORATION**

##### **A. Timing and Priority of Service**

The Company implemented the system of prioritization for restoration found in its Emergency Response Plan, focusing first on public safety and then on customer interruptions that maximized restoration when lines were energized. The Company gave priority and consideration to critical facilities and concentrated efforts to restore service to any life support customers the Company was aware of who were impacted by the Storm as quickly as conditions warranted.

See Appendix C for a timeline of the storm progression, including the hour and date that constitutes the start of restoration and the hour and date that constitutes complete restoration. The hourly chronological restoration assessment in this appendix includes the number of customers out (in executable format) for the Company's Capital and Coastal regions, the total system, and each feeder affected.

See Appendix D for a summary of number of customer outages at peak and customer outage minutes, by cause, for the Company's Capital and Coastal regions.

See Appendix E for a specific list of all outages, in executable format, that includes detailed information for each outage. Also included in Appendix E is a listing of all outages caused by tree conditions as well as data regarding asset replacements for this event.

##### **B. Restoration Coordination**

The Company dispatched crews to respond to outages from the Control Room in Lincoln through the end of the Storm. Consistent with the Emergency Response Plan, the Company activated Police and Fire Coordinators for the Storm. These employees reported to Control Room Leads and were responsible for communicating the estimated times of arrival on all police and fire calls, with a standby condition noted. The Company did not deploy Task Force teams for this event or utilize any Staging Sites.

##### **C. Personnel Resources**

As part of its planning process, the Company prepared for a Type 3 event in Rhode Island based on the weather forecasts, resources, and operational situation. The Company's plan remained consistent throughout the Operations Planning Call #1 on February 1, 2023, as well as the Operations Planning Call #2 on February 2, 2023.

The Company secured a total of 111 internal and external field crews<sup>1</sup> to restore power to customers in Rhode Island, consisting of approximately 81 external crews and 30 internal crews. The internal and external field crew numbers included transmission and distribution overhead line, forestry, substation, underground, wires down, and damage assessment personnel.

See Appendix B for a daily accounting of resource staffing levels from pre-event through complete restoration.

The Incident Commander for Rhode Island Energy did not request mutual assistance from companies in the North Atlantic Mutual Assistance Group (“NAMAG”) to support restoration for this event.

#### **D. Safe Work Practices**

Safety is always at the forefront of Company operations, including and especially during activities associated with storm restoration. For each storm event, the Incident Command System structures designate a lead position for a Safety, Health, and Environment Officer. Safety messages are delivered on all calls to heighten awareness during preparation and restoration.

As with any storm, the Company assembled a safety team with area responsibilities, established the reporting hierarchy, and prepared and communicated organization charts. The safety team prepared safety notices and delivered them to all Company employees through corporate communications. Safety personnel were deployed to assist in specific geographic areas and delivered on-site safety orientations to Company workers and contractors prior to the start of each day. During the Storm, safety personnel visited work sites to advise Company personnel and contractors of safety issues and best practices. In addition, prior to the start of each new job, the work was reviewed by assigned crews, with a focus on safe working conditions for the specific job. These safety efforts helped the Company experience no injuries during the Storm.

### **V. COMMUNICATIONS DURING AND AFTER THE EVENT**

#### **A. Communication Regarding Estimated Times of Restoration**

The Company posted Estimated Times of Restoration (“ETRs”) on its website during the Storm using Outage Central, which provided real time ETR updates approximately every 15 minutes.

As crews were assigned and reported ETR updates based on their actual findings in the field, the Company uploaded the updated ETRs into Outage Central. The Company continued to update ETRs throughout the restoration process as information became available to the Company.

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<sup>1</sup> Crews typically include two or three people, although there may be some one-person crews in damage assessment, wires down, distribution line (troubleshooters), and substation personnel. Transmission crews typically include 6-10 resources.

## B. Intra-Company

The Company began preparing for the Storm on Wednesday, February 1, 2023, closely monitoring weather forecasts as the storm approached the southern region. As the weather forecasts developed, the Company held two Operations Planning Calls to coordinate the needed response from staff and personnel. The Company did not conduct any Briefings for this Storm; therefore, this report does not include Appendix A.

## C. Public Officials

### 1. Governor's Office

During the Storm, the Company's Regulatory and Government Affairs staff communicated with the Governor's office. Additionally, the Company also communicated with Rhode Island's legislative leadership leading up to and during the Storm.

### 2. Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission ("PUC"), Division of Public Utilities and Carriers ("Division"), Office of Energy Resources ("OER"), and Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency ("RIEMA")

The Company's Regulatory Liaison contacted the PUC, the Division, the Governor's office, and OER to provide updates throughout the Storm. See Table 4 below for a listing of updates along with a brief summary of the update provided.

**Table 4. Updates to the Division and OER**

<b>Date and Time of Update</b>	<b>Summary of Update Content</b>
February 1, 2023; 12:45 p.m.	Initial notification; weather forecast; resource planning efforts
February 2, 2023; 12:52 p.m.	Weather update; resource planning update
February 4, 2023; 9:48 a.m.	Weather update; resources update; Customer Outage and Restoration update
February 5, 2023; 8:47 a.m.	Final update; Customer Outage and Restoration update

During the event, the Company's Regulatory and Government Affairs staff provided updates to RIEMA regarding the Company's storm preparations and restoration efforts. The Company also utilized its RIEMA Liaison to post updates virtually on RIEMA's WebEOC and support as needed.

### 3. Municipalities

Based on the anticipated impact from this event, the Company was prepared to utilize the Municipal Room and its Area Community Liaison Coordinators to work with each Rhode Island city or town's emergency, Department of Public Works, and/or public officials as a dedicated liaison. The Company's Area Community Liaison Coordinators served as full-time resources

supporting impacted communities and enabled direct communications back into the Company’s public information coordinators and operations personnel.

**D. Customers**

The Company communicated with customers during the Storm through its Customer Contact Center, email, website, and social media. The Company’s Customer Contact Center secured additional staffing to respond to incoming life-support calls for those affected by outages, as well as additional staff to support the high call volume.

See Table 5 below for a detailed listing of each method of communication utilized throughout the Storm.

**Table 5. Communication Details**

<b>Method of Communication</b>	<b>Purpose of Interaction</b>	<b>Level of Interaction</b>
<b><u>Report Outage/Outage Follow-up</u></b>		
Number of Customer Calls Received by Customer Service Rep	Customer reports outage or issue	1029
Number of Customer Calls Received by Interactive Voice Response (“IVR”)	Customer reports outage or issue	448
Number of Customer Calls Received by 21 <sup>st</sup> Century	Customer reports outage or issue	313
Number of Outbound Calls to Life Support Customers, Type 4 Event or greater	Company notification and follow-up with Life Support Customers impacted by an outage	6291
<b><u>Automated Outage Updates</u></b>		
Number of Inbound and Outbound Text Messages	Outage notification, update, or update request from customer	28,633
Number of emails sent	Outage notification, update, or update request from customer	28,375
Number of outbound calls made	Outage notification, update, or update request from customer	92
<b><u>Web and Social Media</u></b>		
Number of customer hits on Company website during preparation for, and response to, the event	Customers seeking information	2311
Number of Facebook posts	Company preparation for the event, safety information, restoration updates	3
Number of tweets/re-tweets posted on X (formerly Twitter)	Company preparation for the event, safety information, restoration updates	3

## **E. Media**

The Company activated its Public Information Officer (“PIO”), along with additional PIO support staff for the Storm. The Company engaged both traditional and social media channels to distribute Storm and safety-related information. The Company’s Strategic Communications Department received no media requests for information, and no press releases were issued related to the Storm in Rhode Island. The Company received no feedback or comments from media outlets and social media were received and monitored regularly, and overall sentiment was generally neutral.

## **VI. TECHNOLOGY ISSUES**

The Company did not experience any technology issues that impacted the preparation, response, or restoration efforts during the Storm.

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

The Storm impacted the Company’s electrical system, resulting in power outages to 20,355 of the Company’s customers. The damage was caused primarily by strong wind causing tree failure and tree limbs to make contact with the Company’s wires and equipment. The Company followed its Emergency Response Plan and was fully prepared to respond to the Storm, having secured all necessary resources and outside contractors to aid in the restoration effort required for the forecast predicted, and maintained communications with stakeholders through a variety of channels throughout the Storm.

The Company utilized its own distribution line resources and transmission line crews, contractor distribution line crews, and contractor tree crews to restore power to its customers. Power was restored to 95 percent of customers impacted in 19.5 hours from the time of peak impact. The Company restored power to 100 percent of its customers impacted in approximately 42 hours from the time of the first customer impacted and in 26 hours from the time of peak impact. Power was restored to the final customer impacted by the Storm on Saturday, February 4, 2023, at approximately 9:25 p.m.

## **Appendices B-E**

Please see the Excel version of Appendices B-E.

Certificate of Service

I hereby certify that a copy of the cover letter and any materials accompanying this certificate was electronically transmitted to the individuals listed below.

The paper copies of this filing are being hand delivered to the Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission and to the Rhode Island Division of Public Utilities and Carriers.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Joanne M. Scanlon

April 25, 2024

Date

**Docket No. 2509 – The Narragansett Electric Company d/b/a Rhode Island Energy Storm Fund – Service List as of 4/8/2024**

<b>Name/Address</b>	<b>E-mail</b>	<b>Phone</b>
<b>Rhode Island Energy</b> Celia B. O’Brien, Esq. Rhode Island Energy 280 Melrose St. Providence, RI 02907	<a href="mailto:COBrien@pplweb.com">COBrien@pplweb.com</a> ;	401-578-2700
	<a href="mailto:AMarcaccio@pplweb.com">AMarcaccio@pplweb.com</a> ;	
	<a href="mailto:JScanlon@pplweb.com">JScanlon@pplweb.com</a> ;	
	<a href="mailto:SBriggs@pplweb.com">SBriggs@pplweb.com</a> ;	
	<a href="mailto:JOliveira@pplweb.com">JOliveira@pplweb.com</a> ;	
	<a href="mailto:KMSchneider@RIEnergy.com">KMSchneider@RIEnergy.com</a> ; <a href="mailto:JRArsenault@RIEnergy.com">JRArsenault@RIEnergy.com</a> ;	
<b>Division of Public Utilities</b> Christy Hetherington, Esq.	<a href="mailto:Christy.Hetherington@dpuc.ri.gov">Christy.Hetherington@dpuc.ri.gov</a> ;	401-780-140
	<a href="mailto:John.bell@dpuc.ri.gov">John.bell@dpuc.ri.gov</a> ;	
	<a href="mailto:Joseph.shilling@dpuc.ri.gov">Joseph.shilling@dpuc.ri.gov</a> ;	
	<a href="mailto:Margaret.L.Hogan@dpuc.ri.gov">Margaret.L.Hogan@dpuc.ri.gov</a> ;	
	<a href="mailto:Paul.roberty@dpuc.ri.gov">Paul.roberty@dpuc.ri.gov</a> ;	
	<a href="mailto:Ellen.golde@dpuc.ri.gov">Ellen.golde@dpuc.ri.gov</a> ;	
<b>File an original &amp; 8 copies w/:</b> Luly E. Massaro, Commission Clerk Public Utilities Commission 89 Jefferson Blvd. Warwick, RI 02888	<a href="mailto:Luly.massaro@puc.ri.gov">Luly.massaro@puc.ri.gov</a> ;	401-780-2107
	<a href="mailto:Todd.bianco@puc.ri.gov">Todd.bianco@puc.ri.gov</a> ;	
	<a href="mailto:Alan.nault@puc.ri.gov">Alan.nault@puc.ri.gov</a> ;	
	<a href="mailto:Cynthia.WilsonFrias@puc.ri.gov">Cynthia.WilsonFrias@puc.ri.gov</a> ;	

**Docket D-11-94 Review of Rhode Island Energy’s Storm Reports**

Christy Hetherington, Esq. Division of Public Utilities & Carriers	<a href="mailto:Christy.Hetherington@dpuc.ri.gov">Christy.Hetherington@dpuc.ri.gov</a> ;	
	<a href="mailto:Margaret.L.Hogan@dpuc.ri.gov">Margaret.L.Hogan@dpuc.ri.gov</a> ;	
	<a href="mailto:thomas.kogut@dpuc.ri.gov">thomas.kogut@dpuc.ri.gov</a> ;	
	<a href="mailto:linda.george@dpuc.ri.gov">linda.george@dpuc.ri.gov</a> ;	