

July 27, 2018

VIA HAND DELIVERY & ELECTRONIC MAIL

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

**RE: Docket D-11-94 – Review of Preparedness and Restoration Efforts by the State’s Electric Utility Companies Related to Tropical Storm Irene
March 13, 2018 Summary Report**

Dear Ms. Massaro:

Pursuant to Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission (PUC) Order No. 15360 (August 19, 1997) and paragraph 4(a) of the Joint Proposal and Settlement in Lieu of Comments Submitted by The Narragansett Electric Company¹ and the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (the Settlement), which the PUC approved in Docket No. 2509, I have enclosed 10 copies of National Grid’s summary report on the planning and restoration activities associated with the March 13, 2018 Winter Storm Skylar, which will likely qualify for inclusion in the Company’s Storm Contingency Fund. Paragraph 4(b) of the Settlement requires the Company to file with the PUC within 90 days after the storm a report that includes a description of the storm and a summary of the extent of the damage to the Company’s system, including the number and length of outages.

The Company will file a supplemental report detailing the incremental restoration costs resulting from Winter Storm Skylar once the Company accumulates the total costs and completes a final accounting of storm costs.

Thank you for your attention to this filing. If you have any questions, please contact me at 781-907-2121.

Very truly yours,



Raquel J. Webster

cc: Docket 2509 Service List
Docket D-11-94 Service List
Leo Wold, Esq.
John Bell, Division
Al Mancini, Division

¹ The Narragansett Electric Company d/b/a National Grid (National Grid or Company).

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

July 27, 2018
Date

**Docket No. 2509 – National Grid – Storm Fund
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Docket D-11-94 Review of National Grid's Storm Reports

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National Grid

The Narragansett Electric Company

**Report on
March 13, 2018, Winter Storm
Skylar Damage Assessment and
Service Restoration**

July 27, 2018

Docket No. 2509

Submitted to:
Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission

Submitted by:

nationalgrid

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**REPORT ON BEHALF OF
THE NARRAGANSETT ELECTRIC COMPANY d/b/a NATIONAL GRID
ON THE MARCH 13 2018 STORM DAMAGE ASSESSMENT AND SERVICE
RESTORATION EFFORTS**

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Narragansett Electric Company d/b/a National Grid (National Grid or the Company) presents the following report on the planning and restoration activities associated with the March 13, 2018 winter storm Skylar (Winter Storm Skylar or the Storm), which significantly impacted Rhode Island and other states in the Northeast region of the United States. Winter Storm Skylar was the third of several winter weather events that the Company prepared for and/or experienced within three weeks. For pre-planning purposes, the Company classified Winter Storm Skylar as a National Grid Type 4 emergency event, meaning that the Company estimated that restoration activities would generally be accomplished within a 24-hour period and that the event would typically result in interruptions for up to three percent of customers. According to forecasts, Winter Storm Skylar was projected to bring heavy snow and hazardous winds that could potentially cause significant damage to the Company's electric infrastructure. Ultimately, Winter Storm Skylar brought widespread winter storm conditions from all of New England inland to New York. The heaviest amounts of snow impacted three areas from eastern Connecticut to central Maine, western Connecticut north through Vermont, and Upstate New York. Winds gusts were much more isolated and confined to southeastern Massachusetts and portions of the Rhode Island coast. Rhode Island received a significant amount of snow. There was more than one foot of snow in much of the State, and towns in the northern part of the State had close to two feet of snow. Coastal portions of the state experienced gusts in the 45 – 65 mph range, with peak wind gusts of 64 mph in Newport. As soon as the actual impact of the Storm became evident, the Company quickly elevated its response to a National Grid Type 3 event, meaning that restoration activities are generally estimated to be accomplished within a 72-hour period. Type 3 events typically result in up to nine percent of customers interrupted. The combination of wet, heavy snow and high winds caused significant damage to the Company's electric infrastructure in Rhode Island, interrupting power to 67,739 (approximately 26,849 at peak) of the Company's customers. Overall, approximately 14 percent of the Company's customers in Rhode Island experienced outages, with impacts to all of the 38 communities served in Rhode Island.

The Company began preparing for Winter Storm Skylar on Monday, March 12, at 9:00 a.m. by conducting an operational planning call during which the Company reviewed the weather forecast and began planning for the possibility that the Storm would impact the Company's electric distribution system in New England. The Company then held its first pre-event Operations storm call on that same day at 10:00 a.m. As part of its preparation for the Storm, the Company opened a storm room in Providence on March 12 at 9:00 p.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 –these crews were already available because they assisted the Company with restoration following Winter Storm Quinn. Using its own crews and contractor resources, the Company restored power to 95 percent of its impacted customers in slightly over a day from the time of peak impact. The final customer from Winter Storm Skylar was restored on March 15, 2018 at approximately 3:51 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 Winter Storm Skylar and who were an integral part of the Company’s restoration efforts.

II. INCIDENT ANTICIPATION

A. Determination of Incident Classification

On Monday, March 12, 2018, the Company established a Branch Storm Room in Providence at approximately 9:00 p.m. On Tuesday, March 13 at approximately 12:00 p.m., the Company opened the Regional Emergency Operation Center in Worcester, Massachusetts, at approximately the same time that the decision was made to escalate the classification of Winter Storm Skylar to a Type 3 event. Although the System Emergency Operation Center was never opened and the System Level Emergency Response Organization was not officially activated, the Company conducted System Level Briefings on Tuesday, March 13, and Wednesday, March 14. As explained in more detail below, on March 12, the Company named a New England Incident Commander, who was primarily responsible for establishing the projected and actual incident classification level for Winter Storm Skylar.

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.

Through the system and operations Storm conference calls, the New England Incident Commander communicated the incident classification to Company leadership and organizations that the Company expected to engage in restoration or support activities. As noted in Section I above, on Wednesday, March 13 at approximately 12:00 p.m., – as soon as the actual impact of

Winter Storm Skylar became evident – the New England Incident Commander elevated the response classification from a National Grid Type 4 event to a Type 3 event.

B. Activation of Incident Command System

The Company utilizes the Incident Command System, 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 and addresses the operation of Company Emergency Operation Centers.

In the days leading up to Winter Storm Skylar, the Company was completing its restoration efforts for Winter Storm Quinn. Prior to activation of the Incident Command System to respond to Winter Storm Skylar, the Company’s Operations management personnel held an operational call to discuss planning efforts for the possibility of a severe snow and wind storm, which, according to forecasts, would bring hazardous conditions to New England. As a result of this call and in accordance with the Company’s Emergency Response Plan and anticipated Type 4 event, the Company activated the Branch Level Emergency Response Organization in Rhode Island prior to the first operations storm call – the Pre-Event Stage Briefing Call – scheduled for Monday, March 12, 2018 at 10:00 a.m. At that time, the Company planned to open its Rhode Island Storm Room in Providence on that same day at approximately 8:00 p.m. to support Rhode Island restoration. The New England Incident Commander activated the Rhode Island Branch Director, who was in charge of Rhode Island restoration and located in the Providence Storm Room, as well as several other Branch Directors in Massachusetts. Thereafter, the Company activated a number of other positions at the discretion of the Incident Commander and Branch Directors, considering the level of response expected for Winter Storm Skylar in their respective areas, including Rhode Island. At that time, the Company did not plan to open the Regional Emergency Operations Center in Worcester, Massachusetts, based on the anticipated Type 4 event level for this storm.

C. Determination of Crew Needs and Pre-Staging

Given the potential magnitude of Winter Storm Skylar and forecast of hazardous winds and heavy snowfall, the Company secured crews in advance from its contractors of choice and other outside contractors to support restoration efforts for all of New England as part of its regional preparation for the Storm, consistent with our Emergency Response Plan. These external resources had been secured previously to respond to winter Storms Riley and Quinn, and were already on Company property or at staging sites. As of March 12, 2018 at 12:00 p.m., the Company had 59.5 internal overhead line crews, 174 external overhead line crews, and 80 forestry crews (external) at its disposal to respond to Winter Storm Skylar. By approximately 3:00 p.m. on that same day, these numbers had been increased to include 61.5 internal overhead line crews, 174 external overhead line crews, 80 forestry crews, 11 internal underground crews, 37 internal substation resources, 5 internal transmission crews, and 66 internal wires down resources. The Company also had 10 damage assessment crews available at that time ready to be deployed to Rhode Island as needed.

III. THE STORM AND ITS IMPACT

A. Forecast

The Company monitors the weather forecast obtained from its weather provider, DTN, through detailed emails that the Company receives three times per day. Throughout the day, the Company also monitors the forecast from other various weather websites.

On Thursday, March 8, 2018, the weather forecast began to indicate a potential storm for Tuesday, March 13, but there was discrepancy in the models on exactly how close the system would get to the New England coast. Much of the model guidance suggested that the low pressure system would track to the south of the area, but there was some indication that the storm could bring chances for hazard level snow. During the next two days, the forecast continued to indicate a coastal system that would keep the main impacts south of New England. By Saturday, March 10, the forecast was beginning to indicate that there was a greater likelihood that heavy snowfall was possible across eastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

Beginning on Sunday, March 11, models began to trend to a deeper low-pressure system tracking closer to the coast. Forecasts for a higher impact storm began. With a blocking pattern in the North Atlantic becoming more amplified, forecasters were gaining confidence in a higher impact scenario for the Northeast. Confidence was high that the system had the potential to produce widespread snowfall amounts greater than 6 inches, with the highest confidence in northern/eastern New England. Rhode Island was forecast to receive snowfall in the 6-12 inch range, with wind gusts of 45-50 mph.

Although there was little change to the forecasted wind gusts on Monday, March 12, forecasts reflected increased snowfall amounts due to multiple weather models that were more closely aligned and increased confidence in the forecast. Projected snowfall for Rhode Island was now in the 10 – 18 inch range. Snow was projected to start out sticky and wet in consistency and change to a more normal consistency at approximately 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, March 13.

The Storm's impact began early in the morning on Tuesday, March 13. The forecast early in the day remained the same as the previous day for Rhode Island. As it became later in the day, forecasts reflected even higher snowfall amounts, with Rhode Island now forecasted to receive 13 – 22 inches of snow. Peak forecast wind gusts remained in the 40 – 45 mph range, predominantly along the coast.

B. Impact

Winter Storm Skylar was a severe weather event that resulted in significant damage to the Company's electrical system. The Storm brought widespread winter storm conditions from southern New England inland to New York. Rhode Island experienced wind gusts greater than 50 mph along the coast, with peak gusts of 64 mph in Newport and 52 mph at Rose Island. There was heavy snowfall in Rhode Island ranging from 12 – 25 inches across much of the State. The changeover from sticky, wet, snow to snow of a more normal consistency occurred somewhat later than was forecasted, bringing down tree limbs and power lines.

Winter Storm Skylar impacted a total of approximately 67,739 customers in the Company’s Rhode Island service territory. The Storm impacted approximately 26,849 customers at its peak, which occurred on Tuesday, March 13, 2018 at approximately 1:14 p.m. The Company restored power to all customers by March 15 at approximately 3:51 p.m. The Company experienced interruptions in all 38 Rhode Island communities it serves, with a total of 144 distribution feeders affected. Communities experiencing more than 50 percent of their customers interrupted included Hopkinton, North Kingstown, Little Compton, and Exeter with 100% of its customers interrupted.

Figure 1 below shows the number of customers interrupted and restored, by hour, from Tuesday, March 13 through Friday, March 16.

Figure 1

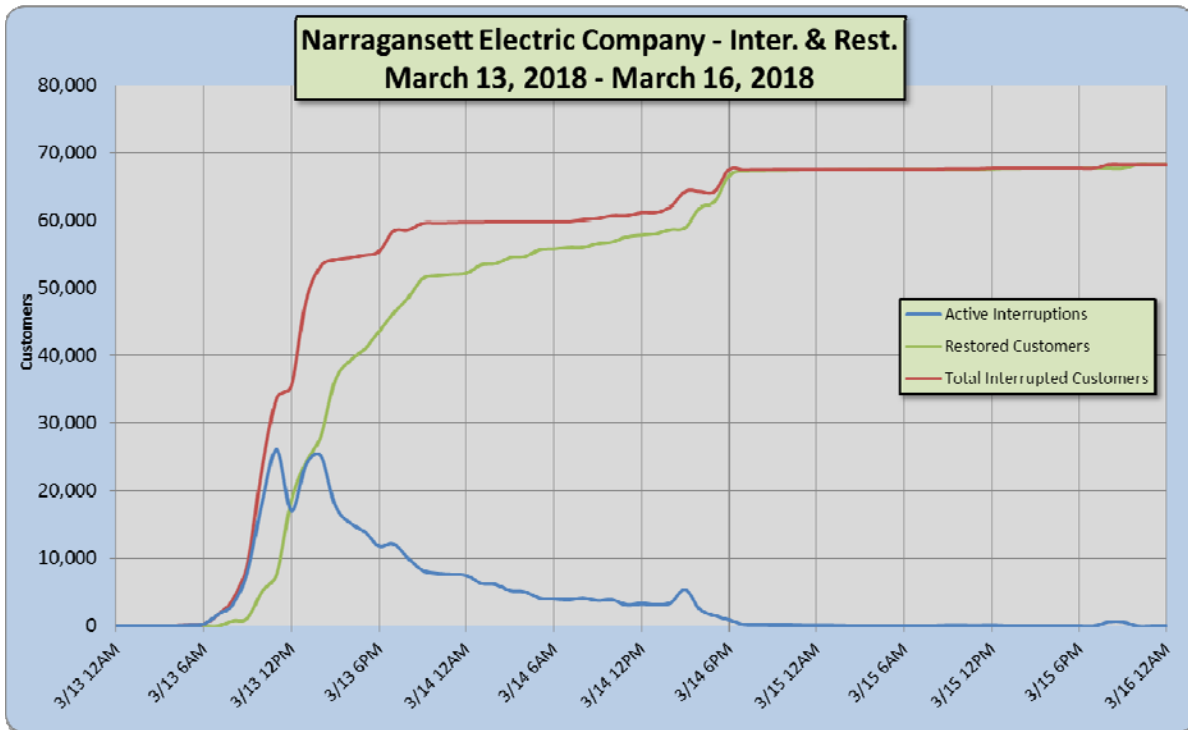


Figure 2 below shows all municipalities that experienced interruptions during the Storm.

Figure 2

Town Name	Total Customers Interrupted	Customers Served	Percent of Total
BARRINGTON	57	6,863	0.83%
BRISTOL	1,454	10,404	13.98%
BURRILLVILLE	168	2,618	6.42%
CENTRAL FALLS	797	7,328	10.88%
CHARLESTOWN	969	5,748	16.86%
COVENTRY	2,317	13,802	16.79%
CRANSTON	3,261	31,732	10.28%
CUMBERLAND	959	15,279	6.28%
EAST GREENWICH	2,885	6,120	47.14%
EAST PROVIDENCE	2,496	22,143	11.27%
EXETER	3,870	3,019	100.00%
FOSTER	190	2,028	9.37%
GLOCESTER	1,627	4,565	35.64%
HOPKINTON	2,129	3,941	54.02%
JAMESTOWN	6	3,331	0.18%
JOHNSTON	598	13,691	4.37%
LINCOLN	3,218	10,174	31.63%
LITTLE COMPTON	2,140	2,568	83.33%
MIDDLETOWN	1,253	8,345	15.01%
NARRAGANSETT	928	10,575	8.78%
NEWPORT	849	15,016	5.65%
NORTH KINGSTOWN	8,815	13,411	65.73%
NORTH PROVIDENCE	940	16,067	5.85%
NORTH SMITHFIELD	977	5,732	17.04%
PAWTUCKET	3,054	33,552	9.10%
PORTSMOUTH	1,034	9,205	11.23%
PROVIDENCE	3,018	72,205	4.18%
RICHMOND	1,428	3,439	41.52%
SCITUATE	533	4,551	11.71%
SMITHFIELD	462	8,832	5.23%
SOUTH KINGSTOWN	1,844	14,702	12.54%
TIVERTON	2,264	8,234	27.50%
WARREN	982	5,985	16.41%
WARWICK	6,307	40,359	15.63%
WEST GREENWICH	389	2,633	14.77%
WEST WARWICK	1,802	13,559	13.29%
WESTERLY	257	14,454	1.78%
WOONSOCKET	746	18,909	3.95%

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 restoration that maximized restoration when lines were energized. The Company gave priority and consideration to critical facilities and concentrated efforts to restore service to its life support customers as quickly as conditions warranted, also as set forth in the Emergency Response Plan.

B. Restoration Coordination

The Company dispatched outages from the Providence Storm Room beginning on Tuesday, March 12, 2018 at approximately 9:00 p.m. 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 the Storm 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 also activated and coordinated five Task Force teams in accordance with the Emergency Response Plan, consisting of Company and municipal personnel utilized to clear roads during emergencies.

On March 13 at approximately 6:00 a.m., the Company also mobilized the Providence wires-down room, with approximately 66 internal resources available, including wires-down appraisers, cut and clear restoration resources, and stand-by resources.

C. Personnel Resources

As part of its planning process, the Company prepared for a Type 4 event in Rhode Island based on the forecasts. The Company's plan remained consistent throughout the pre-event and System briefing calls on Tuesday, March 12, 2018 and the operational planning call on Wednesday, March 13. At approximately 12:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 13, the State Incident Commander elevated the response to Winter Storm Skylar to a National Grid Type 3 event as he monitored the impacts of Winter Storm Skylar on the Company's electric distribution system.

The Company initially secured 313.5 internal and external field crews¹ to restore power to customers in Rhode Island. By March 12 at approximately 3:00 p.m., the Company increased the number of available field crews to approximately 444.5 field crews to restore power to customers in Rhode Island. The field crews included approximately 254 external crews and 190.5 internal crews, including Damage Assessment crews. Many of these field crews were

¹ 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 six to ten resources.

already secured for the Company's response to Winter Storms Riley and Quinn, so they were able to immediately assist with restoration efforts for Winter Storm Skylar. The number of external crews would ultimately increase to approximately 336 crews on Wednesday, March 14 at 8:00 a.m., at which point the Company had a total of approximately 526.5 crews available to support restoration. The internal and external field crew numbers included transmission and distribution overhead line, forestry, wires down, substation, underground, and damage assessment personnel.

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 System and Regional Incident Command System structure 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, for Winter Storm Skylar, National Grid 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 National Grid 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 minimal injuries during Winter Storm Skylar. One employee was injured during snow removal activities.

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 Winter Storm Skylar 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.

B. Intra-Company

The Company began preparing for Winter Storm Skylar on Monday, March 12, 2018, at 9:00 a.m. by conducting an operational planning call, during which the Company reviewed the weather forecast and began planning for the possibility that the Storm would impact the Company's electric distribution system in New England. The Company then held its Pre-Event Stage Briefing Call that same day at 10:00 a.m. The Company also held its first System Briefing Call that same day at 3:00 p.m.

On Tuesday, March 13, 2018, the Company conducted its second System Briefing Call at 3:00 p.m. and its first Restoration Stage Briefing Call that same day at 4:30 p.m. The Company conducted its second and final Restoration Stage Briefing Call on March 14 at 9:00 a.m.

Additionally, the Company issued communications to field crews with both restoration and safety information throughout the Storm.

C. Public Officials

1. Governor's Office

The Company's Jurisdictional President communicated regularly with the Governor's office during Winter Storm Skylar.

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

The Company's Manager of Regulatory Affairs first reached out to the Division and OER on Monday, March 12, 2018 regarding the Company's preparation for Winter Storm Skylar, and the Manager and Director of Regulatory Affairs provided several updates through Wednesday, March 14. Additionally, the Company activated its RIEMA liaisons on March 13 at 8:00 a.m. The Company utilized RIEMA's WebEOC to facilitate communications with Emergency Support personnel throughout the event.

3. Municipalities

The Company opened a Municipal Room in Providence on Tuesday, March 13, 2018 at 7:00 a.m. The purpose of the Company's Municipal Room was to effectively manage and communicate with any potentially impacted communities in Rhode Island. The Municipal Room was located together with the Company's Branch Emergency Response Organization personnel. This arrangement afforded efficient access to key restoration personnel in researching and communicating the priorities of municipalities, including regarding critical customers such as hospitals, nursing homes, and schools. The Company deactivated the Municipal Room on Wednesday, March 14 at 4:00 p.m.

The Company also assigned Community Liaisons 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 Community Liaisons served as full-time resources supporting impacted communities and enabled direct communications back into the Company's Branch Municipal Room, public information coordinators, and Branch operations personnel. In particular, the Community Liaisons requested that communities prioritize their requests on blocked roads and other emergencies, which in turn were forwarded to the Storm Room Leads in order to provide Task Force teams with prioritized work. Throughout the duration of Winter Storm Skylar, the Community Liaisons contacted each of the communities in the Company's Rhode Island service territory a minimum of three times each day, and were deployed in the field for the communities impacted the most.

D. Customers

The Company constantly communicated with customers during and after Winter Storm Skylar through its call center, website, direct email, and social media. The Company monitored social media channels every day from 6:00 a.m. through 11:00 p.m. throughout the event and posted messages, shared resources, and responded to customer issues. This included, but was not limited to, communications in the following subject areas: information on how customers could stay safe during the Storm; information on what the Company was doing to respond to the Storm; information on how customers could contact the Company; information on how customers could receive text message alerts and updates from the Company; updates on the Company's damage assessment and restoration efforts; and updates on ETRs.

On Tuesday, March 12, 2018 at 11:00 a.m., the Company made an outbound call to all life-support customers to notify them of the upcoming weather and to recommend that they take necessary precautions and preparations to ensure their wellbeing in the event of an outage. The outbound call also informed life-support customers to contact 911 or their local public safety officials in the event of an emergency. The Company's Customer Contact Center secured additional staffing to respond to incoming life-support calls for those affected by outages and to support an expected high call volume. Outages from Winter Storm Skylar affected eight life-support customers, and the Company continued to make proactive calls to these customers until power was restored.

E. Media

The Company activated its Public Information Officer and related support staff for the Storm, who participated in the System, Pre-Event and Restoration Stage Briefing Calls conducted by Company operations. From March 12 through March 14, the Company distributed two Storm-related news releases to all Rhode Island news media outlets. The Company engaged traditional and social media channels to distribute the news releases, as well as additional Storm, restoration, and safety-related information. The Company's Strategic Communications Department fielded 22 media requests for information and interviews related to Winter Storm Skylar in Rhode Island. Overall, sentiment was generally positive as feedback and comments from media outlets and social media were received and regularly monitored.

VI. CONCLUSION

Winter Storm Skylar significantly impacted the Company's electrical system and resulted in power outages to more than 67,700 of the Company's customers. The damage to the Company's distribution infrastructure was widespread, mostly due to falling trees and limbs coming into contact with the Company's poles and wires. The Company 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.

Through use of the Company's own distribution line resources and transmission line crews, contractor distribution and transmission line crews, and contractor tree crews, the Company restored power to 95 percent of its customers impacted in slightly over a day from the time of peak impact. The Company restored the final customer on March 15, 2018 at approximately 3:51 p.m.

The Company understands the impact that electrical outages have on its customers. The Company is proud of the restoration work that it accomplished during Winter Storm Skylar and 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.

