

STATE OF NEW YORK

# Public Service Commission

Garry A. Brown, Chairman

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11001/10-E-0155

## PSC SEEKS COMMENTS ON TREE-TRIMMING PLAN

— Major Focus Placed on Downstate Utilities' Vegetation Management Practices —

Albany, NY—01/06/11—The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) announced it would seek public comment on proposed recommendations made by Department of Public Service Staff (Staff) regarding electric utility transmission right-of-way (ROW) management practices.

The Commission instituted this proceeding to consider New York State electric utility transmission right-of-way (ROW) management practices. In this proceeding, the Commission sought comment on the implementation of utility ROW management practices and the contribution of ROW management to the safety and reliability of the State's electric transmission system. In addition, comment was sought on the balancing achieved by these utility practices of the concerns of ratepayers, neighboring property owners, the public, and other interested parties. Several public statement hearings were held across the state. More than 200 comments were received.

Staff reviewed the comments and developed seven proposed recommendations for consideration by the Commission. These recommendations reflect the concerns expressed by the public and take into account the Department's responsibilities in regulating utilities' ROW management activities such as maintaining the highest degree of electric system safety and reliability for the benefit of New York's customers while taking cost and environmental impact into account.

The recommendations are also intended to ameliorate, to the extent practical, some of the impacts that may be associated with ROW vegetation management. Because the majority of

comments came from Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc. (Con Edison) and Orange and Rockland Utilities, Inc. (O&R) service territories, staff proposes some recommendations solely for those utilities, while other recommendations apply to all state regulated utilities.

### **Staff Recommendations:**

1. Con Edison and O&R shall provide individual written notification to all abutting and otherwise affected landowners and local municipal elected officials of cyclic ROW vegetation management work, not more than six months nor less than three weeks prior to the commencement of such work.
2. The notification required in Recommendation 1 shall describe the type of work to be performed, including the geographic limits of the work, the type and extent of vegetation management work planned, as well as provisions for cleanup and expected dates of commencement and completion.
3. Con Edison and O&R shall develop, for staff review and approval, a section in its Long Range Right of Way Management plan specifically addressing how it will conduct its ROW management work in high-density ROW areas.
4. All companies shall submit, for staff review and approval, updates to their websites and any printed materials detailing the rationale and practices governing ROW management programs.
5. All companies shall establish a direct line of communication between the public and the companies' vegetation management personnel for questions regarding ROW vegetation management work. Information advising of the opportunity for such communication and how such communication can be accessed shall be made available on the utilities' website, on all required notifications, and provided by field personnel and contractors upon request.
6. All companies shall develop sections in their plans to address the circumstances and criteria pursuant to which replanting would be warranted.
7. Each company shall develop, if one does not exist, a section in its plan detailing when and where otherwise undesirable vegetation would be allowed to remain on a ROW.

Interested parties are invited to file their comments electronically by February 2, 2011. These comments will be made available to all interested persons, under Case Number 10-E-0155,

through the Department's website at [http://www.dps.state.ny.us/New\\_Search.html](http://www.dps.state.ny.us/New_Search.html). Any party wishing to respond or reply to a comment made by another party may do so through reply comments which are to be filed electronically by February 22, 2011. Electronic filing for comments and reply comments may be completed by e-mailing the filing, under Case Number 10-E-0155, to [secretary@dps.state.ny.us](mailto:secretary@dps.state.ny.us). Those unable to submit comments electronically may do so by hard copy mailed to: Hon. Jaclyn A. Brillling, Secretary, NYS Public Service Commission, 3 Empire State Plaza, Albany, New York 12223.