

STATE OF NEW YORK

Public Service Commission

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TELECOMMUNICATION COMPANIES IMPROVE RESILIENCY — Improvements Made Following Moreland Commission Report —

Albany, NY—03/27/14—The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) today received a report from Department of Public Service staff on improvements that have been made by New York telecommunication companies to improve the resiliency of the telecommunication and restore service safely and as quickly as possible following emergency events and natural disasters, such as Superstorm Sandy.

The actions address findings made by the Moreland Commission on Utility Storm Preparation and Response and the NYS 2100 Commission, which were instituted by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, to improve coordination among utility companies for better management, preparation and response to storms like those that have affected New York State over the past few years, including Superstorm Sandy, Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee.

“New York’s telecommunication companies have been working steadily to improve future restoration and response efforts during and following storms and other emergencies,” said Commission Chair Audrey Zibelman. “As part of this continuing effort, the Commission will work to enhance communication and coordination between the communications companies and electric utilities to ensure rapid emergency response and service restoration.”

Through staff, the Commission will also explore how it could facilitate arrangements that would allow utilities and telecommunication service providers to share fuel supplies, it will hold discussions on State and local regulatory rules that might limit telecommunication providers'

ability to handle and transport fuel, and it will seek to improve the credentialing process for technicians to speed network restoration timeliness.

To ensure that network resiliency continues to be improved, the Commission staff put forth a series of final series of recommendations, which have or will be implemented, to improve companies' emergency response strategies, including:

- During and following a major storm, disaster, or other emergency, all telecommunications providers will update website information and/or issue press releases on a regular (daily) basis and provide accurate estimates of the number of customers affected, areas impacted, and reasonable restoration time estimates.
- Companies have expanded the use of newer technologies to communicate with customers during outages (i.e., email, text messaging, and social media).
- Because wireless communications services are critical during emergency events, wireline providers will coordinate to prioritize and expedite critical service restoration during emergencies.
- Telecommunications companies have improved communications and coordination with electric utilities that would mutually benefit telecommunications and electric network restoration, including the identification of critical infrastructure for priority restoration and the sharing of outage information among industries.
- Companies have improved communications between contractors, utility tree trimming crews and municipal highway departments to minimize unnecessary damage to telecommunications cables and prevent avoidable outages.
- All wireless carriers should establish free-roaming service agreements to assist their customers during emergency events, and mitigate customer impact and network congestion, during and immediately after, significant network-affecting events.
- All companies have reviewed their portable generator inventories, manpower levels, and refueling contracts to determine whether additional resources are necessary to expedite service restorations and prioritize equipment deployment plans. Emergency plans will be updated accordingly.
- Outage information from wireless carriers will be granular, to include cell sites and facilities impaired, impairment cause(s), estimated customer impact, and specific locations (municipality and/or county basis).
- All companies have reviewed their network architecture plans to determine whether battery backup enhancements are necessary to improve network resiliency.

- All companies have reviewed their facilities, especially those located in areas known for heavy rainfall and/or flooding, to determine whether targeted network enhancements, in the form of cable or equipment replacements or facilities additions, would help diminish repetitive, large-scale outages.

Staff's report, when issued, may be obtained by going to the Commission Documents section of the Commission's Web site at www.dps.ny.gov and entering Case Number 13-M-0025 in the input box labeled "Search for Case/Matter Number". Many libraries offer free Internet access. Commission orders may also be obtained from the Commission's Files Office, 14th floor, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223 (518-474-2500). If you have difficulty understanding English, please call us at 1-800-342-3377 for free language assistance services regarding this press release.