

BPU Storm Investigation Should Include JCP&L Online Reporting Crash In Hunterdon

The crash of Jersey Central Power and Light's (JCPL) on-line reporting system with Hunterdon County's Communications Center during tropical storm Isaias should be an investigation priority when the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) conducts its recently announced post mortem, according to Hunterdon Freeholder Board Deputy Director Sue Soloway.

Soloway stated, "JCP&L's on-line reporting tool is supposed to make it easier for 9-1-1 dispatchers to report outages, downed lines, road closures and other power infrastructure damage instantaneously to JCP&L, through the internet, instead of time consuming phone calls and faxes, as was done in the past.

Soloway pointed out, "Hunterdon County's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) has reported the system was not functional during the recent storm. Time is always of the essence for emergency response. Clearing roadways for emergency vehicles is a priority. The failure of JCP&L's on-line reporting created a great hindrance for Hunterdon County's public safety response."

Soloway said, "In addition to delays in service reinstatement, miscommunications to residents, and the continued problem with JCP&L infrastructure in Hunterdon County, we encourage the BPU to reach out to the County's Department of Public Safety and OEM for information regarding the on-line reporting crash during its investigation."

Following the Hunterdon Freeholder Board's call earlier this week for the BPU to be more accountable for storm response failures by power company, the BPU announced its division of reliability and security will conduct a postmortem investigation.

"The Freeholders are gratified that our letter to the BPU President Joseph Fiordaliso, along with many complaints by local officials and residents about storm response, has moved the BPU towards taking greater responsibility for the constant power problems and communication issues," Soloway said.