

March Storm Power Outage Response 'A Repeat of Previous Experiences' NJBPU Told

Hunterdon County's Public Safety Director told the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU,) at a public hearing in Sergeantsville on May 4th, that the response by utility companies to the March, 2018 storms, "was inadequate, uncoordinated, and a repeat of previous experiences."

Numerous local officials and residents appeared at the hearing called by the BPU to provide their testimony with regard to the power outages that ranged over a period of days during wind and snow storms in early March.

Public Safety Department Director George F. Wagner, an over 30 year veteran of service in Hunterdon County, who oversees the County Communications Center and also serves as County Chief of Staff, told the BPU Members, "An incident, such as a power outage, must be managed effectively to ensure minimum adverse impact to public safety. Mismanaged events can become large-scale disasters."

Wagner noted the utilities serving Hunterdon County have had, "A continued lack of improvement or compliance with the recommendations previously cited in the BPU's 2012 Report entitled PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF EDCS IN 2011 MAJOR STORMS."

The BPU has announced that President Joseph Fiordaliso has called for a review of more than 100 utility storm protocols ordered by the BPU following Superstorm Sandy in 2012 and Hurricane Irene in 2011, to ensure that those protocols were being followed and to recommend changes.

The Sergeantsville public hearing was the fifth of five hearings by the BPU following the March storms. Other hearings took place in Bergen, Morris, Camden, and Monmouth Counties.