

TOWNSHIP OF

# Parsippany-Troy Hills

Mayor's Office



Michael A. Soriano  
Mayor

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August 11, 2020

Charles E. Jones  
Chief Executive Officer  
FirstEnergy Corp.  
76 South Main Street  
Akron, Ohio 44308

Joseph L. Fiordaliso  
President  
New Jersey Board of Public Utilities  
44 S. Clinton Avenue  
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Mr. Jones and President Fiordaliso,

About 70% of Parsippany residents lost power as a result of Tropical Storm Isaias. Over half of our township was out of power for at least two days, and thousands of residences and businesses did not see their power restored for four, five, or even six days.

This occurred during the course of a global pandemic that has left many residents dependent on household power to work, conduct business, educate their children, and care for their loved ones. Our society has never been more dependent on stable, reliable electricity than in the year 2020. This outage, more than any other in recent memory, has brought into focus the need to change the way we think about utility operations and infrastructure moving forward.

Earlier this week, Bergen County Executive Jim Tedesco called on PSE&G, which serves his region, to reimburse customers for the cost of food, medication, and other perishables for both residences and businesses which lost power for 48 hours or more during last week's storm. He further called on the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities to make this a requirement in the case of future outages.

I am in lockstep with the supporters of this idea, and I am joining this call to action. As an electrician by trade, I understand the difficulties surrounding our power grid. However, most of the residents of Parsippany experienced a severe and unnecessary hardship in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Isaias, in the midst of a global pandemic and economic crisis. I have heard from hundreds of residents over the last week who are justifiably angry with JCP&L's response. Now that the power is fully restored, further action on your part is needed.

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This concept is not without precedent. Con Edison is offering this program to their customers as I write this letter. I implore you to ensure that JCP&L does the same.

As one of the few electricians serving as a Mayor in New Jersey, I would also like to offer my constructive thoughts on improvements to our power grid. This is not a comprehensive plan, but a few key suggestions to start mitigating the number of outages we experience and the length of time before restoration.

- **Accelerate the installation of "TripSaver" smart reset devices.** TripSavers can save time, equipment costs, and labor costs. After the initial investment, labor and repair costs will decrease substantially, as will the time it takes for customers to be restored to power.
- **Make our substations more resilient to extreme weather conditions.** My understanding for the first few days of the outage was that extensive damage to substations delayed the response to neighborhood outages. As hubs of power generation, a more resistant class of substations will leave more customers with power following major storms, and accelerate restoration times for those who do lose power.
- **Installation of smart utility poles:** Samuel Morse installed the first utility poles in the 1840s. Other than weather treatment, this system has seen little change since that time. Smart utility poles will both accelerate the trouble-shooting process and vastly improve monitoring capabilities over the grid.

All of these ideas, as well as many others that are useful and necessary, will require an investment on the part of JCP&L. Given the extensive damage done by what was a relatively quick storm, these investments are necessary, and the BPU must act to ensure these changes are made.

Our residents, your customers, deserve better. I hope you will take this letter seriously, and begin to implement new business practices to tangibly improve the outcomes for families in your service area.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Soriano  
Mayor, Township of Parsippany-Troy Hills