

TROPICAL STORM IRENE LEGISLATIVE HEARINGS

Recommendations

1 Improve Communication Between Municipalities and Utilities

- a. Require municipalities and utilities to create a communications plan addressing the time period prior to, during and after an emergency situation. The plan should include:
 - i. Contact information for the chief municipal official and the utility company representative;
 - ii. How often and through what method utility companies will disseminate updates to municipal officials on a daily basis during an emergency situation;
 - iii. List of priority areas, such as hospitals, nursing homes, grocery stores and other business centers in each municipality. Municipalities should update the list and send it to the utility companies on a yearly basis.
 - iv. How and when restoration schedules will be disseminated by the utilities during and after the emergency situation
 1. to the municipal officials;
 2. to the public in a transparent manner; and
 3. through agreed upon media outlets, which will be used to disseminate information to the public, such as updated time tables for power restoration.
- a. Require trained, informed utility representatives in each municipality or region.
- b. Create a list of residents, including contact information, with urgent medical needs, such as dialysis, in each municipality. A process for allowing residents to opt-in on this list will be created. This list must be exempt from the Freedom of Information Act.
- c. Require regular planning meetings (annually or more frequently at least semi-annually) between municipal, regional, and utility representatives.

2 Regional and Municipal Emergency Response Plan

- a. Require the Council of Governments (COGs) to work with their member towns to create a regional emergency response plan. This plan will include:
 - i. Regional command centers;
 - ii. Regional shelters;
 - iii. Regional communication centers;
 - iv. Regional points of contact with state officials, utilities, and emergency personnel.

3 Tree Trimming

- a. Require utilities to institute a shorter tree trimming cycle than the existing one.
- b. Expand the utilities' authority to increase the distance within trimming zones to allow them to cut back trees and branches that may impact power lines.

4 Electric Utilities

- a. Require utilities to overlay electric grid maps with town maps.
- b. Require better management of out of state line crews.
- c. Require coordination of utility line crews and municipal DPW workers, particularly in regard to clearing roads to allow for emergency vehicles to pass if necessary.

5 Wireless Utilities

- a. Include cell phone company infrastructure sites on priority lists for electric restoration.

6 Reverse 9-1-1

- a. Require yearly “test” for municipalities to try their Reverse 9-1-1 system.
- b. Clarify guidelines for when the Reverse 9-1-1 system can be activated by municipalities.
- c. Create an outreach plan to educate residents and encourage them to sign-up their additional communication devices in the event of future emergency situations.
- d. Ensure that all municipalities have the necessary training to effectively use their Reverse 9-1-1 system in the event of an emergency.