

**PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION  
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120**

**Prevention and Mitigation of  
Extended Service Outages**

**Public Meeting November 10, 2011  
2271989-CMR**

**JOINT MOTION OF CHAIRMAN ROBERT F. POWELSON  
AND VICE CHAIRMAN JOHN F. COLEMAN, JR.**

Electric utilities operating in Pennsylvania have a duty to provide safe and reliable service to customers.<sup>1</sup> As part of its statutory powers, the Commission is authorized to adopt and enforce rules to ensure that electric utilities provide safe and reliable service.<sup>2</sup> This includes rules relating to the frequency, scope and duration of electric service outages that may be caused by extreme weather events. It is self-evident that these types of outages cannot be completely prevented for various reasons, including the strength and unpredictability of weather and the absence of legal authority to remove trees located outside of a utility's rights of way. Further, the Commission must also balance the reliability of service with affordability of service; an electric distribution system completely immune to weather events would not be affordable for many customers.

However, the Commission expects that customers experiencing service outages will be restored safely and within a reasonable period of time. The Commission further expects that electric utilities will appropriately invest in their distribution systems and give the necessary level of priority to the most troubled segments.

Unfortunately, much of Pennsylvania suffered a series of extreme weather events over the past six months that caused many electric customers to experience extended service outages. While the large majority of customers are typically restored within twenty four hours of interruption, many in the past six months experienced outages of longer duration, and a small percentage of customers have suffered outages of up to a week or even longer. The Commission wishes to verify these facts, and investigate whether there are additional remedies that can and should be adopted to improve the reliability of service, particularly during extreme weather events. To accomplish this, pursuant to our authority under Section 504 of the Public Utility Code,<sup>3</sup> we direct all electric distribution companies to:

1. Provide a list circuits or segments of circuits that experienced service outages of a duration greater than 24 hours within the last six months. Separate lists should be provided for circuits that were fully or partially out 24 to 48 hours, 48 to 72 hours, and 72 hours and longer. Where there are instances of multiple outages of 24 hours or greater occurring on a circuit over the past 6 months, please list each instance separately and group the instances (where necessary) by whether the outages were 24-48 hours, 48-72 hours, or greater than 72 hours. Please list the circuits by location and provide the date and

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<sup>1</sup> 66 Pa. C.S. § 1501.

<sup>2</sup> 66 Pa. C.S. § 501.

<sup>3</sup> 66 Pa. C.S. § 504.

time of the first interruption and the date and time the final customer was restored for each circuit. Indicate whether any of the above circuits were also among the electric distribution company's worst performing 5% of circuits identified in the Quarterly Reliability Reports for the first three quarters of 2011.

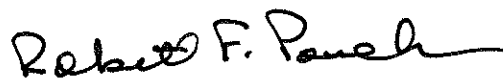
2. Provide detailed explanations of the restoration activities associated with these circuits for each outage listed, including a general description of the system damages encountered. Describe any other mitigating factors that hampered restoration efforts for each outage listed. Also provide a general description of the terrain, foliage, topography, and customer density associated with each circuit.
3. Offer any corrective actions planned or contemplated to reduce the frequency, scope and duration of outages on either the circuits impacted by the weather events and/or the worst performing circuits along with any suggestions that would reduce the frequency, scope and duration of outages on these circuits.

Responses to these questions should be filed with the Commission within thirty days of the entry of this Motion. The Office Technical Utility Services will prepare a report summarizing these responses and providing recommendations for future action by the Commission.

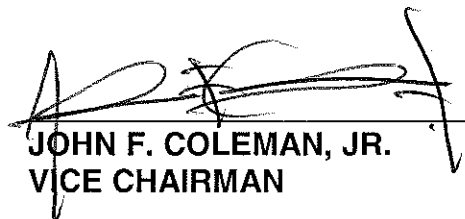
**THEREFORE, WE MOVE THAT:**

The Law Bureau prepare an Order consistent with this Motion.

**DATE: November 10, 2011**



**ROBERT F. POWELSON  
CHAIRMAN**



**JOHN F. COLEMAN, JR.  
VICE CHAIRMAN**