BEFORE THE NEW YORK STATE SENATE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

PUBLIC HEARING ON

"TROPICAL STORM IRENE" RESPONSE

Nassau County Office Building
Legislative Hearing Room
1550 Franklin Ave.
Mineola, NY 11530

September 22, 2011
9:45 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

PRESIDING:

Senator Carl L. Marcellino
Chair

SENATE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator John J. Flanagan

Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr.

Senator Owen H. Johnson

Senator Kenneth P. LaValle

Senator Jack M. Martins

ASSEMBLY MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblyman David G. McDonough

Assemblyman Edward P. Ra

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SENATOR MARCELLINO: Good morning.

My name is State Senator Carl Marcellino.

I am the chairman of the New York State Senate Committee on Investigations, Taxation -- a dirty word -- and Government Operations.

And, we're here for a hearing on the response and reaction to the "Tropical Storm Irene."

Right now, I would like everyone, if you would, to stand, and join us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. And to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Thank you.

Just so everyone knows, this hearing is being simulcast on the Senate website, and we are -- it can be accessed by computer. And, it will be posted, and can be reheard at a later date if you would like to.

I am joined today by my colleagues:

To my left, Senator Ken LaValle;

To my right, Senator Chuck Fuschillo, Senator Jack Martins, Assemblyman David McDonough.

And we have, Assemblyman Ra. Good friend,

and son of Joe.

Ladies and gentlemen: The purpose of this hearing is to investigate, what I consider to be the serious lack of planning and communication by LIPA, National Grid, in the wake of "Tropical Storm Irene."

This hearing will examine their response to pre-storm plannings, their response time, customer communication, and what could be done to improve their system, of both communication and repair; both, communicating with the public, their customers, and, communicating with the crews, who, in my opinion -- and I think I share -- it's shared by all of my colleagues -- the crews did a heck of a job.

They were out there in adverse conditions, and, in many cases, were risking their lives, working with active lines and power lines, and determining -- climbing up trees, and determining, what was good and what was bad, and, what was on and what was off.

They did a heck of a job out there. And, we congratulate them, we commend them, for their efforts.

But, we do believe there was a lack of

communication between central office and central systems, and the crews; and central office and central systems, and the customers.

People were not getting adequate service. They're not getting adequate communications and an adequate response when they had questions.

We could -- on August 28th, as we all know, the tropical storm -- and it was a tropical storm -- "Irene" hit Long Island with winds around 60 miles per hour.

The storm blew down trees, power lines, resulting in over 500,000 customers without power; households without power.

It took LIPA and National Grid over seven days to fully restore all their customers, and with a majority waiting over four days for their electrical power.

I would like the read to you from a portion of the mission statement that LIPA posts on its website, and it puts out in press releases.

"Our mission is to provide highly reliable, economical electric service through our valued work force, with a commitment to superior customer service, accountability, and transparency in all of our operations while being recognized as a leader in

the advancement of efficiency and renewable energy."

They had a hurricane drill, which included -- this comes from the 2010 news release, that was released in July, on July 14th.

"This year's hurricane drill will include new operating procedures and an updated communications plan that LIPA has implemented as a part of feedback the utility received from the March nor'easter and last month's microburst storm that affected thousands of customers in the town of North Hempstead.

"Highlights of the communication plan includes: A special phone system that allows LIPA to call customers experiencing outages, to update them on their status; as well as, a dedicated phone line, where customers can leave their number for a callback from LIPA, to receive the latest information on the restoration status of their home or business.

"Over the next few weeks, LIPA will also complete upgrades to its Storm Center website, that will provide better information, and will allow customers to report outages on-line rather than using a telephone."

Down the road -- further down on their sheet:

"To help minimize storm damage LIPA's electric system" -- "to LIPA's electric system, LIPA has an aggressive tree-trimming program throughout the year, to identify and trim tree limbs in rights-of-way and along the easements that could potentially cause outages during and after a storm."

Next paragraph.

"Immediately after the storm outages will be" -- "storm outages will be evidenced to LIPA via its commuter" -- "a computerized control system. LIPA's computer systems automatically detect neighborhood service interruptions, and begin the restoration process by alerting systems and operators of the outage."

This was also in the 2009 release, and also in the 2008 releases. And, in fact, the 2008 and 2009 releases are identical in -- word-for-word.

My first question to the gentleman who are here from LIPA and National Grid is, basically, this: What the hell happened?

My customers are outraged.

They couldn't get through.

And when they got through, they couldn't get answers.

And when they got answers, they weren't

accurate.

The website was never updated in an effective way. Most of the time, it wasn't updated.

So, gentlemen, that is, basically, going to be my question: What happened? And why did this system, in my mind, and many of my constituents' mind, break down?

Senator Fuschillo.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Thank you very much, Senator Marcellino.

I too share the exact same sentiments and comments regarding the hurricane, having representing the south shore of, Nassau, and Suffolk County, the Jones Beach waterline.

Now, my district, it appears was severely hit hard. And we faced the same frustration that you and many of my colleagues up here did.

Assemblyman McDonough and I share the same representative areas.

And I think the biggest frustration was, the lack of information, the lack of coordination.

We have a speaker that's going to testify here today from one of my villages, Mayor Altadonna, who is the mayor of Massapequa Park.

90 percent of the residents in his village

were without power, and he received no communication at all.

Him and I were talking back and forth, and I finally had to go to the Governor's Office to get some answers.

But, we experienced no coordination with LIPA, to the town of Hempstead, to the town of Oyster Bay. And, that was echoed from the supervisors themselves.

The County Executive did an admirable job. Was very visible in my district, bringing response crews in there as quickly as possible.

But, we faced the same comments from the hundreds of e-mails and phone calls we faced during that day.

One East Farmingdale resident wrote to me:

"I called LIPA three times, and each time, I was assured I would be called back with further updates. Never happened.

"I finally received the computerized update call early Friday night, and they told me that my power would be restored by 9 p.m. It was on 2 p.m. that day.

"I went to a family who was without power for seven days, told me, every time they called LIPA,

they received a different answer. Sometimes they would tell them, that, "Hey, maybe the power's on already, I don't know. Turn your lights on."

You know, unexcuse -- inexcusable, insulting.

The rate payers pay the highest utility rates in the country.

Comments from Senator Flanagan's Office, were, that a LIPA truck, or a truck from Michigan, was driving down, and heard a generator running on a block. And they stopped, by chance, to knock on the door. And they said, "Our paperwork shows that you have power. Why is your generator on?"

And this was a common occurrence, comments to -- that Assemblyman McDonough and I faced from residents in North Merrick.

One woman had -- was on oxygen. Called LIPA.

And LIPA said: Well, look, we don't have any generators. Maybe your fire department does. If not, you know, maybe go to the hospital.

Inexcusable.

Inexcusable, at a time of emergency, and a time of crisis.

I want to thank my colleague, the Chair of the Senate Investigations Committee, Senator Carl Marcellino, for holding this hearing.

And we, hopefully, look for some answers.

You know, LIPA just wasn't created yesterday. And it seems like the residents of, Nassau, and Suffolk County, were better prepared than the administration itself.

So, I look forward to the responses, and the questions that will be posed today.

Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you, Senator.

We've been joined by our colleagues, Senator Owen Johnson, and Senator LaValle.

I'm sorry, and Senator John Flanagan.

Senator LaValle.

SENATOR LAVALLE: Thank you.

I'm just going to be very, very brief.

Senator Marcellino said it all.

Certainly, we thank the workers who were out there in very difficult circumstances.

I think it was publicized, that, being a former teacher, I instinctively had to give you a grade, and I gave you an F.

You should be thankful that Donald Trump is not the chairman of your board, because he would say, "You're fired."

Thank you.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Senator Martins.

SENATOR MARTINS: Thank you.

I'll echo the sentiments, obviously, the frustration, that I heard, and that my constituents, and I'm sure Assemblyman Ra's constituents, where we overlap, was, the lack of communication. That there was no perspective.

There were -- in many instances, in most instances, there was an inability to get through. And, certainly, when they were able to get through they were not able to have any kind of insight as to when the power would be restored.

Things went wrong. And I think we can all agree that things went wrong.

And I would welcome this opportunity to revisit what went wrong, so that we can work together, in terms of coming up with alternatives and solutions so that we can get things right next time.

I found that my office oftentimes became the recipient of a lot of the frustration -- I'm sure my colleagues share that -- because, we were answering our phones; we did have people who were receiving those calls. And, we, in turn, were forwarding those calls and those sentiments and those concerns,

and in cases where there were emergencies, as Senator Fuschillo just mentioned, getting answers, because people simply couldn't get through to LIPA.

So, let's reevaluate how we do things, let's reevaluate how LIPA does things.

Let's look at the fact, that, we do have tree-lined streets, and we love our tree-lined streets on Long Island. And, we do have overhead lines. But, there are things that can be done.

And I think, you would agree, and certainly I understand, there are things that can done, to better coordinate, to avoid these kinds of pitfalls in the future.

So, I'm looking forward to your testimony, and looking forward to the dialogue, in hopes of coming up with certain solutions.

Thank you.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you, Senator Martins.

Senator Flanagan.

SENATOR FLANAGAN: Thank you very much, particularly to Senator Marcellino.

Having heard the comments of my colleagues, I'll just join in support of the -- many of the comments that I've heard, but add a couple of other

things.

I think, we are representatives of our constituents.

And, I know my own frustration, human nature being what it is, I can't stand when I have to go through automated menus when I'm trying to get somebody on the phone.

And it's kind of ironic, because it's pretty easy to call LIPA on a day like today. You have a question about a bill, you have something, it's relatively easy to get somebody on the phone.

So, the fact that it became so difficult to do so during a time of, crisis, if you will, is something that is disconcerting to us as elected officials, and to the public.

And, I don't say this in any selfish vein, but, part of the challenge we have, is that people don't think we're doing our jobs when we can't get answers, that we can go back to them.

And, even if it's an answer that they don't like, getting a straight, honest answer is worth its weight in gold.

So, I'm going to make one comment similar to Senator LaValle, and expand on it a little bit.

The people who were out there, in the field,

on the streets, working in those bucket-trucks, and doing all the hard work, and even the people in the call center, I think they did a fantastic job under very difficult conditions.

And we should not lose sight of that.

And I'm going to close with this comment:

I find it disconcerting that many members of the public, despite their frustration, were taking it out on the people who were trying to make their lives better.

I think we need to recognize, that, the linemen and the people who were out there, they're just trying to do their job. And, at some point, getting, 16, 18 hours of overtime, it's just not worth it.

So, I think, as the public, and a general constituency, we need to be more thoughtful about the people who are out there actually trying to restore the power.

Thank you.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you, Senator Flanagan.

Senator Johnson has passed, and will listen.

Assemblyman McDonough.

ASSEMBLYMAN MCDONOUGH: Thank you, Senator.

I just would like to add to what has already been said, and not to delay it any longer.

I'm looking forward to hearing the testimony, and mainly the answers to the questions that have already been raised.

Senator Fuschillo has said what happened in our shared district. And, I concur, that it's time to find out what has been done, and what will be done in the future.

So, thank you, Senator, very much.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Assemblyman Ra.

ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Thank you, Senator.

Just to echo what the Senators here have said, I would like to thank Senator Marcellino for including myself and Assemblyman McDonough in this hearing today.

Me and Senator Martins do have major overlap to our districts, and I think he expressed the sentiment that we heard from our constituents who were calling our office, you know, all day long, in those days immediately following the hurricane.

And we know, it's been said before: They wanted information. They wanted to have some idea as to what was going on.

And, the information was all over the place,

from, no information at all, to inaccurate information. And, it became very frustrating, and very understandably so.

And I would -- like as some of any Senate colleagues have said, it ended up, in a lot of cases, being taken out on workers that were out there in not the greatest conditions, and unsafe conditions, working hard to restore their power. And, you know, at times, that was very unfortunate to see. But, these constituents from around our districts had no other place to turn.

And that was really the most frustrating part for them, as it was for myself.

So, I'm looking forward to hearing your comments on how we can -- what went wrong. And, also, how we can improve on this system, to make sure that the response is better, and the information that is shared is better, next time we have to deal with something of this nature.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you, Assemblyman.

We've asked Mr. Hervey, and Mr. Bruckner from National Grid, to testify at the same time, so questions could be asked and answered of both of them. This way, we wouldn't have to go back and forth, waiting for their testimony.

We'll start with Mr. Hervey.

MICHAEL HERVEY: Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: I don't think your microphone is on.

Is there a way to get him power?

[Laughter.]

No pun intended.

MICHAEL HERVEY: Is that better?

SENATOR MARCELLINO: I see nobody got it out there.

MICHAEL HERVEY: Hello?

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Try the other one.

MICHAEL HERVEY: Good morning, Senator, and thank you.

My name is Michael Hervey, and I'm the chief operating officer of the Long Island Power Authority.

And I certainly welcome the opportunity to address you here today, and to clarify some issues, and explain some of the issues around storm restoration, and LIPA storm preparation and restoration efforts revolving around "Hurricane Irene."

I hope that in doing so that you'll --

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Let me just -- I'm sorry

to interrupt, but let me just correct that, because it wasn't a hurricane. It was downgraded to a tropical storm before it hit Long Island.

And I'm not trying to pick hairs, I'm not trying to split hairs, but our -- it helps if we refer to it for what it was, for, not only this -- purposes of this hearing, for the record, but for the insurance purposes.

It was -- it's been declared by Mr. Lasky, the head of our financial services department, that it was a tropical storm, and the insurance company should treat it as such, not a hurricane.

So, please.

Thank you.

MICHAEL HERVEY: So, thank you.

I accepted this invitation today, even though LIPA had a previously scheduled trustee meeting for the same day. We did take the opportunity to move the trustee meeting back until a 12-noon start, but I very much appreciate the Committee's willingness to help work with the tight schedule today.

"Irene" was the worst storm to hit Long Island in the last 26 years, since "Hurricane Gloria" in 1985, and the third-worst storm in recent history.

"Irene" was not just a LIPA event, but rather an event that affected the entire Eastern Seaboard, and caused approximately 7 million customer outages in the U.S., from North Carolina to England -- New England.

"Irene" first hit Long Island on August 27th at approximately 5 p.m., bringing pounding rain and sustained winds of 40 miles an hour, up to 50 miles an hour, and gusts up over -- to over 80 miles an hour, over a 20-hour period.

During those hours, dozens of communities were flooded, over 10,000 tree problems on the electrical system occurred, with uprooted and damaged trees causing, falling branches, toppled utility poles, downed power lines. And, ultimately, 523,000 --

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Mike, I apologize for interrupting again, but that microphone is either low volume, and whoever controls it could raise it a little bit; or, if you could just move it forward, I would appreciate it, so that -- because we can barely hear you up here. I can imagine the audience is not getting much.

MICHAEL HERVEY: "Irene" didn't leave us until August 28th, at approximately 2 p.m. And it

left a trail of destruction that spanned the 118-mile length and 23-mile width of Long Island, including outages to approximately 48 percent of LIPA's customers. This event impacted virtually every community on Long Island.

As of September 2nd, on that particular date, there were accounted, approximately 6,000 different locations in need of various types of degrees of electrical repair. That new number grew significantly over the post-storm period, and ultimately grew up to over 18,000 locations.

Notwithstanding these staggering statistics, LIPA and National Grid restored power to more than 93 percent of the 523,000 customers affected by the end of the day, Friday, September 2nd, and 99 percent by the end of the day, Sunday, September 4th.

On Monday, the 5th, all reported outages related to "Hurricane Irene" were restored.

The effort related to restoring power, on average, to approximately 100,000 customers per day, for the first five days after this type of devastating event, can only be described as incredible. And the tremendous amount of hard work done by the men and women of IBEW 1049, and all

other workers who contributed to the restoration activities on Long Island in connection with "Irene," must be respected, and their efforts valued, and certainly appreciated, by all of us.

We rely on their tireless efforts, on a daily basis, to restore our power, and, often, under very trying and dangerous conditions, as was acknowledge by the Senators, but never as much as after a devastating event like "Irene."

We must remind ourselves, that, without them, the rest is not possible.

I would also like to thank all of the other LIPA and National Grid employees, many of whom also went without power for several days, who worked endless extended shifts throughout the holiday weekend, and thereafter, to help to serve our customers.

And, in fact, many of those are still working on storm repairs today.

As you know, LIPA prepares for major storms and hurricanes all year round, which includes an annual drill, where LIPA and National Grid, plus county OEMs and others, participate in a hurricane exercise, broken down into three parts: preparation, restoration, and lessons learned.

LIPA also uses "lessons learned" to improve on its response, not only from the events that affect Long Island, but from those that occur across the nation.

Of note, was LIPA's reaction to the devastation caused several years ago by "Hurricane Katrina."

After "Katrina," LIPA spent time with the utilities affected, and reviewed best practices relating to their transmission and distribution systems, and restoration efforts.

Those lessons learned were incorporated into LIPA's Storm Emergency Response Policy, and the development of those policies as a common utility practice. And our guidelines have been shared, and adopted by many other investor-owned utilities.

LIPA and National Grid follow these emergency procedures, and tailored them to provide the level of preparedness and response necessary for a storm of "Irene's" magnitude.

In addition, our guidelines encompass procedures and decision matrixes for Categories 1, 2, and 3, and 4 hurricanes.

These guidelines were also thoroughly reviewed and analyzed by the Board of Trustees'

Operations Committee as part of their review for the preparation LIPA undertook regarding "Hurricane Earl" last year.

For example: LIPA and National Grid began to monitor "Hurricane Irene" before -- more than a week before it is expected to impact Long Island, and began to prepare, according to those procedures and nationally recognized weather forecasts.

We closely monitored the storm's progress on an around-the-clock basis. And once it was determined that "Irene" would hit Long Island directly, LIPA and National Grid engaged in the largest storm response deployment ever in LIPA's history.

John Bruckner, president of Long Island Operations at National Grid, is here with me today, and he will be more able -- better able to more specifically address what steps were taken prior to the storm, as well as during and after.

But, suffice it to say, preparing for this type of event is a massive undertaking.

A few key aspects of that preparation included:

Using pre-established decision matrix to secure off-Island crews and housing, and housing

them here on Long Island;

Coordinating efforts with state, city, and county, and local emergency management organizations;

Restoration equipment, increasing inventories, and pre-stocking areas, such as, out on the East End, with wires, transformers, poles, and additional restoration equipment;

Also, securing electric and gas personnel for extended 16-hour shifts, canceling vacations, and calling personnel back from vacations;

And, adding call center personnel for support.

In total, 1,725 restoration line workers and tree-trimmers were available to commence restoration once weather conditions made it safe to perform the work on August 28th.

Prior to the onset of "Hurricane Irene," LIPA had put in a mutual-aid request for over 2,500 off-Island contractors.

However, we didn't receive all of those personnel due to a demand in the region for over 6,000 mutual-aid linemen up and down the Eastern Seaboard.

In addition, over 1,400 survey personnel were

deployed, to assess and survey damage, which is a critical component to the restoration process.

I note, that the staffing levels increased throughout the restoration, to approximately 4,000 line workers and tree-trimmers, and more than 7,500 people committed full-time to restoration efforts.

Prior to the storm arriving, LIPA began communicating with customers, elected officials, and special-needs facilities, its employees, and others, about being prepared for "Hurricane Irene."

LIPA communicated by means of e-mail blast, Web messaging, media interviews, newspaper advertisements, social-media outreach, including Facebook and Twitter, a letter to elected officials, and direct communications with the county executives and town supervisors in Nassau and Suffolk.

Personal calls were made to each of our registered critical-care customers, letting them know that the storm could impact their service for multiple days, and that they should be prepared to make alternate plans to ensure their safety.

Throughout the storm, while not as specific as anyone would want, LIPA's customer-communications and media-communications teams, in concert with

operations, developed and implemented a proactive customer and media communications effort, to try to set up expectations of what full restoration would be, and that it would take several days, up to a week.

To provide customers with as much information as possible, we also initiated more than 800,000 outbound calls to customers.

We had ongoing communications across the spectrum that far exceeded any previous communications effort. And, we had messaging that was consistent across all communications channels.

During restoration, LIPA and Grid coordinated with nearly 100 villages, 13 towns, 3 cities, 2 counties, and approximately 70 state and county legislatures.

In addition, before, during, and after "Hurricane Irene" passed, LIPA worked closely with the Nassau OEM and Suffolk FRES and various DPWs in what was the largest mobilization of forces enacted by LIPA and National Grid.

Nevertheless, while we believe our preparation efforts were swift, strong, and on par with our fellow utilities, we also understand our customers' frustration with not having the type of

access to restoration information that we always offer on a normal daily basis.

In these times of always-present real-time communications, our electric system and our restoration plans simply cannot provide the necessary detail during these massive events.

While LIPA's plan and capabilities are not unlike most other electric utilities, we certainly look forward to improving those channels of communications with our customers.

Over the next few weeks, LIPA's crews will continue to assess the full scope of damage left by "Irene," and make the necessary repairs to bring transmission and distribution systems back to its normal operating mode. And much of that work is ongoing to this date.

In the meantime, LIPA and National Grid are undergoing a thorough review of the processes used during "Irene," both internally and externally.

We need to analyze and understand what went right, such as the restoration of half a million customers in a one-week time frame; and what can be improved for the future, such as our communications information systems.

To that end, we are engaging in several

reviews.

First of all, a thorough review by the LIPA Board of Trustees' Operations Committee;

We'll also engage in an after-action review by LIPA staff of the entire events, and all the lessons learned;

We will engage in a review by LIPA's Major Storm Review Panel, which is an independent expert panel of out-of-state utility executives, emergency managers, businessmen, and consumer advocates.

We've already engaged in three productive workshops that were held with village mayors, city executives, town supervisors, and both county executives, who were all extended invitations, to offer recommendations to improve coordination, and ensure a uniform process of tree and debris removal across all municipalities.

We have committed to having roundtables with the departments of public works, and similar operational departments in the towns and villages.

We have also voluntarily committed to a review by the Department of Public Service, Public Service Commission, in conjunction with the review being conducted by all the other utilities in

the state.

We do have these types of appearances, such as, with the other Long Island major utilities before the Suffolk County Legislature Public Safety Committee. And that is intended to brief the Committee on LIPA's storm preparation and restoration and response procedures, and go ahead and look at the other issues that we could address, jointly, with other utilities.

And, of course, we'll have other forums, and take other invitations, as necessary.

Over the next few weeks and months, LIPA and Grid, as I'm sure all entities, will work together to better coordinate and communicate to the public, and to each other, in an effort to bring the Island's electric, gas, and other essential infrastructure services back to their normal operating state, and prepare for the next significant weather event.

I note, that, following FEMA reimbursement, which is expected to be at about 75 percent of the, approximately, $175 million total cost of restoration, the net impact of "Irene" to LIPA's customers is estimated to be about 44 million.

"Irene" has not yet exhausted this year's

storm budget; and, so, the cost of "Irene" will be factored into the budget process for 2012 in the ordinary course of business.

Rest assured, however, that, like with all other non-discretionary costs, LIPA's goal is to mitigate any potential rate impact on its customers.

I really believe that once all of the reviews have been undertaken and concluded, it will be clear that LIPA's preparation and response for "Irene" was reasonable, appropriate, and achieved the desired goal of restoring power to hundreds of thousands of its customers, swiftly, safely, and consistent with sound policies and procedures.

And I'm equally confident, that, as with all undertakings of this magnitude, we will identify areas for improvement, and take all of those appropriate actions.

I really just want to stop, and thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify, and address the current concerns raised by the Committee.

LIPA is ready to provide additional information and support of my remarks here today, and if so desired. And, remains available to address any follow-up questions that you may have related to these, and other issues going forward.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you.

Mr. Bruckner, I would just ask, that, as you testify, if you could, less read, and summarize, that would help, so we can expedite the questioning.

JOHN BRUCKNER: Can you hear me?

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Yes.

JOHN BRUCKNER: Just to make sure it's clear.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: You've got to speak up a little bit.

JOHN BRUCKNER: Is this better?

SENATOR MARCELLINO: That's much better.

JOHN BRUCKNER: Okay, thank you.

Chairman Marcellino, and distinguished members of the New York State Legislature, and all our elected representatives, and others in attendance: My name is John Bruckner. I am the president of Long Island Transmission and Distribution organization, and have approximately 27 years of experience working for the utility on Long Island.

In my capacity, I serve as the local single point of contact, accountable for all services that National Grid provides to LIPA and its Long Island customer base under the current management services agreement.

I would like to start by thanking you all for taking the time to examine the restoration efforts of LIPA and National Grid, in response to "Irene" that recently caused severe damage to the electric system on Long Island, while impacting 7 million customers along the east coast of the U.S. and Upstate New York.

I would also like to acknowledge Mr. Patrick Foye, from the -- Governor Cuomo's Office, who spent many days on Long Island working very closely with our team.

As I reflect on the course of the events over the past few weeks, I cannot help but to feel a tremendous sense of pride.

"Irene" was the biggest storm to hit Long Island since "Hurricane Gloria" in '85. And in just over a week, we restored power to over 523,000 customers affected.

This is a true testament to the talent and dedication of the men and women at National Grid, LIPA, and Local 1049 that worked tirelessly to restore power under, often, very difficult conditions.

At the same time, we recognize the frustration of LIPA's customers that lost power

during the storm, and I thank them for their patience during the restoration process, and I trust their understanding of the significance of the event, and the resulting damage it brought to the electric system on Long Island.

There will be always those who question and critique our storm response.

As a practice, and reflective of our dedication to continuous improvement, we will routinely welcome input to improve upon our performance.

Accordingly, we look forward to an honest and forthright assessment of our performance in the face of the difficult conditions that "Irene" brought.

Responding to an event, such as "Irene," it is immense undertaking. It takes much focus, coordination, and involves the execution of numerous activities.

Many of these activities go very unnoticed by the public.

To share some perspective, over the course of the week:

We responded to over 18,000 damaged locations associated with the 523,000 customer outages;

We secured and provided nightly lodging for

over 3,500 off-Island personnel;

And, we quickly established three temporary shelters with the Red Cross, at Suffolk Community College, Nassau Coliseum, Bay Shore High School, to bed over 2,500 line workers and tree-trim crews when hotel accommodations became scarce with the Labor Day weekend and the start of the U.S. Open and the Hampton Classic;

We dispensed over 250,000 gallons of fuel at remote locations -- hotels, shelters, staging areas -- to refuel the trucks on the overnight, to prepare them for the morning activities;

We established numerous material-handling sites and pre-staging areas across the Island, including using the runways at Brookhaven Airport and East Hampton Airports, as well as Bethpage State Park;

We made over 800,000 outbound calls to customers;

And, we assigned resources to towns and villages, to address wire-downs and road clearings, while trying to balance the demand for those resources with the restoration effort;

And, we replaced over 900 poles, 1,000 transformers, 80 switches, while installing

over 1 million feet of wire and cable.

Activities such as these involve much preparation and planning, and a tremendous amount of effort is spent each year to train and drill our employees for their roles in such events.

National Grid employees serving LIPA, as well as National Grid employees from other business units, have a designated storm assignment in addition to their normal day job.

This regional presence allows us to leverage other state and regional resources rapidly to come to LIPA's aid.

During the course of the year, these employees participate in tabletop drills and emergency restoration field-training exercises that simulate actual events and provide the proper training to enable them to fulfill their roles during a storm.

In the case of "Irene", nearly 5,100 Long Island and Downstate New York National Grid employees took on such roles, with approximately, 4,000, or 80 percent, of these resources coming from areas outside our electric operations organization.

In particular, these resources were

supplied --

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Mr. Bruckner, let me just interrupt you.

JOHN BRUCKNER: Sure.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: You're saying here, that you have had 5,100 Long Island and Downstate National Grid employees, plus, approximately 4,000 from outside agencies?

You're talking, almost 9,000 people?

JOHN BRUCKNER: No sir.

The 5,100 employees that are Long Island and Downstate National Grid employees, 4,000 of them, of those 5,100, is what I was referring to.

4,000 of the 5,100 -- 80 percent of those resources -- come from areas at National Grid outside the electric business.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: So they weren't here?

JOHN BRUCKNER: No, they were here.

They're here, specifically, in our gas business, our generation business, and our corporate services organizations, here, Long Island; and Downstate, in Brooklyn.

So, we utilize the resources that are outside the electric business to support the storm activities during a major event.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Okay, I'm still trying to get a handle.

You have 5,100 employees.

You brought in, from out of state -- wait a second now.

They brought in, from out of state -- you set up lodging for 3,500?

How many actually got here from out of state?

I know there was a call on them from other areas, but, how many?

JOHN BRUCKNER: Yeah, I mean, the people that we brought in from out of state, are line workers and tree-trim contractors. That's different from these employees here.

The 5,100 employees, are the employees that support the logistics.

And, I'll get into that as I follow the testimony in the next few paragraphs. It will talk about, the function, and the roles, that these 5,100 played, which is different from the resources we brought in from out of state.

The out-of-state resources were, predominantly, linemen and tree-trim contractors. And, that we had to provide bedding for those resources.

The 5,100 employees that we have here on Long Island, and in Brooklyn, do not require a lodging. They're here as employees, but they work in our other businesses --

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Who do they work for? They work for, LIPA? National Grid? -- who?

JOHN BRUCKNER: They work for National Grid. They're National Grid employees.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: According to Mr. Hervey, we had 1,725 on-Island and off-Island people doing restoration.

JOHN BRUCKNER: I think --

SENATOR MARCELLINO: I'm just trying to get the numbers right --

JOHN BRUCKNER: Yeah, I think --

SENATOR MARCELLINO: -- because, I'm hearing numbers all over the place, and I'm not getting a clear picture.

JOHN BRUCKNER: -- the 7,500 employees that were -- or, workers that were working this restoration effort.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: How many of them actually work for National Grid?

JOHN BRUCKNER: 5,100.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: How many of them work

from LIPA?

JOHN BRUCKNER: I couldn't answer that question.

MICHAEL HERVEY: LIPA has, approximately, 90 employees.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: So, LIPA has 90 employees, totally; and National Grid has 5,100 employees.

So, basically, the responsibility for the response, was National Grid's, not LIPA's?

Am I right?

JOHN BRUCKNER: The work effort was performed by National Grid employees.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: No, I didn't ask you that question.

Whose responsibility is it?

MICHAEL HERVEY: Well, I think, clearly, this is -- you know, I think you're aware -- I know you're aware of the public-private partnership that we have.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Yeah, I'm aware of it. I was here. I was in the Senate when LIPA was created.

MICHAEL HERVEY: So, LIPA owns the transmission distribution system. LIPA approves the

action that National Grid takes. We -- it's underlying the LIPA procedures for doing this work. And then, ultimately, all of the work is carried out by National Grid employees.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: So, you were directing the traffic, and they were the traffic?

Am I right?

I just want to find out who's in charge here.

MICHAEL HERVEY: Well, yeah, so --

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Who's the general? Who's the lieutenant? Who's the private?

MICHAEL HERVEY: In the storm-restoration activity, for the lead on that activity, is, John Bruckner takes the lead in that storm-restoration activity, but it's under the direction of LIPA.

So, the day-to-day direction of the National Grid work force comes from the National Grid lead, John Bruckner.

And, the overall activity, of course, the public face of the restoration, is LIPA, you know, using the approvals that LIPA has given National Grid to execute.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Okay. Thank you.

JOHN BRUCKNER: So, the work force that I was

referencing, the 5,100 employees from our various businesses on Long Island and Downstate New York, they work as field damage assessors, low-voltage service crews, crew guides, and logistical support. They helped to effect a successful restoration effort.

I'm extremely proud of the teamwork exhibited by the many organizations that contributed resources to this restoration team, and recognize that criticality to the restoration process.

The absence of these employees would most certainly lead to a much longer and less-effective restoration effort.

Preparation for the actual arrival of "Irene" began many days in advance of her making landfall on Long Island.

Weather reports were closely monitored, and storm-preparation meetings were initiated several days in advance of the storm.

During these meetings, and those which continued twice per day during the course of the event, tactical and strategic decisions were made.

At LIPA's direction, requests for off-Island high-voltage linemen and tree-trim crews were also made.

Simultaneously, efforts were launched to establish a crew processing center, and calls were made to the MTA bridges and tunnels, Department of Transportation, and local police departments, to expedite the receipt of off-Island crews as they traveled to Long Island to assist in the restoration.

In accordance with LIPA's storm procedures, National Grid made contact with counterparts at Long Island Railroad, Verizon, Nassau, Suffolk, and New York City Offices of Emergency Management, to reinforce, and discuss, the coordination of activities, while outreach to elected officials and local municipalities were handled by LIPA.

In addition, calls were made to the critical-care customers, to advise them of the impending storm, and encouraged them to take appropriate preparatory actions.

Outreach to all large managed accounts was initiated, with an emphasis on hospitals, nursing homes, schools, and wastewater treatment facilities.

Such communication was maintained throughout the course of the event.

As a result of the preparation, we were ready

to begin restoration efforts immediately after the storm had passed on Sunday afternoon, August 28th.

We initiated detailed damage assessments of LIPA's transmission, substation, and distribution facilities, and began repairing the backbone of the electric system.

Restoration efforts followed a structured restoration approach, such that the outages affecting the largest number of customers were restored.

Priority was also given to restoring areas affecting public health and safety.

As a result, neighborhood and single-customer outages were addressed later in the process, but by doing so, again, enabled the largest number of customers to be restored most quickly.

Based on the anticipated damage from "Irene," LIPA had requested 2,000 high-voltage linemen, through our utility mutual-assistance groups.

However, given the widespread devastation of "Irene," and the resulting demand for the resources, LIPA only received 1,000 additional high-voltage linemen, and was forced to execute its restoration plan with only half of the resources for the first five days of the storm.

In spite of this constraint, within 24 hours of the storm passing, 178,000, or 34 percent, of the LIPA customers were restored.

Within two days, the majority, 283,000, or 54 percent, were restored.

And after three days, 358,000, or 70 percent, were restored.

In addition, we successfully delivered on LIPA's commitments to have all hospitals restored on Tuesday, and all school outages completed well in advance of the start of the school year that was scheduled for early the following week. And, 90 percent of all customer outages were restored by Friday.

On the evening of Thursday, September 1st, National Grid New York completed restoration activities in Upstate New York, and was able to provide over 1,100 high-voltage linemen to Long Island to assist LIPA's restoration effort.

The addition of these National Grid Upstate New York linemen to Long Island greatly increased our ability to restore electric service to the remaining LIPA customers. And, by Monday, all 523,000 customer outages were restored.

In the end, the restoration effort was quite

impressive, and I cannot stress the significance of this accomplishment.

History has shown the value of thorough preparation and execution of pre-established plans.

In fact, our restoration response in the March nor'easter of 2010, that left over a quarter million LIPA customers without power, resulted in National Grid and LIPA receiving the prestigious Emergency Response Award from the Edison Electric Institute, for its efforts.

As part of our after-action review for that event, we identified and adopted many lessons learned that made our already-effort much better.

We continue to be committed to continuous improvement; and, thus, look to improve upon our performances as well in this event.

In closing: I cannot say enough about the commitment of our employees, the great working relationship we share with the IBEW Local 1049 and its leadership, and our partnership with the Long Island Power Authority.

Working together, and capitalizing on the co-location of our electric, gas, and generation businesses on Long Island, as well as our access to additional resources from non-contiguous service

territories in Upstate New York, we were able to quickly address the effects of a devastating storm, the likes of which have not been felt on Long Island for over 25 years.

I want to thank you again for this opportunity to testify.

And, I'm happy to address any questions at this time.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you.

Just a quick point.

You've made -- and both of you have made reference to the communication between yourselves, LIPA and National Grid, and the various levels of government municipalities.

Reading -- I'm not going to read the whole statement, because it's going to be read later from the county executive of Nassau County, Mr. Mangano.

"The most glaring issue" -- I'm quoting from his statement, which we'll hear in its entirety later.

"The most glaring issue, is the lack of communication between LIPA and its customers, and between LIPA and the local municipalities."

Mr. Weiss, the mayor of the village of

Hewlett Harbor, I believe, expresses pretty much the same in his statement -- he'll make it later -- that there was a lack of communication, and, it was poor.

And Mayor Altadonna, from Massapequa Park, basically says -- and I'm not going to read the whole thing -- basically says the same thing: There was a lack of communication between LIPA and its customers, and LIPA and the municipalities.

Which basically flies in the face of what you gentlemen are saying here today; that there was this great communication system that was set up.

And it was what I said earlier in my opening statement: What happened?

Put it the time way I put it: What the hell happened?

There seems to be a conflict, not only in the numbers you give us, but in the statement, that there was communication between the other levels of government.

There's a conflict here. You don't seem to recognize it. They seem to state it.

Now, how do we deal with this?

MICHAEL HERVEY: I don't think that it's not that we're recognizing it.

On Tuesday, the day after the hurricane had

passed, we, in fact, in our media briefings, acknowledged that the customers and the governments were asking for more communication.

We implemented, at that point in time, a daily update newsletter to all the mayors in Suffolk and Nassau. And also participated in mayors' phone calls, conference calls, that were sponsored by the county OEMs.

As part of our work afterwards, when we had the forums that I spoke about, with the municipalities, this point did come out loud and clear also.

So, part of what we're going to need to look at, in our resolution and our improvement process here, is how to really amp that up quite a bit larger than what we had been doing.

And, we had several suggestions coming from the village mayors, when we spoke to them. These are certainly doable things, and we'll put several -- we intend to put some of this into play very quickly.

But, one of the things that also became glaring in our conversations with the mayors, is that, oftentimes, these mayors change over, every several years; every number of years.

And, so, what we need to do is, more outreach up-front, to give them the expectations of what a restoration like this would look like.

So, we're also going to commit to having training seminars or informational seminars of some sort, ahead of storms, on a regular basis, to give the mayors the information they need in advance, because, in many cases, they were seeing this as we were going. We had a plan we were executing, but they were discovering it as we executed it.

And we need to do a better job, one, of telling them up-front, what this looks like; and, two, then, doing daily, or maybe multiple times a day, communications directly to the mayors.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: All right, thank you very much.

And, John, you know, while both of you pat each other on the back, I think you guys failed miserably. You know, you have 27 years of experience.

Mike, I think you're over 30 years of experience.

This is not new. This is not on-the-job training.

And, all I keep hearing is, assessment, and

review; and assessment, and review.

You failed. Your operation, whatever you had in place, failed.

And the task was enormous. And nobody here questioned, the commitment, the work, of the people in the field, because they worked like crazy, and probably put up with a significant amount of abuse.

But, Mike, you never came out till Tuesday afterwards.

You even came to my district. And, on Florence Avenue, and you guys had a great press conference, but everybody left, and nothing happened. And the people didn't get the line cleared from the trees, from whoever was there, until two days later. And the frustration grew and grew and grew.

So let's stop patting each other on the back, and telling me about awards that were received for prior response, because it's ridiculous, that you come here and you talk about it.

Judge your own performance.

You know, this is real-time news. People don't have to go and turn the TV on anymore to find the news. It finds them.

And for you not to come out to two days

later, and start talking about this, is wrong.

And for you to sit here, John, and pat yourself on the back, after 27 years of experience, is wrong, because, this was a failure as far as the residents of Long Island are concerned.

I think, if they had better communication.

If my mayor, sitting in this audience right now, was able to communicate with somebody about, when, or why, or what's going to happen in the village of Massapequa Park, when 90 percent -- "90 percent" -- of the residents are out of power, and he doesn't have a clue, because nobody's telling him something.

Or, e-mails that I received, like my colleagues received, where, people came out and assessed the same problem on the same block, for four times, and they were told the same thing: We'll be back. We'll be back.

And the only people that came back were the people that assessed it.

And the lack of professionalism, in some cases, when the residents called your call center, was an absolute disgrace.

And to keep saying, "We're going to evaluate and see what we did," is wrong.

You know, my question is, always: Where the hell is the board of trustees in LIPA, that you haven't had a permanent CEO for one year since Kevin Law left?

And I know you're trying, Mike, and you've been there a long time. And you probably didn't even want this job for over a year now. But they failed their responsibilities.

I sit on the Energy Committee in the Senate that's going to approve that person, or not.

And I got to tell you, it better not be a political hack, because that's not going to fly with this panel right here. It better be somebody that has utility experience, because I don't want this to ever happen again, where all we hear is: We're going to review. We're going to assess. We're going to analyze. We're going to communicate.

That should have happened years ago. You guys aren't in business the first day. And, it's not/it shouldn't be on-the-job training.

Mike, you said something here, "In these times of always-present real-time communication, our electric system and our restoration plans simply cannot provide the necessary details during this massive event."

Why?

MICHAEL HERVEY: Well, I think --

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: I mean, we did, to the best of our ability.

MICHAEL HERVEY: Right, so, it's a good question.

But I think, in some respects, any utility that goes through this type of effort is going to have a lot less detailed information when you're doing this type of massive restoration.

So our challenge here is to really leapfrog where everybody else is, and put into place some more intelligence, computer systems, out in the field; whatever we have to do.

And this is what we have to really think through, and do it the right way, in order to bring that data back.

The electric system doesn't know that an individual home is out. And it doesn't know that even a piece of a block is out, normally.

We did rely on customer calls for that.

So -- and, certainly, once we know, then -- unless we send somebody out, we don't know what the trouble is.

So, on a normal day, a restoration, like

today, when we get a case of trouble, it's assumed that there's one piece of trouble. We go out and fix it, and we can give a very good estimate on what it takes to fix that.

In this type of damage, there might have to be, 30, 40 pieces of trouble that are repaired before we can get to that last customer down the line.

So, pulling all that information together -- the status of the crews; the length of time that each one of those jobs is going to take; what is in service and what's not in service, meaning, electrified, not electrified -- is something that there's just not an automated system in place right now to do.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Do you have a Reverse 911 system?

MICHAEL HERVEY: We have an outbound-call system, yes.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: And can you reach all the rate payers that serve?

MICHAEL HERVEY: Well, we can reach them, to the extent that they can be reached with the phone number that they've given us.

And this is another outreach I think we need

to do, and have already started, in fact; and that's, trying to get customers to give us additional phone numbers. Because, in this -- also, in this day and age of the communications we have, oftentimes, if the electric's off, the particular phone that they've given us is off also.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Did you utilize the system?

MICHAEL HERVEY: Yes. We made over 800,000 outbound calls during the week.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Okay. Thank you, Mike.

Senator Martins.

SENATOR MARTINS: Thank you.

Mike, you have 90 employees.

John, 5,100?

JOHN BRUCKNER: National Grid has 5,100 Downstate, yes.

SENATOR MARTINS: So, 5,100 employees that you have direct oversight of.

Mike, you have 90.

I've heard from you; John, haven't heard you from yet -- as to how these employees are deployed.

And, frankly, I would like to hear more about that relationship.

You know, we keep talking about National --

LIPA. And I'm hearing responses from you, Mike, but, I need someone to explain to me, how the employees, the service crews, were deployed.

Who made the decisions to deploy them in that way?

And let's start with that: How are these crews deployed?

JOHN BRUCKNER: You want me to answer that?

So, as the storm passed, because we couldn't do any repair or the dispatching of crews during the storm event, because the equipment, you know, it would be unsafe to put them out in bucket-trucks during the event.

So, Sunday afternoon, Sunday evening, when the storm subsided, we immediately dispatched crews to the transmission facilities that were damaged.

The transmission facilities, really, is the start of power getting to the customer.

So, you have the transmission system on the Island that provides power to the substations, and the substations provide the power to the distribution facilities, and then, ultimately, at the end of the line, the customer service to the house.

So --

SENATOR MARTINS: So, the crews are deployed to these facilities.

As -- Mike, as you just testified, you don't know where these outages are until people start calling in.

So, at some point, you have these crews at these facilities.

How are they deployed there? Are they deployed centrally or are they deployed locally?

JOHN BRUCKNER: So, in the case of a -- on a normal day, it's always done centrally.

The centralized dispatch capability is limited to around, you know, maybe 100 or 200 personnel that you could safely deploy, or dispatch, in a safe manner, and in an efficient manner.

In an event like this, when we brought in 2,000 linemen from off-Long Island, in addition to on the Island with our contractors and our in-house workforce, another, approximately 500, you couldn't dispatch that efficiently or safely from one location.

So what we did in this event, according to LIPA's practices or procedures, we deployed them out into substations as many operations.

So, we deployed many of these, this workforce, across the Island -- equally across the Island, and dispatched them directly out of substations.

Not all of the linemen were put into substations. Many of them were held back, and maintained that division-level capability of being dispatched.

And we dispatched them to the transmission-system repairs first. There was a significant amount of damage on the transmission system, so we had to get that back up and running before we could do the distributions.

SENATOR MARTINS: What was the single most difficult -- or, what was the single most common cause of the transmission failures?

JOHN BRUCKNER: I would say trees were the -- was probably the leading on the transmission. Certainly on the distribution.

SENATOR MARTINS: I would think so.

What was your effort to coordinate with our local municipalities, villages, supervisors, county, specifically?

We have highway crews out there that are deployed on a local level, that understand the needs

of their local communities.

I've got 32 villages in my district. I've got 32 mayors and 3 towns/3 supervisors that I represent. And these highway departments in each one of these villages and in each one of those towns have the ability to deploy personnel as well.

How did you coordinate with them?

JOHN BRUCKNER: To coordinate with the towns and villages, we went through the county EOCs.

So, we worked through the county EOC. We had representation at the county EOCs as well. And many of those -- those towns and villages did help to clear roadway debris, as far as tree on roadways, and so forth.

The work that the trees had on the transmission system, we were required to use qualified -- electric-qualified tree-trimmers that we put back into those right-of-ways, and so forth.

SENATOR MARTINS: I had the privilege, for eight years, to serve as a local village mayor.

And one of my, I guess, concerns over the years, was always, whenever we had a storm, the availability of a LIPA crew to deenergize a line so that our highway crews can actually take those trees down. In the right-of-way, they were prepared to do

so.

And, there was a common complaint that I got this year, from every village, from every municipality, was that: There wasn't a LIPA truck or a National Grid crew to be found in their areas. And there was no coordinated effort. And there was no way for our mayors, who had crews on the ground to be able to remove trees, to be able to reach out to anyone to coordinate.

How do we fix that?

JOHN BRUCKNER: Yeah, I think that that's a -- that's an excellent example of an opportunity for going forward.

The -- in this event, we did assign resources to the county EOCs.

And I want to state back onto your point, because, it's not so much the transmission system. This is, road clearing, wires tangled up in the trees on the road. And, not only giving us the ability to get repair crews in there, but also for your constituents to get in and out of their communities.

So I think, in this example here, that we had -- and, you know, certainly in your area as well, we did assign personnel to the EOCs. And we

did work directly, in many cases, with towns and villages.

The challenge that we had here, was having half of the available work force that we needed to do this event.

So, while we were trying to, and we did in many cases, work directly with the towns and villages, assigning, not only people to identify the wires, and be able to clear the wires, so we could advantage of the resources that the towns and villages had to do the tree removal, we did do that. But the magnitude of the wire-down locations was in excess of about 7,000 wire-down locations.

We needed to balance, clearing those wire-down locations at the same time of getting the backbone of the system up that was bringing back, you know, hundreds of thousands of customers.

SENATOR MARTINS: I --

JOHN BRUCKNER: I think, going forward -- if I could; I think, going forward, one of the challenges that we had, was, we did go to many of these locations and remove the wire so that the tree could be removed.

But in many of those locations, I think one of the things that we can do, going forward, better,

is a prioritization system between those coordinated efforts; between the county OEC [sic] and LIPA, and the towns and villages, that we can, in advance, identify: What are critical intersections? What are the critical roadways?

Many of the ones that we did respond to, on the direction, later on, we found out that there were more critical ones that could have been addressed.

SENATOR MARTINS: What I would suggest to you, uhm, and I'll leave it as a suggestion, is that, rather than coordinate on the county level, try coordinating on a local level, whether it's with our local villages or towns.

Because, in order for you to get into those municipalities, if you want to know about outages, if you want to know where the trees are down, I could guarantee you that our local communities, villages and towns, knew where every tree was down within hours after the storm having passed.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Minutes.

SENATOR MARTINS: Within minutes.

That's fair.

They knew where they were. And if there was someone from National Grid or LIPA who could have

coordinated with them, I guarantee you that those trees would have been removed in time for those repair crews to come back. We would have saved days off of your repairs, and people would have had their power days earlier as a result.

So if there's a suggestion, and I guess, best practice, that we could take from here, work with our local communities, because bigger isn't necessarily better, and consolidation doesn't work.

Thank you.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Senator LaValle.

SENATOR LAVALLE: Thank you, Senator Marcellino.

I grew up in a household where I was taught, do not defend the indefensible.

This issue of communication was a failure.

Senator Marcellino mentioned individuals that talked about communication failure.

I have a letter here from the mayor of East Hampton, Paul Rickenbach, who says the same thing: Failure of communication.

So, I think that's something that you really have to zero in on, and not just gloss over, because, it was a failure.

Senator Martins talked about the highway

crews. They have not really gotten enough praise.

All I could speak of, in the 1st Senate District, the highway crews in the villages and the towns were incredible.

And they said: If we only had crews behind us, it could have been done more easily.

Also, we, as elected officials, learned, as we go about and speak to people, we hear common themes. You hear it over and over again.

Again, no one saw trucks for a long period of time.

So, there were, literally, rumors.

I just tell you -- and I know it's not true -- there was a rumor, that the reason there weren't crews out on Sunday, was because you didn't want to pay overtime.

And I have confirmed that that was false.

But, that's where people were: Why didn't we see crews?

You know, LIPA has a responsibility to its shareholders, meaning, its customers.

But it also has another responsibility: You have to keep the lights on.

What was happening -- isn't there -- Mike, what kind of tree-trimming program did we have?

MICHAEL HERVEY: Well --

SENATOR LAVALLE: Prior to the -- I mean, the year before the storm.

MICHAEL HERVEY: Sure, Senator.

There's a very aggressive tree-trimming program. I think that National Grid spends over $20 million a year in tree trimming. And each area is on a certain cycle, and we certainly are on those cycles. And, it's on par, if not superior to most utilities' tree-trimming program.

The basic issue here, the main issue was, not tree trimming, but whole trees failing.

We had a significant amount of rain ahead of this storm. And what we saw, time and time again, is the whole tree coming over.

So, that's not something that the tree-trimming program per se can address.

I think the fact that we didn't have many more outages with this is a testament to the tree-trimming program, and its effectiveness. And, the daily reliability of the system on a day-in, day-out basis, I think also goes to the effectiveness of the tree-trimming program.

SENATOR LAVALLE: Is that 20 million, more, less, or the same, as it was in the previous year?

MICHAEL HERVEY: It's -- I'll let John answer that.

The budget ramped up a few years ago, and I'll let John go into the specifics.

JOHN BRUCKNER: The tree-trim budget has been consistent, I think, from a tree-trim perspective.

What has ramped up, is, we have installed a hazardous-tree program, in accordance with LIPA's direction.

So, in addition to trimming trees, which is really protecting the system for the majority of the season, the hazard-tree program is where we go around and identify hazardous trees, that are not healthy, that pose a threat to the wire, as, more during a storm.

Those numbers have increased over the years. As a matter of fact, the inception of that program is only a few years old, so, we have started picking up on that program.

And while we did the hazardous-tree program, or brought that into existence, we didn't take anything away from the existing tree-trim program at all. As a matter of fact, over the last five years, we probably added miles to the tree-trim program, on an annual basis.

SENATOR LAVALLE: 20 million; more or less than the previous year?

JOHN BRUCKNER: The $20 million is about on par with the previous year. I wouldn't say it was any more or less.

We didn't take away from it, and we didn't add to it.

SENATOR LAVALLE: Okay.

My last comment, and, Mike, you were at the hearing when Senator Maziarz came down, the Energy Committee.

And I think we've reached a point, and -- where we need to make a decision, as a legislature, and an executive, on whether we continue with LIPA in the form that it's in. And, whether LIPA contracts out to a private company to deliver certain services.

Because, Senator Martins and Senator Fuschillo were right on target, and even Senator Marcellino: Who's providing what?

And people are confused, what is LIPA's function.

I know that you've had between 90 and 100 employees. That has been your number of employees at LIPA. So, you contract out to

National Grid, to provide certain services.

We have to decide whether that works; that model works or not.

So, that -- both of you have enormous experience, but if you're operating in a failed model, then no matter what you do, is, you're going to end up with failure.

So, we, as a legislature, in the next 12 months, have to make that decision.

And I know this is on the Governor's list, to do, to figure out, to make recommendations. But, we, as a legislature, also have to take a look at it.

I know it's a difficult job, but, if you're working in a failed system, then no matter how much you spin your wheels, you are just going to fail.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Flanagan.

The statement that came to me as a -- as customers and consumers were calling over the weekend, my office was staffed, as were most of our offices, over the weekends.

We had a section in Hicksville, right across the street from the old LILCO main headquarters on Old Country Road. Directly across the street was a

community, predominantly of older people, because it was -- it's been there a long time. They were without power. And, they trying to get power to these senior citizens, and trying to help them out.

My office was aggressively involved.

When one of my people reached one of your call operators, she asked, "Where is this community that you're talking about?"

And she was told, "Right across the street from your headquarters."

My person was told, "Our headquarters is in London."

It's totally unacceptable.

It wasn't a joke, it was just stated.

Now, that's a toss-back.

Those people didn't get power for another two days.

So, what Senator Martins was saying: Local communities, local towns.

The town halls of many of the villages were out of power for days.

Town of Oyster Bay was out of power, main headquarters, for two to three days.

And we had this conversation, Mike, about this. And you told me that they have to take care

of themselves. That they should be able to take care of themselves.

My question is: They're priorities.

What are the priorities?

If government headquarters, governments that will disperse crews, from road crews, to tree-trim, to move trees, to get things out of the way, so your people can come in and repair the lines, don't have power, or have to operate on generators, which is not efficient, and very -- and, in many cases, not effective, I think you -- you're cutting your own throat here. You're weakening your force.

Your crews could have been expanded by hundreds of other workers from local municipalities, that might have been able to help you and assist you in clearing roads, clearing trees, and clearing routine -- clearing areas.

Let me ask this question: What are the priorities? Who goes first?

Who gets put back first, who gets put back second, and so forth?

Where are your priorities?

MICHAEL HERVEY: A great question.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you.

MICHAEL HERVEY: The priorities really have

two parallel paths.

One is the public infrastructure.

And, I think we were very forward in talking about that. And that was, the hospitals and nursing homes were on that infrastructure parallel path.

We also, as county OEMs identified for us specific intersections, or other specific issues, we needed to deal with.

At one point, we were dealing with a plant that processes a lot of the gasoline coming onto Long Island.

So, that public-infrastructure path primarily starts with those critical-care facilities. And, then, other priorities that are identified to us, as we go along, by the county OEMs.

So, that's the control point there for prioritization across the whole effort.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: There are two nursing homes, critical-care nursing homes, in Suffolk County that didn't have power for four days.

MICHAEL HERVEY: Right.

And --

SENATOR MARCELLINO: How did that happen?

MICHAEL HERVEY: And because they're high priority does not mean that we can accomplish

getting them on quickly.

As was indicated, the first day was taking up, putting our transmission system back together, along with some restoration. And then, basically, we have to build the system out from the substation.

So, it always comes down to man-hours of work. And you simply have to get all the work done, from the substation out to the customer, in order to get the customers on.

So, being a priority doesn't mean that the customer comes on quickly. It means that they're working -- we're working on the issue, up-front, and as a first priority.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Your statement of substations, and the use of the term "substations," that you, and Mr. Bruckner also, stated, we found that somewhat frustrating, because, in contacting and communicating, we were told many times by the callers: Well, that's being handled by a substation.

Okay, which one?

"We don't know."

Can we communicate with them?

"No. We don't have a number we can give you to communicate with them."

How do we pass a message on to them?

"Well, we're going to have to do that."

I said: How are you going to do that if you can't -- you don't know where they are, and you can't communicate with them?

It was -- I'll say it again; you can hear the frustration, I hope: It didn't work. The plan didn't work.

There's no other way to put it.

I know you train. I know that.

I know you have plans. I know that.

You have press releases that say that.

You have press releases that say you had an automated phone system.

You have a press release that says you have a website that worked.

Your website was a disgrace. It didn't work. It wasn't updated effectively. It was a mess.

It was talking, for three days, about assessing.

And then when it was, after the assessing dropped, it was telling areas: We're back on-line. That 50 percent was done.

We knew that wasn't true. It simply wasn't accurate.

So, there needs the be a complete overhaul of this system.

The phone systems; how intimately were you tied into Verizon and Cablevision's lines?

Because, a lot of them had to come down too. When the trees hit the lines, and the lines came down and poles came down, I'm sure phone lines came down as well.

How did that impact you?

JOHN BRUCKNER: So, in preparation for this storm, we had reached out to Verizon. And we had Verizon crews and supervision assigned to each of our divisional areas, so, we were -- in our dispatch rooms.

And, across the Island, in our four dispatch rooms, we had Verizon supervision, we had access to Verizon crews.

So, when their facilities were impacted, you know, they certainly went out and corrected them.

When it was a pole down that had their infrastructure on it, we were able to assign them to that pole. We knew that pole was being taken care of by Verizon.

So --

SENATOR MARCELLINO: When you talk about

Verizon, you're also talking about Cablevision as well?

JOHN BRUCKNER: No, sir. I was just talking specifically about Verizon.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: What about Cable? Why don't you work with them?

JOHN BRUCKNER: Well, Cablevision crews do not set poles on Long Island.

So, if there's a pole that comes down, it's either a Verizon pole or it's a LIPA pole. It wouldn't be a Cablevision pole.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: They wouldn't have a Cablevision line on it?

JOHN BRUCKNER: There may have a Cablevision line on it. And, in many cases, Cablevision would go out, and, you know, they would identify their outages and respond to them.

If this was their wire down, they would go to that location and identify it, and repair it themselves.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: What you're telling me is, that you don't communicate with them?

JOHN BRUCKNER: We have communication with -- we have communication with Cablevision.

If there's a wire down, what happens is,

the -- as I said before, there's about 7,000 wire-downs that occurred during this event. More than half of those wire-downs were not LIPA's wires.

We would always be the first to go out, or attempt to be the first to go out. Based on the volume, it was more of a difficult challenge, but, we would always go out first, because there's always a public-safety liability; that, if it were an electric wire, when customers report those wire-downs, it's very difficult for them to differentiate which they are.

So, we go to the site of caution, and respond to each one of those wire-down locations.

If it's not our wire down, we do try to make communication to the company whose it is, if it's not ours.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Just one more question, and I'll turn it over to Jack Martins.

On South Oyster Bay Road, a large tree fell over Oyster Bay Road, taking the power lines with it. The only thing that was holding the tree off the ground, because it never really reached the road, but it was, like that (indicating), was the lines that were supporting it.

That tree took out my entire community, so I'm very familiar with this one.

It took three days to get that tree removed.

The response was, "It's not our tree. This is a county road."

We had to get, the county crew has to come out and take it down.

Again, the communication between you, your people, and a level of government, to know that there were several hundred homes that were out of power, as well as a hanging tree, where cars literally were driving under the tree.

I was able to reach Deputy County Executive Walker, who sent a crew out, and said: We have to know that the lines are dead before our crews are going to touch the tree, because it's a safety factor.

Understood.

So somebody had to tell the county the lines were dead, so that the county would go in there with a crew and remove the tree, so that the LIPA, National Grid, whoever, could come in and readjust and reconnect the lines.

The communication wasn't there. Trust me, I know this, I lived. And so did my neighbors.

And that was repeated over and over again, Island-wide.

I could cite you dozen of cases, similar to that, where there was a communication problem between your people and a local municipality, be it a county, be a town, be it a village.

That has to change. There has to be, a -- and perhaps what Jack said, perhaps communication better, instead of these bigger, through county OEMs, to, maybe go down to towns, maybe work it through villages.

Somehow there has to be a better system of communication between the localities.

Senator Martins.

SENATOR MARTINS: Just a few more questions.

How did you approach traffic signals?

I know, in my community, there are a number of traffic signals that were down on significant intersections, that remained out for days.

What was the approach, there?

JOHN BRUCKNER: Want me to take that?

So, for traffic signals, once again, we did work with the county EOCs. So, the county EOCs, we had representation in there, and they would forward over the -- I was going say, "the critical,"

but, really, the volume of signals that were out.

So, those locations would be forwarded.

On Sunday, we did assign personnel to work with the counties directly, not only the people that were there, but back in the divisions, as far as personnel crews, field personnel, to work with them, and account for those traffic signals being out.

But, again, here, I would go back to the comment that I made earlier, about tree-trimming, debris in the road, and clearing it.

We did find ourselves moving, from the county EOCs, into some of the towns specifically, and working directly with the towns.

We did make good progress with that approach. To your suggestion earlier, we did try to more localize that approach.

Once again, I think the challenge there was, even the ones we got to, very early Sunday, and then, as the week progressed, were not always the most critical.

I spent a number of hours across Long Island as well. And, while I saw that there were some that were restored, there were also main intersections that remained out.

So I think, not only the coordination, but we

do need to, in advance, identify, what are -- in the prioritization, what are the most critical intersections, so we do make sure, on a town and county basis, those are in, so that, if they're not, those are the high priorities that we do address.

And I would agree with you, that we do need a comprehensive plan, beyond just LIPA going out and putting a streetlight back in; but, coordinated with the towns, with the municipalities, with the counties, to get a team together, to identify what the prioritization is, and how do we go about doing that in the most efficient manner, while still balancing, getting the restoration process underway as well.

So, we want to balance all of these high-priority issues with bringing back as many customers as possible.

I just want to clarify something about the streetlight crossings.

Following LIPA's priority of the most customers brought back for each repair that's made, when we do that, we also bring back many intersections as well. It's not just the customers.

So, there is a focus that, inherently, is built into bringing some of them back, but I don't

think it identifies the prioritization as much as something that we need to do, collectively, going forward.

SENATOR MARTINS: How many crews were out immediately after the storm?

JOHN BRUCKNER: We had -- you know, we keep using this word "crews," versus "linemen."

So, people out in the field, we have on the Island, it was -- 5,100 -- about 6,000 people working the storm.

In the field, we -- going into it the first day, I think we had just under 600 off-Island linemen here, in addition to what we have on Island, which is our own work force and our own local contractors, which is about 450.

So, the first day, it was, you know, somewhere in the area of the 800-and-change, and the 450-and-change, as far as linemen.

As tree-trimmers on the Island, it's a couple hundred that we have on the island. But during the course of the event, we continued to bring on tree-trimmers as well.

SENATOR MARTINS: How many crews did you have available that were capable of deenergizing lines?

JOHN BRUCKNER: That's the same number, sir.

SENATOR MARTINS: Okay, so, if we have -- again, I'm going back to a point I made earlier.

If we have, 64 villages, 3 towns, in Nassau County, and we have the ability to take a fraction of the crews that you have at your disposal but, frankly, much more efficiently, deploy them in a way that is going to coordinate with local resources, doesn't that make sense?

JOHN BRUCKNER: Yeah, I do agree that it's something that we need to take a look at; is, looking at how we can work, again, more locally, and putting some of those resources, at the local level, to address many of those situations.

SENATOR MARTINS: I hope you understand the frustration, that, this isn't the first time, out.

And the question naturally is: Why haven't we done it before?

I mean, it just seems like a no-brainer.

How did we get to this point, where we have not, and were not, prepared to deal with a tropical storm of this nature?

And, I guess, these are the lessons that we're trying to get through, through this hearing.

Were -- your -- both, yourselves, and your top-staff personnel, here, present, during the

storm, and immediately after the storm?

JOHN BRUCKNER: So, yes, myself, and my staff, were here during the -- certainly, during the pre-storm, as we were watching the track of the storm, as well as throughout the event. And, continue to be, with respect to the follow-up, because the system, still, repairs are being made today, and over the course of next several weeks.

So, they were on site. We all worked.

You know, we used the term "16-hour days."

I don't really believe that to be the case. Most, as we know, it's -- that's just a term, but it's probably more in the way of 20-hour days.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Right.

JOHN BRUCKNER: And my staff was, not only located in Hicksville, but also shared responsibilities out in many of these locations where we had substations that were activated.

The experience of the staff that I have, in excess of 20 years per person, or so, their expertise was used out in the field as well; so, they wore many hats.

But, nobody was absent, sir.

SENATOR MARTINS: Were a number of weeks, post the storm?

JOHN BRUCKNER: Yes.

SENATOR MARTINS: Can both of you share with us, what lessons we learned.

And, can you give assurances to, our residents, rate payers, that there are changes in place, or in the process of being implemented, to prevent things like this from happening?

And, if so, what are they?

MICHAEL HERVEY: Senator, I certainly do want to give you an assurance.

I think that's what we have been indicating, is that, we are going to do a thorough review at the local level, at our trustee level, and even on a statewide level, in conjunction with PSC, on lessons learned here.

And we'll put -- just as we do after every major event, we'll put the improvements in place.

I do want to caution, that a hurricane or a tropical storm is still a major event. And there will still always be issues, at the end of the day, that are unforeseen, or that aren't part of what we're geared to handle.

But, we freely acknowledge that we need to do a much better job, at the communications, and at the coordinations, level.

Communications with governments and our customers. And, also, coordination with the towns and villages.

And, we've already started that process.

As I indicated, we sat down last week, with -- ultimately, I think we met with about a third of the villages on the Island. Got a lot of good feedback. But, it's also not something that's instantaneous.

So, we are in the process right now, both the LIPA and the National Grid teams, of putting together short-term actions, if, God forbid, something were to happen again in the next few weeks, or even over the winter. And then we'll have some longer-term actions, that take more building-up of computer systems, and that type of thing.

So, we are actively working on all of those paths to improve the response.

SENATOR MARTINS: Thank you.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Mike, quick question: When does the National Grid contract expire with LIPA?

MICHAEL HERVEY: The contract expires December 31st of 2013.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Okay. Then, why, if --

why is -- why was LIPA going to take that up, this month, I believe it was, the LIPA board of trustees, when it doesn't expire for another --

MICHAEL HERVEY: Sure.

Regardless of --

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Two and a half years; right?

MICHAEL HERVEY: Regardless of who is --

Well, it's two years and a few months.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Right.

MICHAEL HERVEY: -- LIPA feels that it needs a two-year transition period, regardless of who is selected, even if it's National Grid.

And the reason being, is that the contract structure and the organizational structure that we're specifying is dramatically different than the structure that we have today.

So, just the simplist of things you think about:

We've talked about computer systems, and such things here. The computer systems are not simple to transition over.

And, the employee plans, those types of things, organizational structures, it is a huge effort to make that transition, even with

National Grid.

So, we really think, to do it successfully -- and "successful" means, the day we make that transition, that our customers, either, don't notice, or they notice an improvement -- we think that we need a full two years to transition that organization.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Has -- have you or the board of trustees considered any other provider?

MICHAEL HERVEY: Oh, absolutely.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: You have.

MICHAEL HERVEY: And we've been very open about that; that we have been engaging in competitor negotiations with three providers.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Right now?

MICHAEL HERVEY: That's, National Grid, Con Ed, and PSEG --

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Right now?

MICHAEL HERVEY: -- all are finalists. And, we've essentially completed those contract negotiations --

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Okay.

MICHAEL HERVEY: -- and are in the process of working towards a recommendation -- on evaluation of those contracts, working on a recommendation to the

board of trustees.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Has the board of trustees indicated to you -- this is my final question -- their time frame to recommend a permanent CEO to the Governor, to be recommended to the Senate Energy Committee and to the full Senate?

MICHAEL HERVEY: They have not given me that information.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Okay. Thank you.

Thank you, Senator.

MICHAEL HERVEY: Senator Marcellino, I would just like to beg your indulgence.

I know you're well aware of my time constraint.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: I'm going to close it down, and let you both go in just one second. I understand that you do have a time constraint, and that's one of the reasons why we started -- we wanted to start a little earlier today than necessary.

We do appreciate the fact that you did come.

They have a meeting, and as an -- an auditing review.

I would just -- getting to what my colleague was talking about: I would suggest, and make a

strong recommendation, because I will be following that up with a letter to the Governor, that, I don't believe there should be any recommendation made by the board of trustees as to the contract with National Grid, until the -- until all of the reviews of this process have been completed.

And included in those reviews, I believe, should be a complete review -- by an outside, not internal, group -- by an independent outside organization of supplier experts, which I believe we can put together as quickly as possible, as to:

The relationship between LIPA and Grid;

The formation of LIPA: Does it work? Is the system something we want to, maintain? keep going? whatever?

I think all of that has to be looked at, completely, and it has to be reviewed before any recommendation, can, or should, be made as to who's going to run the system.

And I'm going urge that that be postponed until this review process is completed, because, as I think we've all pointed out, that there's nobody up here that's been happy as to what's going on, and the way it's been handled.

"No one" is happy.

I haven't talked to a single individual, that will state that this is a -- this thing worked, and it was flawless.

And every one of us believes that the review process has to be done, and it cannot be done in-house.

I don't believe -- and this is not a personal attack on anybody -- but, I just don't believe that you can evaluate yourself effectively.

I think it has to come from an outside entity, to come in and look at what went on, dispassionately, and without any agenda; to come in there, and give recommendations to the Governor, and to the Legislature, as to, how this thing worked, how it should work, how it can work, and any recommendation as to be handled in the future.

We've heard talk about cost, of $176 million to the rate payers.

How are you going to pay that?

Are we going to see a rate increase?

The question I'm getting on a daily basis: "Are we going to see a rate increase to pay for 'Irene'"?

We're not out of the hurricane system yet. We could have another one hit.

It's not over.

You could have a storm in the winter. It happens every year, we have a major storm. We had a couple last year. You could have more.

That cost is going to go up and up.

How do we pay for it?

And it can't be on the rate-payers' back totally. They cannot keep going.

I say the same thing to the MTA, I say the same thing to the Port Authority; we're saying the same thing you to: You cannot keep going back to the same well over and over again. The pockets of the people of, Nassau, and Suffolk County, the people of Long Island, they're empty. And you can't keep taking money out of their pockets anymore.

So, we have to look at the system. And, again, it has to be done by outside people, to really get a clear and effective evaluation of the system, and how it's operated.

I thank you for coming in. I thank you both for your time.

And, I appreciate the work you're doing.

I appreciate the work that your employees do.

What we're trying to do, is formulate a system that makes your employees more effective, the

system more effective, with one goal: "To provide our customers" -- as your Mission Statement says -- "with the best, most cost-effective, and least expensive electrical services and gas services, on Long Island, and in the country."

Thank you. I appreciate your time.

We'll take a five-minute break.

(Whereupon, the hearing stood in recess.)

(The hearing resumed, as follows:)

SENATOR MARCELLINO: We have a representative of County Executive Ed Mangano, Craig Craft, who will be giving another county executive's statement.

Is that microphone the one that --

A/V TECHNICIAN: This one is better.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: That's the better one? Okay.

Mr. Craft.

CRAIG CRAFT: Senators, good morning.

My name is Craig Craft. I serve as the acting commissioner of the Nassau County Office of Emergency Management.

County Executive Mangano hoped to join you this morning, but is unable to attend due to a scheduling conflict.

Accordingly, he has asked that I read the following testimony into the record on his behalf.

"Members of the Senate Investigations and Government Operations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to address this hearing.

"We can all agree that the Long Island Power Authority's response to the widespread power outages that occurred as a result of 'Hurricane Irene' was unacceptable.

"The most glaring issue was the lack of communication between LIPA and its customers, and between LIPA and the local municipalities.

"LIPA remained vague, at best, regarding when residents could expect their power to be restored, and many times, these estimates were days off.

"In fact, full power was not restored to all customers until 12 days following the hurricane.

"LIPA knew well in advance of 'Hurricane Irene' making landfall that Long Island was looking at the worst hurricane it has seen since 'Hurricane Gloria' in 1985.

"In response, LIPA called in more than 3,500 out-of-town workers. Even with the added workers, it still took them over a week to restore full power.

"The most deplorable aspect of this situation was the amount of time that it took LIPA to restore power to some critical-care customers, and facilities that house critical-care patients.

"In neighboring Suffolk County, there were two nursing homes that were without power for four days. Nassau [sic] homes house critical-care patients, and for them to rely on backup generators is unacceptable.

"Throughout the initial cleanup, there was a clear failure by LIPA to communicate with local crews in order to clear the roadways.

"Nassau County cleaned all downed trees on county roads immediately after the storm, except for those where live wires were attached.

"Unfortunately, many crews that were ready to finish the clean-up process were unable to do so, because LIPA had not communicated with them, the live-versus-dead wires.

"Even by LIPA's own admission, it took them a day or two before they were working effectively with local governments, on deenergizing lines and removing trees.

"In wake of 'Hurricane Irene,' Long Island found itself with over 500,000 of its residents

without power.

"With the amount of notice that LIPA received of the impending storm, and amount of aid they received from out-of-town workers, they should have been equipped to restore power to its customers.

"During the clean-up process, communication efforts between LIPA and local municipalities, and LIPA and its customers, were subpar.

"In fact, my office was inundated with 'power' phone calls because residents were only able to reach an automated system when calling LIPA.

"In the future, LIPA must implement a better plan for restoring power to Long Island residents, and they must communicate with localities in a more efficient manner so we can partner with them to better serve our residents."

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Senator Fuschillo.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Mr. Craft, thank you very much for being here on behalf of the County Executive.

And I must say, that, coordination from him himself, his office, your office, and other departments in Nassau County, was excellent.

And we -- that's why we're so frustrated, because we expected the same of LIPA.

But, I spent many days with the County Executive and yourself, in the Southern Tier of my district, on the waterlines, from Freeport to Massapequa.

And, he was readily available and accessible; also, arranging for the New York State Insurance Department to have their office hours -- emergency office hours at Cedar Creek Park, as well as the mobile van down there.

And there were many days, including yourself, when you participated, and you were physically able to be there. And, it's a large county.

Where we were down, in South Merrick and other areas, and Bellmore, Wantaugh, and Seaford, Massapequa, with FEMA, directly, to show them the damage, for them to make a -- an assessment of the damage. And they were pretty quick to respond as well.

So, I want to thank you, and the County Executive himself personally, for his actions during the storm.

CRAIG CRAFT: Thank you, on behalf of the County Executive, and myself.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Craig, you were in the audience, I think, for a good part of the testimony

of the gentlemen from LIPA and National Grid; their claim of communication between other municipalities, that they've been -- that it was ongoing, and an important factor in how they worked.

How did you find their communication with you, as the County's chief emergency management officer?

CRAIG CRAFT: Senator, we -- I did take note of testimony by LIPA.

We did, in fact, have each of the townships in our EOC, three days prior to the storm, throughout the storm, and for the week to follow.

A great amount of information went up to LIPA, but nothing came back down.

The representative that LIPA put in our EOC was excellent, to say the least. Sent all of our information up, but nothing came back down, including restoring power to critical infrastructure.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: So you did have a representative working with you, and they were helpful, in a sense, that they helped you to get the message upwards; but, you never heard back as to, what was done, and what was being done?

CRAIG CRAFT: That's correct.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Dave, do you have any --

ASSEMBLYMAN MCDONOUGH: I do, thank you.

Thank you, Senator.

Craig, thank you for your remarks, but let me ask you a question.

During this crisis, "OEM," the Office of Emergency Management, you were also charged with the function of preparing shelters as well --

CRAIG CRAFT: Yes, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN MCDONOUGH: -- for the eventually of the storm requiring that?

CRAIG CRAFT: Yes, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN MCDONOUGH: Right.

And, was that -- was there any cooperation with LIPA -- other than what you just said, the lack of it, was there any cooperation with LIPA, regarding those people who had been evacuated, and their power situations?

CRAIG CRAFT: Actually, at one point in the storm, when power failed to one of the evacuation sites, we had to relocate residents to a site with power.

ASSEMBLYMAN MCDONOUGH: How many people were in that location, roughly?

CRAIG CRAFT: Approximately 1,000.

ASSEMBLYMAN MCDONOUGH: How many?

CRAIG CRAFT: Approximately 1,000.

ASSEMBLYMAN MCDONOUGH: So, you lost power in that shelter for 1,000 people in the shelter?

CRAIG CRAFT: Yes, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN MCDONOUGH: And, was LIPA responsive to that?

I mean, I'm sure that's the first one you contacted; right?

CRAIG CRAFT: Again, information went up, Assemblyman.

It certainly went up.

ASSEMBLYMAN MCDONOUGH: It never came down?

CRAIG CRAFT: If it was a great response, we wouldn't have relocated the people that were in the shelter.

ASSEMBLYMAN MCDONOUGH: Okay, so you heard nothing back from them when you reported that; right?

CRAIG CRAFT: No, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN MCDONOUGH: So, then, I guess we all agree that the communication is what failed tremendously here; right?

CRAIG CRAFT: Absolutely.

ASSEMBLYMAN MCDONOUGH: Okay.

Well, thank you very much for your efforts during this, Mr. Craft.

Thank you.

Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: You're welcome.

Senator?

It's --

Jack has a question.

Senator Martins.

SENATOR MARTINS: Uhm --

SENATOR MARCELLINO: I call him Jack.

SENATOR MARTINS: That's fine.

Thank you.

Thank you very much for being here.

Just in terms of coordination, your efforts were specific to the towns; right?

CRAIG CRAFT: Our efforts were, the county, towns, and villages, starting with conference calls, starting a week out, to coordinate efforts with the town.

SENATOR MARTINS: I remember those, sure.

But, as -- you know, in the immediate aftermath of the storm, as each municipality was responding to its own jurisdiction, can you tell us, what, and how -- what efforts, and how the county's

OEM coordinated those efforts?

CRAIG CRAFT: Absolutely.

In the EOC, we have locations for each of the towns to be represented.

Each township gathers information coming into, calls to the town highway departments, or "DPWs." And, the information is shared back and forth.

When we receive information into the EOC, we share it with the three townships.

The three townships, when they receive information, send it to the county EOC, where there's a LIPA representative, fire marshals, police department, and we take the action needed, dependent on the call.

But, there are representatives, as I stated earlier. There were representatives from the three townships in the EOC, three days prior to the storm, and a week following the storm, ready to answer questions, and, make contact with town government to assure that the needs of the residents were facilitated.

SENATOR MARTINS: Yeah, yeah, I understand that. And, again, I'm just trying to figure out if there are lessons to be learned here as well.

You know, when you're dealing with the town of Oyster Bay, you're not necessarily dealing with the village of Massapequa Park.

And, certainly, there are resources available to the village of Massapequa Park. And, I guess you're assuming that there's contact between the town and each individual village, to be able to coordinate those efforts.

And the same can be said for the town of Hempstead and the town of North Hempstead.

How are we getting to the street; how are we getting to the individual residences?

How are we making sure that we're actually coordinating best efforts, especially in those areas where you do have larger villages that may not necessarily be coordinating with the towns as effectively as you may think?

CRAIG CRAFT: Senator, early into these conference calls with the village mayors, they were all provided with direct contact numbers to key members of the EOC staff, to communicate any problems that they had in their village.

On more than one occasion, they took advantage of those key phone numbers, and their requests were addressed.

SENATOR MARTINS: And the information was sent up?

CRAIG CRAFT: Sent up, sir.

SENATOR MARTINS: It never came back?

CRAIG CRAFT: Rarely.

SENATOR MARTINS: Understood.

Thank you, sir.

CRAIG CRAFT: Sure.

ASSEMBLYMAN MCDONOUGH: Senator? If I could, just one other comment, Senator Marcellino?

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Sure.

ASSEMBLYMAN MCDONOUGH: Craig, you have a -- in the Office of Emergency Management, you have something called the "CERT teams."

I believe that's the community -- would you -- "Community Emergency Response Team"?

CRAIG CRAFT: Yes, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN MCDONOUGH: And that's all staffed, mainly by volunteers from Nassau County offices who arrive at OEM?

I know, during that big snow storm last year, that was activated.

And, this was activated just prior to the full impact of the storm; right?

CRAIG CRAFT: Absolutely.

We had CERT volunteers in the Office of Emergency Management throughout the storm.

ASSEMBLYMAN MCDONOUGH: And I've been in those offices. That, you have phone banks there.

And were -- most of those are incoming calls from people who are calling that number?

Is that where the number that the County Executive would -- had put out publicly?

Is that where those phones were, basically?

CRAIG CRAFT: The number that the County Executive had put out was a non-emergency number --

ASSEMBLYMAN MCDONOUGH: Right.

CRAIG CRAFT: -- that was staffed by police department personnel.

ASSEMBLYMAN MCDONOUGH: Okay.

CRAIG CRAFT: The "Office of Emergency Management" number, remained, remains, intact throughout all of events.

The CERT volunteers were manning all incoming phone calls; as well as, staff from county agencies, that were not directly out addressing the issues of the storm, were deployed to OEM, to man the phone banks there.

ASSEMBLYMAN MCDONOUGH: Now, those numbers

were -- the calls coming in were from citizens? Or was that from agencies trying to coordinate stuff within the county? Or, what?

CRAIG CRAFT: Agencies have direct contact numbers.

ASSEMBLYMAN MCDONOUGH: Right.

CRAIG CRAFT: Most of the calls coming in were from residents.

ASSEMBLYMAN MCDONOUGH: And, then, you would pass them on to -- or, CERT members would pass them on to, I guess, LIPA, where you said, it was going up, and not coming back? Or, what?

CRAIG CRAFT: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN MCDONOUGH: Okay, so -- but, how many, uhm -- could you give me an estimate of how many calls you got?

What would you say out there? What would you guess?

CRAIG CRAFT: The OEM line received thousands -- multiple, multiple thousands -- of calls throughout the week; primarily, frustrated residents of Nassau County that could not get through to LIPA.

Again, municipalities have a direct line to call in.

ASSEMBLYMAN MCDONOUGH: Yeah?

CRAIG CRAFT: Police agencies have a direct line to call in.

Our phone lines were manned -- approximately, 75 stations, just manned, just to take incoming phone calls from residents that, primarily, could not get through to LIPA.

ASSEMBLYMAN MCDONOUGH: And that was manned 24/7 throughout the duration, and a little after?

CRAIG CRAFT: 24/7 throughout the duration, up until Wednesday following the storm.

SENATOR FLANAGAN: Okay.

Thank you, Craig.

Thank you very much.

Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Senator Fuschillo.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Craig, was your primary communication and interaction with LIPA, or did that include National Grid, Verizon, Cablevision, or any other interested parties that may be affected?

CRAIG CRAFT: Our representative in the EOC is from National Grid.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Okay.

CRAIG CRAFT: We do communicate directly with Cablevision and Verizon FiOS.

When we learn of outages in areas, again, that might have to do with critical infrastructure, a means of getting vital information out to the residents, we keep an open line of communication to Cablevision and Verizon FiOS.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Right. And your communication was with National Grid and LIPA, or National Grid directly?

CRAIG CRAFT: National Grid had a representative in the office that reports up the chain to both.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: And what about LIPA; did they have a representative in your office?

CRAIG CRAFT: A few days after the storm, they did.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Now, when you -- you mentioned a few times, everything went up.

Your information was provided to, whom, when you said "up": LIPA or National Grid?

CRAIG CRAFT: The call-center rep, again, sent to the EOC, is a full-time employee of National Grid.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Okay.

CRAIG CRAFT: He sends the information up to National Grid, and LIPA.

He sends it to the LIPA call center.

Again, his position, I believe, is a National Grid employee --

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Okay.

CRAIG CRAFT: -- full-time.

But, the information going up, was going to the LIPA call center, just to clarify that.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Right.

And, what came back to you?

CRAIG CRAFT: Rare.

Rare information, in very rare instances.

I could think of very few, over a few days' time, that we received accurate communication back down the line.

Very rare. Maybe a handful.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: During the aftermath of the event, the storm, the hurricane, however we want to categorize it -- "tropical storm," Senator -- what was your communication with LIPA in the aftermath?

CRAIG CRAFT: With the exception of --

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: As far as -- and let me just rephrase that.

With communication from the top, to you, as a representative of Nassau County OEM, were you

getting briefings, daily? three times, four times a day?

What type of communication did you have?

CRAIG CRAFT: Senator, with the exception of one conference call that I was holding, with the cities, towns, and villages --

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Uh-huh?

CRAIG CRAFT: -- where LIPA asked to join in on that call, there was no correspondence from the top to myself personally.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: During the entire week?

CRAIG CRAFT: Through the entire week, to myself personally.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Now, since the aftermath -- aftermath now, what has been the communication with LIPA with OEM?

CRAIG CRAFT: Again, their employee in the EOC remained there.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Right.

No, I'm speaking about --

CRAIG CRAFT: To OEM?

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: -- from the administration of LIPA.

CRAIG CRAFT: None.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Nothing since then?

CRAIG CRAFT: Nothing at all.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Okay.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Senator Martins.

SENATOR MARTINS: Thank you.

Your understanding, as far as a response to this tropical storm, who was responsible, or who had direct oversight, of deployment of personnel, as between National Grid and LIPA?

CRAIG CRAFT: National Grid.

SENATOR MARTINS: Decisions made as to, how to deploy, and where to deploy, who was making those decisions?

CRAIG CRAFT: I would have to say, National Grid.

Again, that is my understanding.

SENATOR MARTINS: I understand.

CRAIG CRAFT: I'm certainly not in a position where I'm setting policy for them, but it's my understanding that it was National Grid's management deploying the employees to the field.

SENATOR MARTINS: And as much information as you were providing, and, as you were available with resources on the local level, to be able to coordinate with them, was it your experience that they were unresponsive?

CRAIG CRAFT: It was certainly unresponsive.

I reflect to a microburst that affected Great Neck --

SENATOR MARTINS: Sure.

CRAIG CRAFT: -- about a year and a half ago, where, LIPA and National Grid responded to the EOC that was set up in Great Neck.

There was a coordinated effort at that time, between LIPA and National Grid, and the local DPW and highway forces, to go out, as you had mentioned earlier, in unison.

You know, kill the power, clear a road. Not to have agencies going to different locations at different times, and finding their hands tied, that they couldn't gain access to a road because a tree was down; or, vice versa, they couldn't remove the tree because the power was on.

SENATOR MARTINS: What would you -- to what would you attribute the lack of coordination on their part, with respect to their response to this storm?

CRAIG CRAFT: Poor communication.

Just, poor communication is the key component to this failure of the response to this storm.

SENATOR MARTINS: Thank you.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Craig, thank you very much for your testimony.

I think the issue here that we're trying to get at, and I have just one quick question for you: Were there ever any police, fire, or other first-responder emergency personnel who were without power, to your knowledge, within the county?

CRAIG CRAFT: Yes, there was.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: How long did it take to get them back on-line?

CRAIG CRAFT: Off the top of my head -- I don't want to give you incorrect information -- but I believe it was, Tuesday, after a conference call with the village mayors, where there was an issue on the North Shore, restoring power.

I know that Merrick Fire Department was without power for quite some time.

I know that Wantaugh Fire Department, Station 5, on Merrick Road in Bellmore, was without power, approximately six days.

I know that Wantaugh Fire Department, Station Number 4, was without power, approximately a week.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: See, this is what I was talking about earlier, when I asked about

priorities.

What were the priorities? And, how were they addressed? And, who addressed them?

And when you have town halls out, for three days, with the inability to communicate to their crews, to go out and help clear streets and access roads, and so forth; when you have a county not being told that that tree overlying a -- or overhanging a major thoroughfare can't be cleared, because they weren't officially told that the wires were dead, so that it would be safe for the crews to come and chop the tree down, and break it up and move it out of the way, so that the crews could then come in and fix the wires; this kind of communication, one cannot have police, fire departments, first responders, emergency circumstances, and emergency situations, you know, out in an area, and claim, "We have a successful system, and a twenty-first-century communication system, that is -- that just doesn't fly.

So, I thank you for your testimony, Craig. And I appreciate it.

Thank the County Executive for his assistance, and his service, during the storm.

I'm sure everybody appreciates it.

CRAIG CRAFT: Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Our next speaker will be Mayor Mark Weiss of the village of Hewlett Harbor.

MAYOR MARK WEISS: Senator Marcellino, distinguished members: My name is Mark Weiss, and I am the mayor of the incorporated village of Hewlett Harbor.

On behalf of the residents of our village, a mostly residential community, located in the southwestern corner of Nassau County, and with a heartfelt sense of concern for all who lived and work on Long Island during the storm, I want to thank you for holding this most important hearing.

I feel privileged to be here today.

While mine is but one voice, and mine is one -- but one small village, I believe my frustrations and bewilderment regarding LIPA's response to "Tropical Storm Irene" reflects what has been, and still is being, expressed by hundreds of thousands of Long Islanders, people who live -- people who I believe, and I dare say, have the right to believe, that they have been victimized, and let down by LIPA.

By painting a word picture, describing what went on in my village, I hope to give voice to all

those who are eager to gain a commitment from LIPA; a commitment that our utility will fix their emergency-preparedness plans, what I see as a systemically flawed model, that, from head to toe, needs to be revisited, and revamped.

In the aftermath of "Tropical Storm Irene," it is clear that LIPA and National Grid failed.

And so that I am not misunderstood, I'm not speaking about a failure on the part of the thousands of men and women who work for LIPA. We are in their debt.

In my view, this was, specifically, and most definitely, a failure of leadership. As such, LIPA, as a utility, violated a sacred trust with its customers, and with our counties, our towns, and our villages.

In less than two weeks, LIPA undermined the feeling of safety all Long Islanders have a right to expect from the providers of their electrical power; the power that lights our homes and our offices, the power that helps to heat and cool our homes, the power that drives the machines that wash and dry our clothes, the power that runs our televisions and radios, that heats our ovens and electrifies our microwaves, and the power that runs our computers,

and oftentimes, the computers that run our phones, and, to so many, most importantly, the power that keeps our food fresh.

Based on the experience of this Island resident, the poor planning, the poor coordination, the poor internal and external communications surrounding this storm, categorizes "Irene" as nothing short of LIPA's "Katrina."

Just as "Katrina" exposed FEMA's inadequacies, "Irene" hung a lantern on what now appears to be LIPA's soft underbelly.

The time for anger, emotion, and name-calling is over. This is the time to reflect on the past, only to plan for the future. A better future.

Let's begin with what's commonly known and accepted as fact by all Long Island residents: Long Island has trees.

These are trees that block roads, and trees that knock down power lines. Trees that were, and in the future will be, an impediment to getting the right people and equipment to where they need to be.

Future planning must recognize the challenges these trees present, and your planning -- LIPA's planning, must prepare for the probability that they will fall.

Second: Understanding the probable, or even the possible, magnitude of the devastation after a storm, understanding where critical problems might be, understanding how best, and where, to deploy assets, cannot be left to the last minute, or until after the event has occurred.

Yes, Long Island Power Authority's customers, I'm sure, will be willing to accept that LIPA will not have assets in place for a spontaneous disaster. But it is difficult to fathom why, as it appears, LIPA's assets were not where they were needed when "Irene" was being touted for weeks as the "storm of the century."

Setting aside that experts were wrong regarding the severity of the storm, the Nassau, and Suffolk County, executives, town executives, village mayors, citizens' groups, and business residents across Long Island were preparing for almost two weeks.

What on earth was LIPA doing during that time?

Senators, let me suggest, that hope is not a strategy.

In the future, obtaining and distributing LIPA assets to all corners of Long Island must be

one of LIPA's highest pre-storm planning considerations.

And, then, there is the matter of communications.

From time to time, power will be disrupted. This is inevitable. But what Long Islanders should be able to expect, is that they will be able to reach their power utility, and that we will get accurate information about the status of repairs, either, immediately, or within a reasonable period of time.

With 20 percent of our village without power, 98 percent of the complaints we received were about LIPA.

Let me restate: 98 percent of the complaints we received in the aftermath of "Irene" were from residents who were not able to get through to LIPA, about the problems LIPA's intake operators were having managing outage reports.

This is evidenced by the fact that reports seem to go missing, and were not being coordinated with field crews.

Even when our Village tried to aggregate our resident complaints, it became apparent, that, within hours, and then within days, that LIPA

left -- LIPA's left hand did not know what LIPA's right hand was doing.

Complaints were recorded, but they appear to have fallen into a black hole.

The people we spoke to were courteous, but it appears that LIPA's infrastructure and systems did not support their efforts.

When we were told the trucks were in our area, no trucks could be found.

When we were told that our village hall was on a priority list, our village hall was, in fact, the last place in the village to get power restored.

When we were told that a line crew would come immediately to secure lines tangled in fallen trees, several tree crews came, and left, because no line crews ever showed up.

In this day and age where computerized reporting and status analysis is price of entry for any business entity of substance, I cannot think of an excuse worthy of expression.

Certainly, none would satisfy my residents.

LIPA must commit to adopting a better communication system, and a system protocols, to deal with emergency management.

In my village, as I'm sure was the case in so

many villages and towns, our trustees, our emergency managers, our commissioners, our office staff, our security staff, our road crew, started preparing for "Irene" a week in advance of the storm reaching Long Island.

In addition to readying vehicles, and making arrangements to move them to accessible higher ground, we purchased additional gas-powered saws, chains, ropes, lights, batteries, and radios.

We also made plans to move our computers out of village hall.

We activated our standing agreement with our local country club, putting their forces on call, and allowing us to engage the club's ground and maintenance staff immediately after the storm passed.

We also put private tree services on alert, to ready them and their equipment if our personnel were in need of additional resources and support.

And beyond this, walkie-talkies were purchased, and with street maps, they were distributed to our trustees and volunteers, to allow us to note and centrally process information about trees that were down, flooded conditions, power outages, and the like.

In Hewlett Harbor, our roads were clear in hours, and our residents, many of whom evacuated the village, returned, for the most part, to an accessible functioning village, save one problem: As it turns out, LIPA was our weakest link. Not because the power went off, but because, with all of our systems that were put in place, to support and communicate with our residents, LIPA seemed to have fallen off the grid.

Were we perfect? No.

Could we do better? Most definitely.

Will we incorporate the key learnings from this storm into plans for the future? Yes.

Senators, this is what we are asking of LIPA:

Senators, let's me recommend if I may, that you require LIPA to set up an ongoing citizens committee to help in the planning process.

No one knows a community better than area residents and local business leaders and local government officials. These people will be invaluable.

I am sure each village and town will support this effort.

And, I would also like to suggest that LIPA assign field representatives, people who will be on

the streets, before and after a storm, to interface with villages throughout the Island.

It is nice to have someone to talk to on the phone, but if one's complaints are not delivered to, and coordinated with, and by, a responsible field representative, who has a bird's-eye view of the situation on the ground, the functionality of the system is sure to be compromised.

In my professional experience, customers are favorable to companies that acknowledge the existence of a problem, and work to satisfy their complaints.

Over the next few months, LIPA will have an opportunity to fix the flaws in their emergency-preparedness program, and to get it right.

As a result, I expect LIPA's customers, and their representatives, will be most appreciative and supported.

I offer our village's support.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you very much, Mayor.

I just -- if I could ask you a quick question.

One of the things, you talked about future planning.

And one of the reasons why we didn't hold this hearing immediately, on top -- or, during the storm, or immediately after, is, we wanted to give some time to, basically, let the dust clear a little bit so we would have, you know, some clear thoughts, and we just get over some of the initial anger that was out there.

Could the villages, like some do with police services, contract to a police entity?

We have the old Brookville Police, for example, that service different villages, by contract.

Could they service, could they form connections with private tree-trimming operations, so that they didn't have to bring them in one at a time? Could they have them on contract, to -- on call, to come in?

Would that be feasible to some of the villages, to get together?

MAYOR MARK WEISS: It's definitely feasible.

I think it's up to each village to determine the assets that are available to them; those that are on staff, and those that are within the community.

Three years ago, the village of

Hewlett Harbor formed a written agreement with the Seawane Country Club, which is smack in the middle of our village.

We noticed that they have very large vehicles, they have pay-loaders, they have people who know how to use equipment to cut down trees, and to help us to clean roads.

We formed this agreement, and we've taken advantage of it, in three years, three times.

The storm in March, which devastated Hewlett Harbor, was a great example of how well it worked. And, we've employed it once again during "Irene."

We -- I -- we also have relationships with several tree-pruning companies. We contacted them prior to the storm. We made them aware of the situation, and our potential need for them.

They know the area very well. They have equipment that can deal with the challenge. And, we were on the phone with them on a regular basis.

And they were, in fact, working to support our own crews, the country club's crews. And, we brought them in as well.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: I appreciate that comment, especially with these -- some of the larger

clubs that exist on the north shore, and various south-shore communities, that they could be utilized, because, I do know some of the villages are not all that big, and do not have a department of public works per se; or, maybe, have only an individual in the clerk's office to go out and assist in this kind of operation.

So, that, perhaps getting together and forming some kind of joint relationship might help them in the future, coming in.

I appreciate your testimony, and we thank you for your time.

Any other questions?

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Just a quick question.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Sure.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Mayor, thank you for your testimony.

It seems you prepared to the best ability as you could.

What has been your communication with LIPA in the aftermath?

MAYOR MARK WEISS: We had a contact, a personal contact, at LIPA, that was set up prior to the storm. And, in fact, as you've heard from others, that worked well.

The Village was able to get through to that person.

It was everything else that failed.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Has the administration reached out to you since the storm and the aftermath, for coordination meetings, emergency-management meetings?

MAYOR MARK WEISS: Only the village and towns' meetings that they've set up.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Okay. Thank you very much, Mayor.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you once again.

MAYOR MARK WEISS: Thank you very much.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Our next speaker, Mayor James Altadonna, of the village of Massapequa Park.

MAYOR JAMES ALTADONNA: Good evening.

I should say: Good afternoon, Senator Carl Marcellino, and Senators.

Thank you for having me, and thank you for having this hearing.

We were equally as frustrated, as you've heard from other representatives speaking here today.

And my goal today was to provide you with a

microcosm of the days' events, and leading up to the storm, and after the storm.

As you know, we were 90 percent affected. We had no electrical power to 90 percent of our villages.

So, if you indulge me, I would like to provide you with a microcosm of the events.

We held a staff meeting on the morning of August 25th to advise employees of the coming storm. Employees were advised of the severity of the storm, and all the employees needed to prepare personally for the hurricane that was to be coming.

Equipment was staged throughout locations in the village, to prevent the loss of equipment at any one location.

On August 26th, at approximately 7 p.m., an Emergency Notification Announcement to all village residents was dispatched, advising residents to prepare for the storm, and provide them with contact information for fire, police, LIPA, and to let them know that Village Hall would be open and functioning, and to assure our residents that we were prepared.

All employees were brought in at 12 midnight on Saturday, August 27th. Last-minute preparations

were made.

Early in the morning, Sunday, August 28th, employees were dispatched, to survey and assess the damage from the storm.

The central command center at the village was activated, and residents immediately began calling.

Village crews went to work on clearing trees on emergency streets that were not entangled with wires.

The village was divided into three sections.

Crews were dispatched to clear roadways. In addition, small truck were dispatched to clear smaller items from the streets.

This action was taken to remove any impediments that may arise for fire, police, and, especially LIPA.

Trees that were entangled with wires were called in to our LIPA emergency government lines.

My initial contact was with Tracy Burgess Levy. We relayed all pertinent information, including trees entangled with wires that were blocking our roadways.

This was our first hint of trouble.

I repeatedly asked, when we were going to see crews, and what information I could relay to our

residents.

She seemed overwhelmed at the amount of phone calls she was receiving from various municipalities, and unable to provide a response.

On Monday morning, August 28th, after no response from LIPA, I began calling LIPA's municipal representatives for action.

At this point, 90 percent of our village was without power.

Again, in contacting LIPA, their response was, that they were directing crews to the hardest-hit areas.

And I politely told them again, that 90 percent of our village was out. We had major access roads that were impassable, as well as multiple downed wires with electrical fires. If this does not constitute a hard-hit area, I do not know what does.

By mid-morning, my frustration level had peaked. I began reaching out to other forms of government for support.

I called Governor Cuomo's Office, as well as Senator Chuck Fuschillo.

And I would like the record to reflect, that Senator Fuschillo stepped in and made calls. And,

it was after those phone calls that we started to receive some limited response from LIPA.

At this point, we received that call from Lillian Manjarrez of LIPA. We again relayed to her all the previous information that was relayed to LIPA government contacts.

Again, all day Monday, August 29th, no LIPA crews were available in Massapequa Park.

On Tuesday morning, August 30, 2011, I was advised that a LIPA crew was on O'Connell Street.

The Village Administrator was dispatched to find that crew.

An employee by the name of Ron Noone -- and I would like to be on record, the employees of LIPA and National Grid did an incredible job under the circumstances -- a name, Ron Noone, from LIPA, provided assistance and information. He was present to ascertain the situation on O'Connell Street, but, initially, had no plans to clear it.

Once it was determined that the electric was off, he did, in fact, have his tree crew clear the tree -- clear the wires from the tree.

Village staff immediately went to work.

The administrators -- at the Administrator's insistence, he was asked to go to Willow Street and

Lake Shore, which is a major thoroughfare in our village.

Again, he ascertained that the wires were not live, and we went to work, and we cleared that main northwest -- I'm sorry, north-south thoroughfare.

Although extremely helpful, he advised us that he had to move to other areas.

Again, after some convincing, he determined that other areas, two other blocks were safe, and that the Village was able to clear those streets.

After numerous calls and demands for action, a dedicated crew arrived at Village Hall on Wednesday morning. That crew, headed again by Ron Noone, worked in conjunction with the Superintendent of Public Works, and began clearing trees from roads and wires.

And I would say, Wednesday, was the first day we had manpower to, actually, effectively create -- effectively improve the situation in Massapequa Park.

The Village continued with its three crews, and brought in an outside contractor, as the -- Senator Carl Marcellino had suggested -- outside contractor to provide crews to continue to clear trees and clean up roads.

I was giving -- at that point, Wednesday, I was given a contact, Joseph Cicalo, director of construction delivery, who was able to provide updates, and attempts to advise us when electrical power was restored to our village.

It was not until late Friday that the village residents had been restored with power.

In conclusion to "Tropical Storm Irene", which was not as strong as predicted, thank God, we determined that there were three facets that needed to be addressed by LIPA.

First, and foremost: Their preparedness.

We felt that they were not prepared. Assets were not deployed throughout the county. And, it took too long to mobilize and to respond.

Second: LIPA's assessment.

If they would embed with the villages and towns, their assessment would have been much easier.

Third: Reconstruction, which should have two separate, distinct components.

One should be, clearing roads of trees, and determining wires that are live or dead;

And, then, the second component should be, the opening or the electrical restoration.

But, to do two in the same, as we see, takes

too long.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to address the Standing Committee on Investigation and Government Operations.

And, I welcome any of your questions.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Well, Mayor, thank you very much for coming. And, I appreciate your testimony. It will be, obviously, part of the record when we prepare our report on this issue, going forward.

Just a quick question: Did you -- it's the same question I asked Mayor Weiss.

Did you find any first responder -- police department, police substations, fire departments -- without power?

MAYOR JAMES ALTADONNA: We were on generator power.

The Massapequa Park firehouse was on generator power.

The most significant event in our village, was, we had, literally, downed wires that were live, with fires.

And, in calling in those calls to LIPA, as long as it was not going to cause fire to a home, they felt it wasn't a priority.

We were actually staffing code enforcers, on blocks, to prevent children and individuals from walking down those blocks while these transformers and wires were live.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Senator Fuschillo.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Mayor, just a quick comment.

Thanks very much for taking the time to be here.

MAYOR JAMES ALTADONNA: No problem.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: I shared your frustration all week long, when you and I were communicating quite often --

MAYOR JAMES ALTADONNA: Right.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: -- due to the lack of response, or I should say, a lack of communication, as to whether or not somebody would be in your village.

MAYOR JAMES ALTADONNA: Yes.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: And to hear from you, repeatedly, every day, that 90 percent of the homeowners that you represent, you and I both represent, was inexcusable.

I thank you for your efforts.

MAYOR JAMES ALTADONNA: Thank you.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: One question, and I've asked the previous speakers: In the aftermath, have you had any communication from LIPA with respect to coordination of any type of meeting?

MAYOR JAMES ALTADONNA: I have had one communication with them, that they were going to hold a town-hall meeting for mayors.

Unfortunately, they scheduled it the same night of the NCVOA of Nassau County, so, I did send a representative in my place.

SENATOR FUSCHILLO: Thank you, Mayor.

I appreciate you being here.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Assemblyman Ra.

ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Mayor, one quick question.

MAYOR JAMES ALTADONNA: Sure.

ASSEMBLYMAN RA: And I thank, you, and Mayor Weiss, for being here, because, as Senator Martins had highlighted earlier, the coordination with our real local governments was certainly very lacking here.

My question was: You talked about that Tuesday morning when you were advised about the LIPA crew that had -- that was on O'Connell Street.

Had you received any prior communication from LIPA, or anything directly from them, letting you

know there would be a crew in the area so that you could coordinate with your village crews that needed to be there as well?

MAYOR JAMES ALTADONNA: No, our residents are pretty resourceful. So, it was a resident that called it in.

And, as soon as we found out that there was a truck, we immediately went to meet them.

We -- you know, we were -- that's the way we communicated with LIPA.

ASSEMBLYMAN RA: Thank you.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thank you very much for your testimony. Appreciate it.

Just so that we put on the record: I did make, and my staff did make, outreach to the Suffolk County Executive's Office, to come and testify, and present a statement.

We were declined, that testimony.

Our next speaker, just to give you a perspective of a business person on the Island, and how that particular individual was able to operate under the circumstances of the outage, is a gentleman by the name of Mark Gelish.

Mark is the owner of Mac's Steak House in Huntington.

Mr. Gelish.

MARK GELISH: Good morning.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Good afternoon.

MARK GELISH: Good afternoon.

My name is Mark Gelish. I'm the owner of Mac's Steak House, in -- 12 Gerard Street, Huntington, New York.

I would like to describe my experience with "Tropical Storm Irene," and my experience with the response of LIPA.

Upon Sunday morning, I arrived at Mac's Steak House. The eye of the storm was upon us.

Mac's, at that point, had no power, but the cross-street did have electric, of New York Avenue and Gerard.

At about 10 a.m., the immediate area around Mac's Steak House --

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Just to point out, Route 1 -- that's Route 110 --

MARK GELISH: Route 110.

Yes, sir.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: -- is New York Avenue. So, it's a major north-south thoroughfare.

MARK GELISH: Around 10 a.m., the electric

was out in the whole immediate area of Mac's Steak House.

The first 24 hours were uneventful.

Monday, I woke up in the restaurant, and was pleased to see that the electric had been put on everywhere that I could visibly see, except for, Mac's Steak House.

Monday day, we at Mac's went into a rescue mode. We set up electric with generators.

We figured that the electric would be on any time, and all we tried to do is maintain the temperatures of the fresh food and the wine inventory.

We also tried to monitor response of LIPA, with radio, Internet, and phone calls.

At around 3 p.m., I was lucky enough to reach a LIPA operator.

This was an extremely frustrating event.

In summary: I was trying to explain to her that the outage at our area was a technical event and not a physical issue.

The operator seemed to want to taunt me, with comments like:

"I don't care. My house doesn't have electric either."

"I will not write down this issue, because we don't know where the trucks are."

"We don't know. Could be weeks, could be hours, before we get there."

"You have insurance, don't you?"

And, "We are working 24 hours a day."

Resigned to the fact that I wasn't going to get anywhere, I slept at Mac's from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. I went home to shower, and look up my status on the LIPA Web page.

The status -- and I paraphrase -- was "assessing and responding."

With that, I was excited.

I went back to Huntington, to see how close the truck were to Mac's.

I drove around for two hours. Could not find a working crew anywhere.

I proceeded to go in a five-mile circle of Mac's Steak House, and I gave up my search at about 1:15 a.m. Tuesday morning.

5 a.m., I called emergency number again, and there was nothing new on the recordings.

At 8 a.m. I called again, and there was -- it stated that there was a service ticket that went out at 7 a.m.

With that, I stayed outside the restaurant for the next 24 hours, monitoring the cross-street of New York, which is Route 110, and Gerard.

At about 9 p.m., I saw a LIPA truck, and with my excitement, I went into the street to greet them like a liberator.

He informed me that he wasn't there for me, but that he was only on his way home.

The next -- the following events happened over the next hour and a half:

He informed me, that the crews were working until dusk, but they got paid until 10 p.m.

That, the trucks were all up on the north shore roads because they were devastated.

He said, and I quote, "It look like a war zone."

He was generally upset with my situation, and he decided to take time out of his day, to go up and down the street and look at the wires, to see if he could find the issue.

Upon his inspection, he said that the problem was a transformer that was open. It just needed to be closed.

He then proceeded to tell me he would do his best to dispatch -- to get to dispatch, and to send

a crew first thing Wednesday morning.

He would not touch anything, however, that night, because -- even though I begged him. He cited safety of other LIPA workers as the reason he wouldn't touch it.

Wednesday morning that subcontractor called me. He explained his conversation with the Green Lawn dispatcher. And, he gave -- and he said I would be in the thoughts and prayers.

He said he did the best he could.

Around 9 a.m., I tracked down another subcontractor on Wall Street, which is approximately one block from Mac's. They were in a small pickup, and they seemed to be doing site evaluations.

I thought they were there to inspect my plight. And, as cordial as they were, they also portrayed the incompetency of the LIPA response.

And, here's a few of those excerpts:

They told me that they needed to get the water station up for the sewage, and, so, they were holding back some electric.

With that I asked: Well, why was the electric around the sewer, restaurants, and retail working, and not where I was?

They again told me that LIPA had no clue

where their trucks were. And, that they would also not come 100 yards from where they were to see why I didn't have electric.

At 2 p.m. that day, Wednesday, I spoke to a LIPA representative. This time it was a supervisor who would only identify herself as "Linda."

Linda was very courteous, and equally incompetent.

She stated, at this point, she would write down my issue, but still could not send an e-mail or call a dispatcher, but, that -- so, maybe next time, they could avoid some of this type of issue to happen.

Linda kept me on the phone for 15 minutes. And I think, at that point, it was because I was truly defeated, and I was very amenable and not hostile to her.

At 5 p.m. that day, with great amount of resentment, I spoke to my insurance adjustor. And we decided, at this point, the products had been compromised, and we needed to go, from rescue, to recovery mode.

We then proceeded to throw out all of fresh food, and document what we threw out.

Again, I stayed at Mac's until about 6 a.m.

No electric.

At this point, we got ready for a re-opening mode. We called all of our vendors, to get opening orders, just to get ready.

Electric was restored around 10:20 a.m. And with a great amount of effort, we opened up Thursday night with about 80 percent of our menu.

Here are a few of my concerns for this panel.

Number one: How could the powers to be have so much to say about the public being prepared, which the public did, and then not prepare themselves?

Number two: How could the recovery response be so incompetent and so uncoordinated?

Dominoes can tell you the status of your pizza delivery, with a part-timer 19-year-old executing the baking, and a 19-year-old executing the delivery.

And, LIPA, a well-class utility, having no control, and repeatedly saying, they have no idea where the trucks.

The lack of some sort of analytical decision-making process at LIPA, to the fact that 100 trucks were put on streets where the devastation was, and I can appreciate that, but, that they

didn't decide to put one bucket in the business districts, just to fix the little bit of problems that mine was, and some of the other restaurants in Huntington were.

And then, of course, the decision-making process, that they leave businesses hostage to them, and let other businesses thrive, during their self-inflicted crisis.

And, lastly: The audacity of them, to use insurance as part of the consoling process of the business plight.

Insurance is for emergencies, not for utility incompetency.

In conclusion: I would like to thank you, Senator Marcellino.

Your staff did show genuine concern, and follow-up, during the whole time of this crisis. They also seemed to try to fix the issue.

I hope, that instead of pointing finkers -- fingers, excuse me, LIPA re-evaluates the system, and starts, works, to recreate an effective mature and -- response to the next emergency.

Thank you for your time.

Thank you all.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: All right, thank you very much, and I appreciate your time coming in.

I wanted you to come in, and let the -- for the record, just to be here; that, the plight of a business person out there, trying to do business.

A lot of restaurants, as you well know, were feeding people; because, they had no power, they couldn't cook, they couldn't take care of themselves. They were using the restaurants as a place to just get warm food for their families.

MARK GELISH: Uh-huh.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: So, it is important to --

What was the total number of -- what was the total amount of your loss?

MARK GELISH: So far, we have four claims.

The food inventory was 18,000;

Business loss is still being negotiated;

A stereo system, which is nobody's fault, is somewhere between two and five thousand;

And, last, I have antique wines that we have to go through, that might have been compromised. If it was all of it, which I don't think it will be, it will be about $14,000.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Wow.

Thank you very much, Mark.

Appreciate your time.

MARK GELISH: Thank you, guys.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Our next speaker will be the business representative of the International Brotherhood of Electric Workers Local 1049, James Brown.

Mr. Brown.

MARK BROWN: Mr. Chairman, Senator Marcellino; Senator Fuschillo, all our elected representatives, and all those in attendance: My name is Jim Brown. I'm a business representative with IBEW Local Union 1049.

I'm here representing business manager, Bob Shand. Unavoidably, he's away on IBEW business, and is unable to attend.

He has asked that I read his statement, and make it available for the record, and answer any questions to the best of my ability.

"Chairman Marcellino, Senator Fuschillo, members of the Committee, and all elected Representatives present: As the proud manager of 3,500 IBEW men and women who diligently and expertly provide electric and gas service for our friends and neighbors on Long Island, I want to thank you for

taking the time to examine the efforts made while restoring service to the 523,000 customers who lost their power as a result of 'Hurricane Irene.'

"First, and foremost, Local 1049 is committed to working with your Committee, our government agencies, LIPA, and National Grid, to provide the best service and storm response possible.

"The record will indicate that electric customers on Long Island enjoy the highest electric reliability and the shortest outage time of any overhead utility in New York State. This is for, both, storm- and non-storm-related events.

"This is not to indicate we are satisfied.

"We strive every day to be better, and hope that the storm-review process will provide additional safe and expedient solutions to restore power after these types of events.

"I would like to point out, that our members' average age is a little over 48 years, and it is not unusual for members to have 30 or 40 years of service to our community.

"Our experience can be a valuable resource to your Committee, should you desire.

"While I know that some of you may take exception to the response to 'Hurricane Irene,'

I would like to discuss some of the extraordinary efforts made during restoration.

"All vacation and scheduled days off were canceled prior to the event.

"All personnel were staged and prepared in advance of the storm.

"There were mandatory 16-hour shifts around the clock, seven days a week, in advance, during, and subsequent to the storm. And, in some departments, these shifts lasted for six or seven days after all customers were restored.

"16-hour shifts, commuting to and from work, allow little time for much-needed sleep after performing this hard and dangerous work.

"Just examining the numbers, 50 percent of us were going home, to dark homes and cold showers, too.

"Yes, we live here. Long Island is our home, also.

"We are not complaining. We are proud and privileged to serve our community.

"I personally began my career with then-LILCO in 1973, initially, as an apprentice lineman; subsequently, as a substation technician.

"For the last 20 years, I have been a

business representative with IBEW Local Union 1049, representing members who work for the utility.

"I believe this combination of experience, of over 39 years, provides a unique perspective for evaluating the storm restoration.

"I have worked, and been an integral part of, ice storms, heat and lightening storms, tropical storms, and hurricanes, and I remain unaware of any authority that delineates as to what is an adequate or excellent number of customers to restore each and every day.

"The restoration is a function of the damage to the system, and the right number of workers with the appropriate skills.

"Is, two days, five days, or seven days, too long?

"I'm sure we all feel two hours is too long, but, I am unaware of no process that restores 523,000 customers that effectively and safely.

"As you would guess, I am very proud of the work done by the men and women of IBEW Local 1049.

"I also wanted to give thanks and praise to all 7,500 men and women, who sacrificed, and gave their best efforts, during this time.

"I had the opportunity to observe many facets

of the restoration effort. Those by my members, the contractors who traveled here, and the National Grid management team. Their dedication to restoring Long Island was extraordinary.

"A special recognition should go to National Grid president, John Bruckner, who led the effort of what became several battalions of men and women. His leadership during this difficult time was as professional as I have witnessed in my 39 years of storm restoration.

"Lastly, I would also request, that, through our efforts, we can come up with a message, asking customers to remain calm, provide support to the restoration effort, and come together as a community, during these difficult times."

Thank you.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: Thanks for your testimony, Mr. Gelish.

And, I do appreciate your remarks.

And, I do appreciate, as it, I said earlier, and I think you heard it from just about every member of the panel, we appreciate the work of the crews in the field. We appreciate the fact that they were out there on under very difficult circumstances.

I agree with you; there's no way to say, that, four, five, six, seven days, is an appropriate response for half a million people out of power, or half a million households out of power.

It depends on the nature of the outage, it depends upon the nature of the units that are out, and the complexity of the hook-up system.

We understand all of that.

We also -- it depends upon the timing when streets could be cleared appropriately.

But, I think that you heard here today, a complaint on the communication between LIPA, Grid, and its customers.

That's a problem.

I also heard, from testimony, and I think you heard it, too, because you were here, that there was a complaint about the communication between the central headquarters and the workers in the field, and vice versa.

I was told by a LIPA representative, on the phone, that the backyard of the household that I was standing in, had been given power earlier that day.

In fact, they had not.

In fact, there hadn't been a crew on that road to address their household.

And there had been many calls from, both, the customer and my own office, to LIPA's phone system.

How would you address the communication between your people, who are on the ground, doing the best they could, under difficult circumstances?

But, still, how is the communication between your field people and the main office?

MARK BROWN: I personally didn't have any interaction at that time.

Even though the members that I represent, the gas group, we go out and do two-man restoration, to assist the regular electric crews at the time, I'm sure that they functioned as they normally would, through our dispatch system.

Just, once again, overwhelmed by the quantity of outages, and the damage, that occurred, as was represented by Mr. Bruckner, you have to start at one end, and get -- to get to the other end.

How the communication went? I'm sure that local 1049 will do everything in its power to assist LIPA, National Grid, and your Committee, or any other governmental agency, to make it function in a better manner.

SENATOR MARCELLINO: I appreciate that.

And I appreciate your time, and the

testimony.

And, again, I appreciate the efforts of your workers, that you represent. Of the workers that you represent, they did yeoman's work.

Once sent to the places of -- most people were saying: Well, once they got here, we had -- they did their job, and they did it quickly, and they did it well.

I didn't get any complaint on that level.

We did get complaints, as I said, on the communication system, and whatever.

Again, I thank you for your time, and I thank you for your testimony.

I will be forwarding -- that's the last testifier in this series.

I thank my colleague for coming and being here, and listening and, asking questions.

We will be forwarding on to the Governor, a letter.

We'll copy LIPA and Grid, as to what it says. But, we're going to ask them to, basically, hold in abeyance, any reference, or any recommendation, on contract between LIPA and Grid, until, and when, a full independent review of the operation and the response to "Irene" is completed.

We don't have that done.

And I don't trust -- this is my own personal thing -- I just don't trust the fox to look at the security system in the hen house.

We're not going to deal with that.

I want somebody, outside; I want a professional group, come in. And I want a full review of the system, and a full review of this so-called "twenty-first century communication system," which, as you've heard, over and over again, from testifier after testifier, failed.

Absolutely failed.

That is the only way you could describe it.

It didn't work.

I don't know why. I'm not an expert, but I'm going to find out.

And I don't want decisions being made, one, as to who's going to head LIPA; or, who's going to be contracted to perform the service, and manage your personnel, the workers, until we get that review.

They're just going to have to wait until we get that review.

And I'm going to urge the Governor to set one up as expeditiously as possible, so that we can make

this review done -- get it done, until we get some answers to the questions.

Because, as you heard here, the testimony between -- and the written testimony, if you read both Grid's and LIPA's written testimony -- we didn't get LIPA's until this morning. We had Grid's yesterday, in advance, and we were able to read that ahead of time -- in fact, they contradict each other. They don't -- they don't match.

And, that's not the way it should be. They should be in sync.

They're not.

So, we're going to need answers.

Again, I thank all the people who testified, for their efforts, and their time. And we appreciated their testimony.

And, my colleagues, again, thank you once again.

The meeting of this committee is adjourned.

(Whereupon, at 12:48 p.m., the public hearing, held before the New York State Senate Standing Committee on Investigations and Government Operations, concluded.)