

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

Local Union 457 AFL-CIO



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To the Members of the Energy & Technology and Labor Committees:

Local 457 of the IBEW represents approximately half of the CL&P territory from central to eastern Connecticut; we also represent Norwich Public Utilities and Wallingford Electric Division. Our experience with restoration efforts due to the impact of Tropical Storm Irene was different in the public sector Municipalities than it was with CL&P.

We certainly acknowledge that no Company could maintain a workforce that could single-handedly deal with the damage that this storm created but there are certainly things that could have been done differently and in fact were done differently at the Municipalities we represented. We feel that is due to the staffing level.

In an attempt to illustrate this staffing issue we have included a few exhibits that show the CL&P districts we represent and the Town covered by those districts with the population of each along with the number of Linemen for each location (East and Central System Projects groups are not associated to a district and can be considered roving crews). When you compare those numbers to the Municipalities you can see quite a contrast. What also needs to be recognized is the Municipalities didn't restrict the hours of work which we feel aided their restoration efforts.

There has been a lot of talk surrounding hours of work. CL&P has publicly stated that the work hours would be 16 on and 8 off for safety reasons. Historically, when there were widespread outages due to storms Utility Workers would work 17 to 18 hour days. This had been the practice for a very long time.

It was approximately the 2002-2003 time frame when CL&P discovered they were not in compliance with the Federal hours of service rules relative to the Commercial Drivers License regulations. CL&P, along with the Edison Electrical Institute, petitioned the Federal Government to get an exemption for the hours of service because that restriction would only allow a CDL holder to drive for 15 hours with ½ hour travel each way to work which equated to the 16 hour work day.

CL&P claimed they needed the ability to work beyond that restriction for public safety as well as service restoration- we concurred. While the hours of service issue was playing out the then President of CL&P, Lee Olivier, put out a letter to employees stating that due to the hours of service regulation which required 8 hours off, the Company would continue to pay double-time for hours worked as if the employee had worked over 16 hours and not received 8 hours off for rest time as the contracts called for. This practice continued even after CL&P received its Federal exemption for the hours of service. It wasn't until approximately 2008 with a change in management where we were told they were going to cease the practice of paying double-time; it was a "business decision".

We understand business decisions but NEVER have seen public safety be compromised to the degree it has been since that decision. The mantra now is to get the crews off the clock before they go over 16 hours regardless of what they are doing. We have never walked away from wires down and other dangerous situations like we do now.

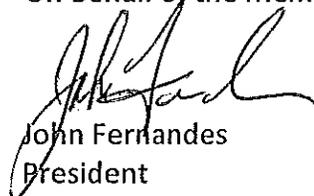
When Tropical Storm Irene passed crews were called in at approximately 2:00 p.m. In the past we had a majority of workers on-site so they didn't have to deal with road closures and fallen debris as they tried to get to work. The majority of these same workers were sent home at 10:00 p.m. at the expense of public safety. In the past we would work 20 to 24 hours on the first day of an event to address as many public safety issues as possible before settling into any type of schedule. Our Members end up feeling humiliated when they have to drive off and leave people in the dark because CL&P is more concerned with cutting cost vs. providing service as they always had been in the past. This commitment has been lost since deregulation.

For clarification, the 16-8 isn't exactly accurate per our contracts. If someone works 16 hours and doesn't get their contractual meal time, this time is added onto the end of the day so that 8 hours off could be up to 9.5 hours off. If you add in the travel time and such you can see how it shortens the actual hours worked.

Finally it must be said that CL&P relies heavily on the use of third party contract Linemen. Their districts are so depleted that a thunderstorm can cause these contractors to be called because there are not enough employees to handle it. There was a time when that hardly ever occurred. Many of these contract crews are from out of State. These are good paying jobs (due to the risk and skill required); why not keep these dollars in Connecticut by providing more jobs? If CL&P was required to maintain a higher staffing level through, perhaps, a benchmark, we feel the residents of Connecticut would be better served and the quality of life for our Members would improve because they are sacrificing time with their family due to constantly being forced to work under threat of discipline week in and week out during the summer months and often other times as well.

As you can see we feel CL&P is understaffed and as the regulatory body we would hope you would address this. I personally testified before the DPUC during the 2003 rate case for CL&P to address that aging workforce; this situation hasn't improved. When you consider that the average age of a Utility Worker is 52 and combine that with the current staffing problem it doesn't paint a very good picture for the future. We hope you give consideration to our concerns. The people of Connecticut deserve better.

On Behalf of the Members of IBEW Local 457,



John Fernandes
President
IBEW Local 457

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Rich Sank
Business Manager
IBEW Local 457

IBEW Local 457
Towns Serviced by LU 457 Lineworkers
2011

Hartford *Top Linemen- 3, Lead Linemen- 4, Linemen-10*
Total Linemen= 17

Bolton -4,980	Rocky Hill -19,709
East Hartford -51,252	Wethersfield -26,668
Hartford -124,512	Windsor -29,044
Manchester -58,241	

Total population = 314,406

Middletown *Top Linemen- 3, Lead Linemen- 2, Linemen- 7*
Total Linemen = 12

Cromwell -14,005	Middletown -47,648
Durham -7,388	Portland -9,508
Haddam -8,346	
Middlefield -4,425	

Total population = 91,320

East Hampton *Chief Linemen- 3, Lead Linemen- 3, Linemen- 10*
Total Linemen = 16

Colchester -16,068	Glastonbury -34,427
E. Portland -9,508	Hadlyme
East Haddam -9,126	Hebron -9,686
East Hampton -12,959	Marlborough -6,404

Total population = 98,178

Willimantic *Chief Linemen- 3, Lead Linemen- 3, Linemen- 6, Line Helpers- 2*
Total Linemen= 14

Andover -3,303	Lebanon -7,308	Sprague -2,984
Chaplin -2,305	Mansfield -26,543	Willimantic -15,823
Columbia -5,485	S. Coventry -12,435	Windham -25,268
Franklin	Scotland -1,726	

Total population = 103,180

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New London

*Top Linemen- 2, Lead Linemen- 3, Linemen- 6
Total Linemen = 11*

East Lyme -19,159 Salem -4,151
Lyme -2,406 Waterford -19,517
New London -40,115
Old Lyme -7,603

Total population = 92,951

Mystic

*Chief Linemen- 2, Lead Linemen- 3, Linemen- 5
Total Linemen= 10*

Groton -40,115 Preston -4,276
Ledyard -15,051 North Stonington 5,297
Montville -19,571
Mystic -4,150

Total population = 88,460

Cheshire

*Chief Linemen- 4, Lead Linemen- 5, Linemen- 18, Line Helpers- 3
Total Linemen = 30*

Bristol -60,477 Newington -30,562 Terryville -12,243
Cheshire -29,261 Plymouth -12,243
Meriden -60,868 Poquonock
New Britain -73,206 Southington -43,069

Total population = 321,929

Tolland

*Chief Linemen- 5, Lead Linemen- 5, Line Mechanic- 14, Line Helper-1
Total Linemen = 25*

Ashford -4,317 N. Coventry -12,435 Suffield -15,735 West Suffield
East Windsor -8,210 Somers -11,444 Tolland -15,052 Willington -6,041
Ellington -5,132 South Windsor -25,709 Union -854 Windsor Locks-12,498
Enfield -17,370 Stafford -12,087 Vernon 29,179

Total population = 176,063

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Danielson

Chief Linemen- 4, Lead Linemen- 4, Linemen- 7, Line Helpers- 1
Total Linemen = 15

Ashford -4,317	Eastford -1,749	Plainfield -15,405	Thompson -9,458
Brooklyn -8,210	Griswold -11,951	Pomfret -4,247	Union -854
Canterbury -5,132	Killingly -17,370	Putnam -9,584	Voluntown 2,603
Danielson -17,370	Lisbon -4,338	Sterling -3,830	Woodstock 7,964

Total population = 124,382

Madison

Chief Linemen- 4, Lead Linemen- 4, Linemen- 8, Line Helpers- 1
Total Linemen= 17

Branford -28,026	Guilford -22,375	Westbrook -6,938
Chester -3,994	Killingworth -6,525	
Clinton -13,260	Madison -18,269	
Essex -6,683	Old Saybrook -10,242	

Total population = 116,312

System Projects Central

Chief Linemen- 3, Lead Linemen- 1, Linemen- 11, Line Helper- 1
Total Linemen = 16

Not associated to any District

System Projects East

Chief Linemen- 7, Linemen- 12, Line Helper-1
Total Linemen = 20

Not associated to any District

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Town of Wallingford

Chief Linemen- 1, Linemen- 6, Apprentice Linemen- 7
Total Linemen= 14

Wallingford -45,135
Northford -7,000

Total population = 52,135

City of Norwich

Chief Linemen- 1, Linemen- 3, Apprentice Linemen- 6
Total Linemen = 10

Total population = 40,493

**Population totals based on 2010 census information*