



1937 - 2012

International Brotherhood  
of Electrical Workers

Local 420

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March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Dear Distinguished Members of the  
Energy and Technology Committee:

I am here today in support of Committee bills S.B. 23 and H.B. 5544.

Recently, we have been very vocal about the staffing levels for Connecticut Light and Power Company. Our staffing levels have been dramatically reduced since the 70's and our customer base has dramatically increased. The current staffing levels are inadequate; not just for storms like "Irene" and Alfred, but the various storms that affect the State of Connecticut throughout the year; for example, winter ice storms particularly in northern Connecticut, the unpredictable New England winds and the pop-up thunderstorms that hit the State of Connecticut from April through October.

I represent the Connecticut Light and Power Company workers for the western part of the State of Connecticut. The work centers are Greenwich, Stamford, Norwalk, Newtown, New Milford, Falls Village, Torrington, Simsbury and Waterbury. These work centers maintain not only these towns, but the towns that surround each work center. Evening emergencies such as thunderstorms, broken poles from car accidents and equipment failures, can take 3 to 5 people off the daily work schedule per work center because they worked all night. If a whole department works on a brief thunderstorm, there could be nobody on the work platform the next day. This greatly hinders work for residential and commercial customers.

Average waiting time, under ideal conditions, for a residential service could be up to 3 weeks and for 3-phase commercial, it could be 9 to 10 weeks providing nobody is out sick, on workers compensation, vacation or rest time due to emergency work. This has a negative impact on Connecticut businesses.

I am not suggesting that the Company hires 2,000 line workers and support workers for big storms. I am simply expressing the need for more workers for regular work as well as the minor emergency work that we do on a weekly basis.

Currently, Connecticut Light and Power Company is pursuing the purchase of all of AT&T's poles and they have long-term plans for overhead and underground maintenance to strengthen our system. This work should be done by Connecticut Light and Power Company employees and not contractors; a large portion of whom are from out of state.

In the past three years, Waterbury has lost 11 line mechanics and only 4 were replaced. All of the other work centers that I have mentioned have similar problems. We have difficulty handling minor storms due to our low staffing levels. It is a great inconvenience to Connecticut's businesses and residential customers.

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We are not just short of line mechanics, we are also in need of cablesplicers, stockhandlers and service designers. All these classifications are instrumental in storm restoration as well. The cable departments have similar emergencies from week to week, much as the line departments. Some of our stockrooms only have one stockhandler, and some have only two. Sometimes trying to get material from the storerooms is a lengthy process, particularly, during major storm events. It's like going shopping on Thanksgiving week at a major supermarket and they only have one cashier.

The Company is now in the process of hiring 10 account executives and 5 supervisors for the purpose of dealing with the towns as liaisons. The towns will soon have somebody to complain to, but without the workforce, the people they complain to, can do very little.

Between Connecticut Light and Power Company, AT&T and United Illuminating, over 1,000 jobs could be created for Connecticut residents, helping the people who graduate from State trade schools, community colleges and returning veterans. Hopefully, we can have bipartisan support from Connecticut legislators and cooperation from the CEO's who would all like to become job creators.

Connecticut Light and Power customers pay their monthly service charges and are promised safe, dependable and reliable service. It is time to see to it that the company delivers on its promises.

Thank you.



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