1		IN THE MATTER OF
2		THE MORELAND COMMISSION
3	MOF	RELAND INVESTIGATION INTO UTILITY PREPARATION RESPONSE
4	RESPONSE T	AND TO HURRICANE SANDY AND PRIOR MAJOR STORMS
5	Location:	Murray Hill Drive Binghamton, New York
7	Date:	April 24, 2013
8	Time:	6:00 p.m. to 8:15 p.m.
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1	(The hearing commenced at 6:00 p.m.)		
2	MS. CALCATERRA: Good evening. I am		
3	Regina Calcaterra. Joanie Mahoney,		
4	Commissioner of Onondaga County. She is one of our		
5	Moreland Commissioners. And we're also joined by		
6	Justin Teres and Aylin Ictemel, as well. They're		
7	all part of the Moreland Commission team. The		
8	Moreland Commission was created the Moreland		
9	Commission for for Storm Utility for Storm		
10	Utility Preparation and Response there you go		
11	Utility Storm Preparation and Response was created		
12	in November. Governor Cuomo, on November 13th,		
13	issued an executive order creating a Moreland		
14	Commission.		
15	A Moreland Commission is an		
16	extraordinarily unique commission. There are many		
17	task forces and commissions in state government,		
18	but what this particular Commission has is subpoena		
19	power, which is an extraordinary power. So he		
20	created a Moreland Commission, directing the		
21	Commissioners and also directing the Moreland staff		
22	to investigate all of the utilities around the		
23	state, their emergency plans when it comes to		
24	storms and, also, their storm response as well.		

- 1 And the executive order, also, gave a directive for
- 2 the Moreland Commission to investigate any energy
- 3 agencies in the state to find out if there's any
- 4 type of redundancy or inefficiency and, also, to
- 5 take a look at LIPA, the Long Island Power
- 6 Authority, which struggled to put the lights on
- 7 after Sandy.
- 8 The important thing about the -- the
- 9 executive order and what's unique about it is how
- 10 far the governor directed us to go back. He wanted
- 11 the Moreland Commission to take a look at storms
- 12 going back to the December 2008 Ice Storm, to
- 13 Hurricane Sandy, Lee, and Irene as well. So it
- 14 goes back then. So what this has required us to do
- is actually travel around the state and hold
- 16 regional public hearings because we're -- the way
- 17 that we're doing our investigation is through a
- 18 variety of different means. Mean one is we've got
- 19 subpoena power, so we're able to subpoena documents
- 20 from each one of the utilities, which is what we've
- 21 been doing and we've been sifting through, which
- 22 we'll talk about in a moment. Then we could bring
- 23 them in for questioning.
- We have, also, been interviewing

- 1 external stakeholders as we call them. We've did
- 2 our best to reach out to every Office of Emergency
- 3 Management in the state that was impacted by
- 4 outages during one of those storms, and either had
- 5 telephone interviews with them or in-person
- 6 interviews to get their assessment. And other
- 7 external stakeholders that operate critical
- 8 infrastructure, whether it's hospitals or schools
- 9 or telecommunication providers, mass transit
- 10 providers or fuel providers as well, to get their
- 11 understanding of the impact of not having power as
- 12 well and to find out how responsive the utilities
- 13 were to -- to them during those storms.
- So -- so that's one way that -- those
- are a variety of different ways that we've been
- 16 getting information, but it's also important to get
- 17 information from the public. So we have a website
- 18 which is Moreland N.Y. dot gov which is the
- 19 Moreland Commission's website which we ask people
- 20 to submit testimony to if they can't attend a
- 21 public hearing. But, of course, we've also held
- 22 public hearings around the state. This is our
- 23 eleventh one and this is our final one. And the
- 24 way that we've identified where to have these

- 1 hearings is we are working closely with staff from
- 2 the Public Service Commission and we've had them
- 3 identify for us counties that have had outages
- 4 based upon these storms and based upon the amount
- 5 of outages in an area is a determination of whether
- 6 or not we actually had a hearing there or not. So
- 7 we have a hearing in most of the state but there
- 8 were some counties that weren't affected by any of
- 9 the storms. So this is our final hearing.
- 10 So what I'd like to do this evening
- is -- first, is go through a power point and
- 12 presentation to give you a little bit more
- 13 background specifically about the Moreland
- 14 Commission and the work we've done so far since
- 15 we've been in place since November. What we did in
- 16 early January was actually issue something called
- 17 an interim report. The reason why is because in
- 18 early January the legislative session begins and
- 19 there were some changes that we saw early on in our
- 20 investigation where we realized that needed to be
- 21 made by -- by support of the legislature as well.
- 22 So it was best for us to make recommendations in
- 23 January so at least the governor and the
- legislature then have the rest of the session to

- 1 negotiate the changes that we had recommended.
- This, fortunately, had happened and
- 3 the recommendations that we made in our interim
- 4 report on January 7th concerning the Public Service
- 5 Commission, which I'll mention in a moment, was the
- 6 governor put in his State of the State address.
- 7 He, also, put it in his budget and the legislature
- 8 and the governor approved -- approved our
- 9 recommendations and now the recommendations by the
- 10 Moreland Commission are now statute because the
- 11 budget was passed last month and there's a law just
- 12 surrounding what some of the recommendations we
- 13 made.
- 14 So the recommendations we made in
- 15 January, it was a fruitful exercise for us to do it
- 16 then. But we still had a lot more to do. So what
- 17 we did in -- in November-December, is we took a
- 18 look at LIPA because was a -- that was a very
- 19 pressing issue at the time and we also took a look
- 20 at changes that need to be made to the Public
- 21 Service Commission. We made those recommendations
- 22 in January and then afterwards we moved on to the
- 23 other utilities because there are six publicly
- 24 traded utilities in New York State, outside of LIPA

- 1 which is not publicly traded. It's a -- it's a
- 2 public authority. LIPA would be the seventh. So
- 3 it's those seven utilities that we were charged
- 4 with investigating.
- 5 So since January, we have been
- 6 traveling around the state, meeting with all the --
- 7 with the leadership and the executives of the
- 8 utilities, meeting with O.E.M. managers and, also,
- 9 taking public testimony which is what actually
- 10 brought us here today.
- 11 (Off-the-record discussion)
- MS. CALCATERRA: Okay. This is --
- 13 this is an example of why it is the governor
- 14 actually targeted these four storms. If you take a
- 15 look at the numbers, what we have here is a list of
- 16 outages for each one of the storms. And as
- 17 everyone knows, once power goes down it impacts
- 18 telecommunications, it impacts your fuel supply,
- 19 hospital rooms, and other critical infrastructures
- 20 such as mass -- mass transportation and other
- 21 areas. So having the ability to put the power back
- 22 on quickly has either a positive effect or a
- 23 negative effect that could be a trickledown effect,
- 24 which is what we saw on Long Island after Sandy.

- 1 So what -- what we did was identify
- 2 the number of outages based on each storm. And you
- 3 can see that these four storms that are listed up
- 4 here are the ones that had a tremendous amount of
- 5 outages. And what we, also, did is identify the
- 6 amount of time it took actually to restore power
- 7 for each one of the storms. So you see Hurricane
- 8 Sandy, there were over two point one million
- 9 customer outages. Now it's important to know as we
- 10 go through this evening that a customer is a meter.
- 11 It is not just a home or a person; it's actually a
- 12 meter. So there could be one meter on an entire
- 13 apartment building or one meter on an entire mall
- 14 or there could be a meter on a small residential
- 15 home. So when it's -- you see that -- when we talk
- 16 about the million customer outages, two point one
- 17 million, what it means is that -- it was a heck of
- 18 a lot more as far as individuals that were affected
- 19 when you have two million customer outages of
- 20 meters. And the restoration time took up to
- 21 twenty-one days.
- 22 And Hurricane Lee, which was August
- 23 2011, there was one point one million customer
- 24 outages and the restoration period took up to nine

- 1 days.
- 2 Tropical Storm Lee in September 2011,
- 3 sixty-eight thousand customer outages and the
- 4 restoration period took up to ten days.
- 5 And the December 2008 Ice Storm, there were three
- 6 hundred and thirty thousand customer outages and
- 7 the restoration period took up to eight days.
- 8 So not having electricity from eight
- 9 days to twenty-one days does have a substantial
- 10 impact on -- on individuals and a community as
- 11 well. So these four storms were targeted.
- The next slide basically tells us what
- 13 the Moreland Commission was charged to do, which is
- 14 what I had mentioned earlier. We have to
- 15 investigate all the utilities, take a look at the
- 16 energy agencies, and see if there's any
- 17 recommendations, make recommendations on oversights
- 18 if we see that there's a failure or weakness in
- 19 oversight, and recommendations for reform.
- 20 What we've done to date, some of that
- 21 I've mentioned earlier but in order to get the
- 22 documentation that we needed we sent subpoenas out
- 23 to seven utilities. As we said, there's six
- 24 privately owned utilities and one large municipal

- 1 authority which is on Long Island. And we sent out
- 2 forty letter requests. Basically those letter
- 3 requests were sent to what we deemed to be critical
- 4 infrastructure. We needed to understand the role
- 5 that -- that the lack of power had on critical
- 6 infrastructures. So we sent letters around to the
- 7 M.T.A., to the Port Authority, to fuel
- 8 transportation agencies, to schools, and a variety
- 9 of other groups out there that were impacted, for
- 10 us to learn from their perspective what their
- 11 communication line was with their utility.
- We've reviewed hundreds of thousands
- of pages of documents. That's what happen -- that
- is what happens when you send out a subpoena and
- 15 you get documents back. We've conducted numerous
- 16 witness interviews, which I've -- I itemized
- 17 earlier. This is now our eleventh public hearing
- 18 and our work is ongoing and we expect to be putting
- 19 out a report within -- our final report within the
- 20 next two months.
- 21 And this is where the problem came
- 22 from. The problem didn't come from Sandy. That's
- 23 not necessarily what prompted putting together the
- 24 directive. The problem has been ongoing throughout

- 1 all the storms. And the governor saw that there
- 2 was a pattern that whether it was with Lee or Sandy
- 3 or Irene, that he didn't -- there was no real
- 4 jurisdiction over the utilities because the
- 5 utilities are privately owned and they operate
- 6 within a certain area. So you don't have a choice.
- 7 You -- you have to work with that utility that
- 8 covers the area that you either live or you work
- 9 in. There's no competition.
- 10 And on the state level, the state has
- 11 an agency called the Public Service Commission that
- is supposed to have oversight of these utilities,
- 13 but there wasn't any oversight. The oversight was
- incredibly weak and I'll give examples of it later.
- 15 So -- which we'll tell you about, but basically
- 16 what we found out through our early investigation
- 17 is that the Public Service Commission was a
- 18 toothless government oversight, and as a result,
- 19 the utilities didn't have any risk of losing any or
- 20 all or any part of their business or being
- 21 penalized even for failure to do what they were
- 22 supposed to be doing. And that frustration and
- 23 that pattern that was seen time after time again is
- 24 what prompted the governor to put together the

- 1 executive order, taking a look at all the utilities
- 2 around the state.
- 3 So as I said, we put together
- 4 recommendations in January in the interim report.
- 5 One of them was to strengthen the oversight of the
- 6 Public Service Commission. The second one was to
- 7 unify state energy programs because we saw that
- 8 there was redundancy. And the third one was to
- 9 restructure LIPA.
- 10 We'll just focus on the Public Service
- 11 Commission. What we actually found is that there's
- 12 a variety of different problems with it. I mean
- one of them is that there's limited performance of
- 14 required utility operational and management audits.
- 15 And basically what that means is that the Public
- 16 Service Commission had, over time, been eliminating
- 17 their ability to actually audit utilities, which is
- 18 counterintuitive to what a regulatory body should
- 19 be. So we noticed that they were drifting from
- 20 their core mission as far as being a regulatory
- 21 body. They, also, had scaled back a lot of the
- 22 work that they did in the past.
- And what we, also, found out, which
- 24 was incredibly unique to this particular -- to --

- 1 to this particular state, is that in order for the
- 2 Public Service Commission to penalize a utility,
- 3 they actually have to go to court, and the bar was
- 4 incredibly high. They had to prove that the
- 5 utility knowingly did what they did. So since the
- 6 bar was so high, the Public Service Commission
- 7 never went to court. So they didn't penalize
- 8 utilities. And what we realized is that all the
- 9 other Public Service Commissions in the region and
- 10 elsewhere in the U.S. actually has the ability to
- 11 penalize the utilities, which is what we didn't
- 12 have here in -- in New York.
- So -- and what we, also, realized is
- 14 that if they did go to court and they prevailed
- 15 over that very high bar, they would then have the
- 16 ability to set a fine of a hundred thousand dollars
- 17 a day for a utility, for each day that that fine --
- 18 that the problem occurred. So if you think that
- 19 there's an outage for nine days, it's a hundred
- 20 thousand dollars a day, that's nine hundred
- 21 thousand dollars. These are publicly traded
- 22 companies. They do incredibly well. It's not --
- 23 that's not losing a lot of money. That's not a
- 24 tremendous penalty. So another recommendation that

- 1 the Moreland Commission made was not only to give
- 2 the P.S.C. the ability to penalize internally
- 3 instead of going to court to penalize
- 4 administratively, but also, to change the formula
- 5 for how the fines were given. So as you see,
- 6 what's listed up here is that the fines are
- 7 actually -- the recommendation that we made is that
- 8 the fines be based upon a percentage of the revenue
- 9 of the company. And these recommendations, not
- 10 specifically to those numbers but generally around
- 11 them, were adopted in the budget. So now the
- 12 Public Service Commission now, today, has the
- 13 ability to administer -- to administratively
- 14 provide penalties and, also, give a penalty that
- 15 would move the utility to making some changes that
- 16 they actually need to make.
- 17 What we also found was the issue with
- 18 the audits. That they moved away from doing any
- 19 type of audits. So we had made recommendations
- 20 that they start increasing their ability to do both
- 21 management audits and operational audits. An
- 22 operational audit is when they look at the utility,
- 23 in and of itself, to see how -- how it's providing
- 24 service. A management audit is when they may pick

- 1 one or two issues and look at those one or two
- 2 issues across all -- all six of the utilities that
- 3 the P.S.C. oversees to see how each one of the
- 4 utilities is doing it differently.
- 5 So now they're -- they're stepping up
- 6 and that was part of the recommendations. It
- 7 wasn't adopted in the budget because it didn't need
- 8 to be. That change just needed to be made in the
- 9 agency. The agency has already put that into play,
- 10 created a new unit, and is staffing it up and
- 11 moving forward to go with the operational audits.
- 12 Another thing that was discovered is
- 13 that the agency was losing staff, a tremendous
- 14 amount of staff. Several years ago they only had
- 15 four hundred and seventy-seven people and they were
- 16 down substantially. So what we did was take a look
- 17 at the median number of staff that they had over
- 18 the past fifteen years and we made a recommendation
- 19 that that median level of staff be funded because
- in order for this regulatory agency to now beef up,
- 21 now that they finally have teeth, they need to have
- 22 staff that's going to do the enforcement. So that
- 23 recommendation was made and was put into the budget
- 24 and it was adopted.

- 1 And the -- the -- one more thing that
- 2 was put in there was the ability to revoke
- 3 certificates of utility companies because if a
- 4 utility company, time after time after time again,
- 5 refuses to do what they need to do to provide
- 6 the -- the level of service that they should be
- 7 providing, you need to have some way to -- to get
- 8 them to act appropriately because if you don't,
- 9 then you don't have any negotiating -- then you
- 10 lose your negotiating ability. So what we did was
- 11 put in a provision -- or made a recommendation for
- 12 provision about revoking their certificate to
- operate, basically saying you can't operate in this
- 14 territory. But in order to do that we would have
- 15 had to gone through a lot of due process and
- 16 hearings. But if they're still not conducting
- 17 themselves the way they need to, then we -- then
- 18 the governor now has the ability to revoke their
- 19 certificate. So that's something that is -- is
- 20 held over the utilities now which wasn't held
- 21 before and is, also, done in many other states as
- 22 well. So it's not unique to New York.
- But, also, the one that
- 24 specifically -- the recommendation that

- 1 specifically is in line with why we're here tonight
- 2 is we found that the utilities create an emergency
- 3 plan and nobody looks at them. And sometimes those
- 4 emergency plans aren't even drilled. They'll sit
- 5 around a table and will do something called a table
- 6 talk drill. Well they'll talk about a drill, but
- 7 they won't physically conduct the drill. So now
- 8 utilities have to submit their written plans, their
- 9 written emergency plans to the Public Service
- 10 Commission. The Public Service Commission and
- 11 utility will now go back and forth and negotiate
- 12 what is going to be the best plan. And then the
- 13 Public Service Commission has the job to then
- 14 certify their approval of the plan. So it puts it
- 15 back in the Public Service Commission's bucket
- 16 because they, also, need to take responsibility to
- 17 make sure that plan is an adequate plan as well.
- 18 So now both parties have to start talking and
- 19 sharing and the P.S.C. now has oversight to make
- 20 sure that the emergency plans are the appropriate
- 21 plans statewide. And that was put into the budget
- 22 and was adopted as well.
- So even though we were -- we've only
- 24 been around for a short time, we've had a

- 1 tremendous impact, which is -- which is terrific
- 2 and we -- which helps every citizen here in New
- 3 York State. And the governor is committed to
- 4 making sure that the recommendations are fully
- 5 enforced. And we will be putting out a report
- 6 later this evening.
- 7 What I'm now going to do is turn it
- 8 over to Commissioner Joanie Mahoney, who is going
- 9 to talk a little bit about locally how the storms
- 10 have impacted this area. And then I'll walk
- 11 through what the rules are for this evening and
- 12 we'll open up the hearing. Thank you.
- MS. MAHONEY: Thank you, Regina. That
- 14 was a great oversight and I know that people have
- 15 comments here, so I'll keep mine brief. But we did
- 16 go through what the background is in this
- 17 Binghamton area which for our purposes in dividing
- 18 the state up includes Broome, Chemung, Chenango,
- 19 Cortland, Delaware, Madison, Otsego, Tioga, and
- 20 Tompkins Counties. And we looked at what the
- 21 customer outages were for Sandy, Irene, and Lee,
- 22 and the 2008 Ice Storm. And we, also, have
- 23 information about the fact that some of the issues
- 24 had to do with flooding and not necessarily power

- 1 outages and understand that, you know, that's not a
- 2 direct focus of what we're doing. But the
- 3 information and the way the information was
- 4 transmitted and when and how accurately and that
- 5 kind of thing has been helpful.
- 6 We've had the opportunity to collect
- 7 written testimony and we have, also, had -- in
- 8 addition to the meetings that Regina talked about,
- 9 we've also had the opportunity to speak with people
- 10 specific to Binghamton and to these counties. So
- 11 we're interested to hear from you. We are
- 12 gathering the information directly from the public.
- 13 It was important to the governor that we hear
- 14 directly from the public and that we put this
- 15 report together because we have every reason to
- 16 believe that we're going to have these kinds of
- 17 storms. And what kind of regulatory, you know,
- 18 framework is in place to put the proper incentives
- in place to make sure that we have the storm
- 20 hardening that we need because of the changes that
- 21 we've seen in the storms in the last five years and
- 22 that we expect to see in the next several years,
- 23 what kind of incentives are in place to encourage
- 24 storm hardening so that our utilities can withstand

- 1 these kinds of storms, and then what kind of work
- 2 is done ahead of time so that when the storm hits,
- 3 we can get everybody back online as quickly as
- 4 possible.
- 5 It's very important. It's not just a
- 6 hassle. In many cases, it's a life and death issue
- 7 and I know the governor took it very seriously and
- 8 appointed Regina, who has worked nonstop for
- 9 several months, and we're here to listen.
- 10 So with that, I don't know. Are we
- 11 going to go straight to our first speaker? Okay.
- 12 Darcy, you have -- our first speaker, you have a
- 13 microphone for her?
- 14 MS. CALCATERRA: And what I'd like to
- 15 do is first thank -- thank University President
- 16 Harvey Stenger for hosting us and for Binghamton
- 17 University to host the Moreland Commission. It
- 18 takes a lot of work to put together an effort like
- 19 this and they did it seamlessly and we truly
- 20 appreciate it.
- Okay. What we -- what we -- what --
- 22 our testimony is actually recorded so it's very
- 23 important that you state your name for the record
- 24 and state your position and then you could go on

- 1 and testify. We do ask that you focus your
- 2 testimony on matters related to the utilities and
- 3 their response to the storms. Thank you.
- 4 MR. LACOURT: Thank you, Madam
- 5 Commissioner and Chair and Commission. My name is
- 6 Richard LaCount. I am the Director of Emergency
- 7 Management for Tioga County, have been for forty
- 8 years.
- 9 The county's partnership with NYSEG
- 10 has gone back at least thirty years. Without
- 11 NYSEG, our communication system would not have been
- 12 upgraded.
- But now on to the storms. Okay. In
- 14 each storm we had, 2005, 2006, and, 2011, NYSEG had
- 15 an employee in our E.O.C. immediately. Before
- 16 that, our emergency crews and NYSEG crews train
- 17 together. We train them; they train us, so we know
- 18 how each group works. In 2011, before the storm
- 19 hit, NYSEG informed me how many crews they were
- 20 bringing in from the outside, both electric and
- 21 gas. And once the storm hit, like I say, they were
- 22 in our E.O.C. They could inform us as to what they
- 23 were doing. If we had any problems, they were
- 24 right there to help us. And they were always

- 1 asking what can we do to help. What can we do to
- 2 help? We -- they asked us where do you need the
- 3 dry ice? Where do you need water? We told them.
- 4 They delivered it to those spots. Back in the 2006
- 5 flood, the Town of Owego lost the generator at
- 6 their power supply. They supplied a generator.
- 7 So like I say, if all the parties we
- 8 have were as good and gracious as NYSEG, it would
- 9 be a perfect world. Thank you.
- 10 MS. CALCATERRA: Thank you. Actually,
- 11 we have a series of questions. What's helpful is
- 12 as we go around the state is to learn if there are
- 13 best practices, specifically that if NYSEG does
- 14 things particularly well, then we want to make
- 15 recommendations to other utilities. Can you
- 16 explain -- do you know if NYSEG, after a storm, if
- 17 they actually give an estimated time of
- 18 restoration --
- MR. LACOURT: Yes, they do.
- 20 MS. CALCATERRA: -- for homes? But is
- 21 it a global one or is it a local one? Is it one --
- 22 one global what we call E.T.R. or is it street by
- 23 street, different times?
- MR. LACOURT: They give theirs street

- 1 by street.
- 2 MS. CALCATERRA: They give -- NYSEG
- 3 gives street by street E.T.R.s?
- 4 MR. LACOURT: Yes.
- 5 MS. CALCATERRA: And how do -- is
- 6 that -- how is that communicated?
- 7 MR. LACOURT: Via -- via the Internet,
- 8 for one thing.
- 9 MS. CALCATERRA: They put on their
- 10 website what the local E.T.R. is?
- MR. LACOURT: Yes.
- MS. CALCATERRA: On a street-by-street
- 13 basis?
- 14 MR. LACOURT: Yes, ma'am. Yes, ma'am.
- 15 And address, they break it down that far.
- 16 MS. CALCATERRA: Now because we were
- 17 told that -- that what they have on there is who is
- 18 out, but they don't necessarily put on the time
- 19 that -- that the rest -- that the local restoration
- 20 is, that it's more of a global one.
- MR. LACOURT: No. It tells you what
- 22 time the streets are.
- 23 MS. CALCATERRA: You've seen a local
- 24 one. Okay.

- 1 MR. LACOURT: As far as I know from
- 2 what I've seen. It's street by street by address.
- 3 Like I say, they --.
- 4 MS. CALCATERRA: How do you work with
- 5 them, which is important from a county perspective,
- 6 on tree trimming. Because usually right after a
- 7 storm, the trees are down, wires are down, and the
- 8 counties have to work cooperatively or do their
- 9 best to work cooperatively with the utilities in
- 10 order to identify wires that are down, have them
- 11 marked, clear the wires, and clear the trees. How
- 12 has that been done in the past? Have -- has your
- 13 county and the utility teamed up together or do you
- 14 have utility go and identify the wire and they will
- 15 contact you and tell you what the status of the
- 16 wire is?
- MR. LACOURT: Generally what happens,
- 18 being that we are a rural community, there are more
- 19 trees than people, the -- our fire -- fire
- 20 departments have already been out, our road crews
- 21 have been out. They identify where the -- the
- 22 problem lies as far as the trees and then they go
- 23 out -- NYSEG goes out and kills the power if
- 24 necessary so we can get the job done.

- 1 MS. CALCATERRA: Do you have a list of
- 2 critical infrastructure that are priority sites
- 3 that need to get power immediately after a storm
- 4 that you share with NYSEG?
- 5 MR. LACOURT: Okay. In our community,
- 6 we have no hospitals. We have no real critical
- 7 infrastructure that doesn't have their own power --
- 8 power supply.
- 9 MS. MAHONEY: We heard when we were
- 10 out on Long Island, from members of the public,
- 11 that were frustrated because there were line
- 12 workers available but they didn't have -- they
- 13 weren't doing work at that time. And one of the
- 14 responses that we had from a utility was about the
- 15 fact that the code's function is held on the
- 16 municipal side and they needed approvals to repower
- 17 before they were able to --.
- MR. LACOURT: Okay. That -- that was
- 19 the last storm in -- Lee. The local fire code
- 20 states that the -- any electrical wires that
- 21 were -- involved water had to be replaced before
- they could turn the power on and panels in the
- 23 homes also had to be replaced. So that was done.
- 24 The biggest hold-up in our county was getting

- 1 enough electricians in to redo the homes so NYSEG
- 2 could turn the power on.
- 3 MS. MAHONEY: And that's exactly what
- 4 the question was that we were getting to. But your
- 5 experience has been that that effort of hiring the
- 6 electricians to get that work done so that the
- 7 codes are satisfied and turn the power back on --
- 8 MR. LACOURT: Right.
- 9 MS. MAHONEY: -- that's all smooth? I
- 10 mean some of the labor issues that we heard
- 11 downstate were very different than that.
- MR. LACOURT: Like I say, as far as --
- as far as I've been involved, we've had no problem
- 14 with NYSEG getting things turned on. And it's been
- 15 the need that we have qualifying the electricians
- 16 to come in and do the work and certify it.
- MS. CALCATERRA: How do you feel about
- 18 the -- the -- any thoughts on the workforce of
- 19 NYSEG? And I'm asking this -- I understand this is
- 20 a public forum, but what we're finding is that some
- 21 of the utilities have had a substantial reduction
- in staff over the past decade, so much so that
- there's a reduction of linemen and of a variety of
- 24 other service providers, and they're not

- 1 necessarily hiring quickly enough because it takes
- 2 about five years to properly train a lineman and to
- 3 get them to a point to be one. So there's been a
- 4 deficit. So what we're looking to do is find out
- 5 what the reality is and what the average age of the
- 6 workforce is. And if there's a recommendation that
- 7 we will make to the P.S.C., it may be because there
- 8 seems to be a trend, please have -- make sure the
- 9 utilities start hiring again because there's been a
- 10 tremendous amount of retirement. What do you see
- 11 here?
- MR. LACOURT: What I think and feel is
- 13 the fact that, granted, they've lost some linemen,
- 14 but prior to the storm we had sufficient warning,
- 15 NYSEG went out and obtained outside crews to come
- in and man up their force. So there was no lack of
- 17 crews to do the job.
- MS. CALCATERRA: So even though
- 19 their -- their -- their general staff has been
- 20 reduced, in emergency situations they bring in the
- 21 mutual aid and you feel that the mutual aid covers
- 22 the reduction. Have you seen that their staff
- 23 reduction has had an impact on anything else?
- MR. LACOURT: The only thing the fire

- 1 service will say as far as staff reduction, is when
- 2 you have a simple house fire it takes forever to
- 3 get NYSEG there. Or if you have a car accident and
- 4 it involves wires, it takes forever to get NYSEG
- 5 there. Because either cut the power, get the power
- 6 lines off the vehicle, because of the fact that --
- 7 I won't go into the details but it's -- but they're
- 8 quicker than they used to be, put it that way.
- 9 They've improved.
- 10 MS. CALCATERRA: That's helpful
- 11 because what we're doing is we're asking questions
- 12 about gray sky -- gray sky days when there are
- 13 storm situations, which you said that -- that NYSEG
- 14 makes up the difference by bringing mutual aid.
- 15 But what you're doing is identifying some
- 16 challenges under blue sky days, when things are
- 17 fine but then you've got these other incidents that
- 18 are out there.
- MR. LACOURT: Right.
- MS. CALCATERRA: So that was helpful.
- 21 Thank you so much.
- MR. LACOURT: Okay. Thank you.
- MS. CALCATERRA: I have a list,
- 24 apparently, of people who have signed in to speak

- 1 and I'm just waiting to get it via email. And I
- 2 will identify the next speaker who had signed up,
- 3 if I get this email. And we got it. Fabulous.
- 4 Here you go.
- 5 Okay. Our next speaker is Peter --
- 6 Peter Andreasen, the -- and I apologize because I
- 7 don't know if it's actually written properly so
- 8 please make sure that you identify yourself when
- 9 you come up. The former supervisor of Vestal. But
- 10 what I'm going to do is, also, mention the two
- 11 people who are on deck. After Peter, we're going
- 12 to have Brian Parker, from Cortland County, and
- 13 after that Andy Matviak, the Mayor of the Village
- 14 of Sidney. Thank you.
- 15 MR. ANDREASEN: Good evening. It's a
- 16 pleasure to be here. My name is Peter Andreasen.
- 17 I am the former supervisor of the Town of Vestal,
- 18 2006 through 2011.
- I managed to hit the storm or the
- 20 flood in 2006, six months after I took office. I
- 21 could say very honestly that we were lucky that we
- 22 had 2006 before we had 2011. We learned a lot,
- 23 although we had emergency plans. We followed those
- 24 plans almost to a letter and worked extremely

- 1 closely with NYSEG and with other utilities to get
- 2 back online and to minimize the effect on our
- 3 populous. Vestal's got fifty-two square miles of
- 4 land and about twenty-eight thousand people now.
- 5 That's what we dealt with in 2011.
- 6 What a lot of people forget or they
- 7 just don't want to bring it up when they are
- 8 complaining about service, is that Irene went
- 9 through here about two and a half to three weeks
- 10 before Lee followed her up, and all of the
- 11 resources in this area were stressed. Even the
- 12 resources that they brought in from other areas to
- 13 support what they were doing were stressed. Now I
- 14 live in Castle Gardens and Castle Gardens gets
- 15 flooded pretty regularly. Both floods, I was
- 16 fortunate I only had basement flooding. Some of my
- 17 neighbors weren't that fortunate.
- 18 We started working with NYSEG actually
- 19 about two days before the actual storm came through
- 20 here. We knew it was going to come up. We were
- 21 working with NYSEG and with the Emergency Services
- 22 Coordinator right behind me, Brett Chellis, for the
- 23 county. And at about four o'clock on the 11th,
- 24 Brett and I were on the phone and we declared at

- 1 that time a state of emergency. We knew what was
- 2 going to happen.
- It was essential for us, and I don't
- 4 know if anybody else is going to bring this up, but
- 5 it's essential that we understand what's happening
- 6 to the river. And at least three years in
- 7 succession, the federal government has threatened
- 8 not to keep the river gauges online. Three years
- 9 ago, we almost didn't get them. This year, again,
- 10 it was held back until what I would say at the last
- 11 moment by the federal government.
- MS. CALCATERRA: Can you explain that
- 13 just a little bit more?
- 14 MR. ANDREASEN: Sure. The river
- 15 gauges that we have, and I'm just going to mention
- 16 two of them now, one at Conklin and one right here
- in Vestal. They tell us what's going on with the
- 18 river. And the things that are important to us are
- 19 two things, the height and then the velocity of the
- 20 change. And the river gauges on the 11th were
- 21 doing things that we just saw a little bit in 2006.
- 22 The velocity came to the point that around seven
- o'clock that night, Brett Chellis and I were
- 24 talking and I told Brett, I said, Brett, I think

- 1 it's going to go over the dykes. We didn't have to
- 2 worry about that in 2006, but we did have it go
- 3 over the dykes and had significant flooding in
- 4 2011.
- 5 The only problem that we had with
- 6 power, other than having to cut down individual
- 7 areas of the town because of dramatic flooding, was
- 8 the substation at Castle Gardens.
- 9 In 2005, with the minor flood that was
- 10 brought up earlier, there was no flooding of that
- 11 substation. 2006, the bottom part of the
- 12 substation flooded and it took about four or five
- days to get that back online. Now that takes care
- of the western part of the Town of Vestal and goes
- in a little bit into Apalachin, into Tioga County.
- 16 2011 -- or 2006, they raised it. They went back
- in. They raised it up and figured that's far
- 18 enough.
- Well, 2011 proved it wrong. It
- 20 flooded again. This time, NYSEG ran a line across
- 21 the river from Endicott to try to get some of it
- 22 back right away. Now that was really a -- I'm
- 23 going to say that was patchwork and I think NYSEG
- 24 will agree. They, also, brought in a portable

- 1 substation and that portable substation is huge.
- 2 It's on wheels, very heavy. NYSEG called me and
- 3 said we got the substation, we need a road because
- 4 if we put that over that wet land, it's not -- it's
- 5 not going to get there. This is where I think we
- 6 have to learn to work with our utilities. And we
- 7 did. I just asked them what do you need, what's
- 8 the weight, how wide is it, and our highway
- 9 department had it in there in about four hours. So
- 10 you've got to learn to work together when you have
- 11 a disaster like we had then.
- 12 Also, some key people in NYSEG were
- 13 already up in the Catskills because of Irene and
- 14 they were bringing people in to back up the people
- 15 that were out taking care of Irene.
- I sympathize with everybody who loses
- 17 a home, power, flooding, but they've got to
- 18 remember that everything is stressed, not just
- 19 them. And I mean I was stressed, my wife was
- 20 stressed, and I was in E.O.C. for probably ten
- 21 straight days. But, again, like the gentleman from
- 22 Tioga County said, NYSEG was there in the form of
- 23 either the director or his assistant. They were
- 24 with us day and night. What do you need? What do

- 1 we have? And once we got a handle on it, we got
- 2 almost hourly, there are so many down now for gas,
- 3 there are so many down now for electric. And they
- 4 were working with us because the other utilities
- 5 that you are not addressing are water and sewer and
- 6 cable, which really -- cable, I'll set aside, but
- 7 water and sewer are in the muncipality's
- 8 responsibilities. So in a lot of cases on '11, we
- 9 were dealing with NYSEG saying we still don't have
- 10 that sewer pump area free, you're going to have to
- 11 wait. You can't put any power in there yet.
- 12 And we had a public health issue. We
- 13 wouldn't let people back into an area of town.
- 14 Again, it delayed NYSEG. It wasn't their fault.
- 15 It was a public health issue for about three days.
- So there's a lot of stuff that goes on
- 17 that you got to take in consideration when you're
- 18 looking at just one thing. So the way we did it
- 19 was we got everybody together, the emergency
- 20 coordinators, NYSEG, the local municipalities,
- 21 water and sewer people. I can't tell you how many,
- 22 but it was like constant meetings, constant
- 23 support, and constant addressing the more critical
- 24 situations and then taking them down on a priority

- 1 basis.
- 2 So from that standpoint, I can't fault
- 3 NYSEG for anything on what they did in either
- 4 flood. They were right there with us. They were
- 5 helping. I know there were a lot of people who
- 6 were upset. I had one that was a little stupid in
- 7 the first flood. He said I'm on a hill, I didn't
- 8 get flooded, I don't have a problem, but I can't
- 9 watch the ball game Sunday because I don't have
- 10 electricity.
- MS. MAHONEY: Oh, my goodness.
- 12 MR. ANDREASEN: And -- and he did it
- in the lobby of the town hall, where there were
- 14 five or six families that had just lost their
- 15 homes.
- MS. MAHONEY: Oh, my goodness.
- 17 MR. ANDREASEN: And he's worried about
- 18 a ball game. So you know, you've got to take a
- 19 look at what you're hearing and where it's coming
- 20 from and why.
- MS. MAHONEY: That's good advice.
- 22 MR. ANDREASEN: And that's -- that one
- 23 gentleman is glad I didn't catch him because I'd
- 24 about had it.

- 1 I think the big thing is that we learn
- 2 from every one of these. We learned in '06. We
- 3 had a huge rainstorm in November of '06. Twelve
- 4 hundred and fifty homes were affected by water
- 5 coming down the hills. That was sort of a bonus
- 6 that we got from the June flood. The one we had in
- 7 '11, I would put it at a ratio of about eight to
- 8 ten times worse than '06. But all the way,
- 9 everybody was working together to try to get
- 10 everybody back home as soon as we could.
- MS. CALCATERRO: Thank you so much.
- MS. MAHONEY: Thank you so much for
- 13 that.
- 14 MS. CALCATERRO: Next, Brian Parker.
- 15 After that, Andy Matviak, and after that Alan
- 16 Hertel.
- 17 MR. PARKER: Good evening.
- MS. CALCATERRO: So far this evening,
- 19 we have ten speakers. I just wanted to let you
- 20 know.
- MR. PARKER: Good evening. I'm
- 22 representing Cortland County. I'm, also, a former
- 23 village trustee of the Village of Marathon. I know
- 24 for a fact -- I want to commend all the utilities,

- 1 NYSEG, National Grid. Marathon has its own
- 2 utility, which is municipal owned. I know for a
- 3 fact that our linemen, our staff were up north
- 4 during the ice storm. They were in Long Island.
- 5 They were -- both Sandy and Irene, they were there
- 6 as mutual aid. No mutual aid was -- was mentioned
- 7 before.
- 8 The only reason I really wanted to
- 9 comment tonight is it was hit on earlier. The
- 10 reduction in budgets in the utilities is causing,
- in my opinion, reductions in line maintenance and
- 12 that line maintenance is essential even during a
- 13 minor storm. I know because I live in the Village
- of Marathon, the Willet supply line that comes in
- 15 from NYSEG, from Willet, if we get a good windy
- 16 day, you can count on Marathon going down. That's
- 17 because the lines -- the tree trimming isn't --
- 18 isn't done anymore. And the -- the staff comes out
- 19 of Ithaca, which isn't very far away but it's
- 20 still, just for that portion of it, it needs to
- 21 be -- something needs to be done with that.
- 22 And -- and to commend all the
- 23 responders, as I said, we sent from -- we have four
- 24 people on our utility and we sent half of them both

- 1 ways on all the storms, all the big ones. So
- 2 mutual aid is essential. And that's all I really
- 3 have to say, unless you have questions.
- 4 MS. CALCATERRA: No; that was helpful
- 5 because we are finding a trend across the board.
- 6 It's just the industry that you have a lot of
- 7 linemen who are retiring and the average age of
- 8 linemen we are finding out are in their forties.
- 9 And that's not going to be helpful for the next
- 10 generation. And there hasn't been a cycle of
- 11 constantly hiring and training a new one. So this
- is not particular to one utility; this just seems
- 13 to be industry wide.
- MS. MAHONEY: And then -- and then you
- 15 have the Public Service Commission that oversees
- 16 the rates and those are -- there's politics in
- there because of how they're appointed and how they
- 18 govern. And when a NYSEG, for example, goes for
- 19 their rate case, if they don't get the rate that
- 20 they need and they can't hire, are they starting
- 21 with their cost cutting at tree trimming, which is
- 22 taking you out in every storm unnecessarily. So
- 23 those are the kinds -- we're hearing a lot of
- 24 patterns like that.

- 1 MR. PARKER: It seems to be. Again,
- 2 only because I was a trustee in the Village of
- 3 Marathon, I know we hired -- we hired a lineman,
- 4 trainee. And at each stage is a thousand hours of
- 5 actual work. You got a thousand hours on a line,
- 6 you got a thousand hours in a substation, you got a
- 7 thousand hours in a bucket. It takes a while,
- 8 especially for us --.
- 9 MS. MAHONEY: How long? I'm curious.
- 10 I'm curious how long it takes to do those three
- 11 thousand hours.
- 12 MR. PARKER: Depending on -- depending
- on the size of where you are, I mean obviously if
- 14 you're at NYSEG who has -- we have a thousand
- 15 customers. NYSEG has hundreds of thousands of
- 16 customers. And as you take that trainee through
- 17 the program, obviously NYSEG can go a lot faster
- 18 than we can as a small utility. Endicott has their
- 19 own. Sherburne, all the little municipals have a
- 20 hard time filling positions.
- MS. MAHONEY: Do you know -- just if
- 22 you don't know that's fine. But out of curiosity,
- 23 do you know how long it takes you to get one person
- 24 through the three thousand hours?

- 1 MR. PARKER: I'm going to say it took
- 2 at least five years for the Village of Marathon.
- 3 MS. MAHONEY: That's -- that's very
- 4 helpful.
- 5 MR. PARKER: And we hired this -- the
- one we hired came directly from his college courses
- 7 and quit college to come work for us. So he
- 8 started, he committed, he's gone through.
- 9 MS. MAHONEY: That's very helpful.
- MR. PARKER: So thank you.
- MS. MAHONEY: Thank you.
- MS. CALCATERRA: Thank you so much for
- 13 joining us this evening. Our next speaker is Andy
- 14 Matviak. After that Alan Hertel and Doug Rose.
- 15 MR. MATVIAK: Good evening and -- and
- 16 thank you for having this panel so we can express
- our comments to you. I've been a village trustee
- 18 for twelve years and I've been Mayor of the Village
- 19 of Sidney for two years. So I've seen two floods.
- 20 Sidney's a municipality of about
- 21 thirty-nine hundred people, located in Delaware
- 22 County, right at the edge of three counties,
- 23 actually Delaware County, Chenango, and Otsego
- 24 County and we're the largest village in Delaware

- 1 County. We have had two floods come through. '06
- 2 was worse for us than '11, but it has done
- 3 substantial damage to our community and to the
- 4 residents of our community.
- 5 As far as NYSEG, and a lot of speakers
- 6 have said this prior to me, NYSEG has done an
- 7 outstanding job for the Village of Sidney. They
- 8 were on the ground right away the day after the
- 9 flood. We had two meetings a day for two weeks.
- 10 We had a meeting in the morning, to plan what our
- 11 schedule was going to be, and a meeting at night,
- 12 to summarize what was done. NYSEG had people
- 13 there. They helped -- now, we -- the only power we
- 14 lost was we had a substation in the Village of
- 15 Sidney that we lost power to because water got too
- 16 high and they could not get in and work on that
- 17 substation until that water receded, so we were out
- 18 longer. We were probably out a week in part of the
- 19 village and surrounding counties, but mainly
- 20 because the water didn't recede fast enough for
- 21 them to get in there to work on that substation.
- But as far as our residents, they were
- in and they disconnected the power to our residents
- 24 so we could get inspectors in there or code

- 1 enforcement officers could get in there. They had
- 2 people on the ground following our code meter
- 3 people -- on the ground following our code
- 4 enforcement people and our inspectors. Once they
- 5 were approved to be restored, they got our people
- 6 up and running.
- 7 As was mentioned earlier, they were
- 8 great partners. They supplied to our emergency
- 9 shelters. They supplied water. They supplied food
- 10 to our emergency workers on the ground helping
- 11 clear the properties. So we've had a very good
- 12 working relationship with NYSEG.
- NYSEG used to have a crew located
- 14 right in Sidney. That is no longer the case. They
- 15 have a crew in Oneonta, which is about twenty miles
- 16 from us. But we really have not noticed a lot of
- 17 deficiencies in responding to needs that we have in
- 18 the village.
- 19 Again, one of the men spoke earlier
- 20 about gauges in the river. These gauges in the
- 21 river are extremely important to anybody who has a
- 22 community along the Susquehanna. It allowed us to,
- 23 in '11 -- again, we put in a disaster plan after
- '06, but it allowed us to announce to our people

- 1 that they had to vacate their property a lot
- 2 earlier than we thought we would have but with the
- 3 gauges we have, we have a matrix that we monitor
- 4 and it tells us where the water is going to be in
- 5 our community. When it hits the Village of
- 6 Unadilla, where there's a -- a gauge and in
- 7 Bainbridge where there's a gauge. It helps us do
- 8 that and we saved a lot of lives and it's been a
- 9 great advantage to us. And the federal government
- 10 has said from time to time that they're going to
- 11 shut it off. We -- we worked with having people
- 12 respond in March so that they would keep them on,
- 13 but we don't want to go through that every year.
- We're, also, very fortunate in the
- 15 Village of Sidney, we have a high school program
- 16 that has put gauges in the river and they're
- 17 recognized throughout the state and the country.
- 18 They, also, monitor those gauges for us and
- 19 actually they're probably more accurate and give us
- 20 more information so that we can better help our
- 21 people.
- But NYSEG has been a great partner to
- 23 work with. I really cannot say anything that we've
- 24 asked from them that they have not done.

- 1 MS. MAHONEY: That's very helpful.
- 2 What is the role that the federal government has
- 3 with the gauges once they're in place? Are they
- 4 monitoring them?
- 5 MR. MATVIAK: They do monitor them,
- 6 yeah. They monitor those. And what we can do is
- 7 we get on NOAH's website which is the weather
- 8 service website and they will use those gauges and
- 9 tell us where the river is and what we -- we can
- 10 expect throughout the emergency period. So they're
- 11 very, very helpful. But we use those too because,
- 12 like I say, we have a school program that monitors
- 13 those and we have a matrix that tells us when the
- 14 water is a certain level in Unadilla we know where
- it's going to be in the village.
- And in '11 it really helped us. It
- 17 helped us get our people out safely. It helped us
- 18 get our -- unfortunately we have our emergency
- 19 fire -- one of our fire stations is right in the
- 20 flood area. In -- in '06, we lost one of our fire
- 21 engines. This time, we were able to get our people
- 22 out because of the matrix that was developed after
- 23 the '06 flood.
- So that's -- that is very, very

- 1 important. I think you'll hear from a lot of
- 2 people along the Susquehanna River how valuable
- 3 that -- those gauges are.
- 4 MS. CALCATERRA: Thank you.
- 5 MR. MATVIAK: You're welcome.
- 6 MS. CALCATERRA: Our next speaker is
- 7 Alan Hertel, followed by Doug Rose, and thereafter
- 8 Brett Chellis.
- 9 MR. HERTEL: Good evening. My name is
- 10 Alan Hertel and I'm the Executive Director of the
- 11 United Way of Broome County. Our organization
- 12 funds programs at a number of not-for-profit
- 13 agencies across Broome County that help meet
- 14 identified needs. But we, also, operate a
- 15 two-one-one information and referral call center.
- 16 This is a free, confidential service for residents
- in Broome and Tioga Counties. And in 2012, we
- 18 handled more than fifty-two thousand inquiries. As
- 19 you know, we were hit with the flooding here from
- 20 Tropical Storm Lee. And Broome County Emergency
- 21 Services asked us to open our call center to help
- 22 with the calls that were coming in. We did and
- 23 handled probably close to twelve thousand specific
- 24 flood related calls. That's leading up to the

- 1 relationship with NYSEG.
- 2 Some years ago we worked with NYSEG
- 3 and established a communication link so that we
- 4 could get regular updates on power outage
- 5 information, including general overview of where
- 6 outages were, estimated restoration times if
- 7 available, location and hours of operation of dry
- 8 ice and bottled water sites. That proved to be
- 9 valuable information for the calls we were
- 10 receiving from -- from people in our community
- 11 during that storm situation.
- We, also, receive safety information
- 13 relative to NYSEG facilities that we can share with
- 14 staff and callers. And on the rare occasion for
- 15 those unusual situations, we can proactively reach
- out to NYSEG to try to get more information.
- 17 After the flood waters receded, the
- 18 work of rebuilding and recovery began and is
- 19 actually still ongoing. I'm sure you know it takes
- 20 a long time. Our United Way was asked by the
- 21 county to take the lead on handling donations to
- 22 help with recovery and rebuilding needs. We agreed
- 23 to do so and received nearly a million dollars from
- 24 the community. Not nearly the level of the

- 1 Superstorm Sandy, but you're dealing with a smaller
- 2 population, too. It came from individuals,
- 3 companies, both large and small, and foundations.
- 4 NYSEG did make a significant contribution to assist
- 5 with that, not only in Broome County, but in the
- 6 surrounding counties as well. And we acted as the
- 7 fiscal agent for the funds.
- 8 We were part of an organization called
- 9 Broome County Community Organizations Active in
- 10 Disaster. It's a separate 501C3 whose purpose is
- 11 to plan for and respond to disasters from the human
- 12 service perspective in a community. So the B.C.
- 13 COAD, they decided how the funds would be used and
- 14 that was done through a process of working with
- 15 case managers. So all of the affected households
- 16 had to work with a case manager, who, in turn,
- 17 assessed what kind of benefits they had available
- 18 to them, either FERA funds or insurance or
- 19 whatever. Then they put together a proposal to the
- 20 COAD for a grant from these funds. And then that
- 21 was how we were involved.
- 22 But basically about twenty percent of
- 23 our total population was impacted by this flooding.
- 24 And through that whole process with the recovery

- 1 and the recommendations from the case managers, we
- 2 were never made aware of any complaints or problems
- 3 with NYSEG.
- 4 So that's the involvement that our
- 5 United Way has had through this process. I think
- 6 they're doing a good job keeping our two-one-one
- 7 call center informed of -- you know, with helpful
- 8 information. And they seem to work well as the
- 9 power was restored, et cetera. So that's my
- 10 comments. Any questions?
- MS. CALCATERRA: Do you have --
- 12 what -- what in your county would you believe would
- 13 fall under the category of critical infrastructure?
- 14 MR. HERTEL: We've got the hospitals.
- 15 I think our two-one-one call center is -- is on the
- 16 verge of being a critical need.
- 17 MS. CALCATERRA: That -- that's an
- 18 excellent point. That actually -- we haven't
- 19 thought of that in thinking of bringing that up but
- 20 that's a great idea because that is a source of
- 21 communications that people will use during an
- 22 emergency.
- MR. HERTEL: Right -- right.
- MS. MAHONEY: Oh, NYSEG's quick.

- 1 MR. HERTEL: Yeah. Be careful. And I
- 2 have worked with NYSEG so that they're aware that
- 3 we have the call center so in case there are
- 4 outages that impact our location, but there haven't
- 5 been many so we've been fortunate there. So -- but
- 6 I know like hospitals, those kinds of things, are
- 7 critical, yes.
- 8 MS. CALCATERRA: Have you ever had
- 9 problems with gas stations in the past? In Long
- 10 Island --
- 11 MR. HERTEL: Gas stations?
- 12 MS. CALCATERRA: -- in Long Island, it
- 13 was a bit of a nightmare afterwards, after Sandy
- 14 because our fuel --.
- MS. MAHONEY: Shortages.
- MS. CALCATERRA: Yeah. We had a fuel
- 17 shortages and then we had gas stations that did
- 18 have fuel, but didn't have power so they -- they
- 19 couldn't pump it out. Anything regionally, like
- 20 not related to gas, but similar to that, in that
- 21 past?
- 22 MR. HERTEL: I know that there were
- 23 areas that were without power and there were gas
- 24 stations in those areas that couldn't operate, but

- 1 this is a more rural area. It's easier for people
- 2 to get around, so I'm sure they were able to get
- 3 gas elsewhere. I have not -- I'm not aware of that
- 4 as a problem.
- 5 MS. CALCATERRA: Do you -- can you
- 6 categorize the constituency that you have calling
- 7 into the two-one-one call center?
- 8 MR. HERTEL: Well it -- it runs the
- 9 gamut. There's a lot of working families that
- 10 call, looking for assistance of any wide variety.
- 11 We maintain a database of about four thousand
- 12 different services and programs for people. So a
- 13 lot of them are people who can't afford to pay rent
- 14 and buy food. So we see a lot of the calls coming
- in for basic needs, which is food, clothing, and
- 16 shelter. And we've seen these calls, the call
- 17 volumes increasing over the years. It's not that
- 18 it's going away. It's increasing. So I think I
- 19 would say that -- you know, we have a fair -- a
- 20 fairly significant percentage of the population
- 21 that's below the poverty level, as well, in our
- 22 community. So -- but there are folks that are
- 23 definitely working and they still have needs.
- MS. CALCATERRA: During a storm, does

- 1 the constituency change drastically --
- MR. HERTEL: Well, we're not --.
- 3 MS. CALCATERRA: -- on the two-one-one
- 4 call line?
- 5 MR. HERTEL: During a storm like this,
- 6 we're not really taking the time to find out who is
- 7 calling and trying to find demographics or -- we're
- 8 just trying to get answers to -- to the general
- 9 population that's calling in because they're
- 10 desperately looking for answers.
- 11 MS. CALCATERRA: I think the better
- 12 way for me to phrase that question is what type of
- 13 calls you're getting during a storm?
- MR. HERTEL: Anything from what roads
- 15 are open, where can I get shelter, where can I get
- 16 food, you know, what are the -- people do call
- 17 about power situations, as well. It really runs
- 18 the gamut. A lot of the calls, initially, because
- 19 of the widespread impact on -- on the county, were
- 20 dealing with transportation-type issues. How can
- 21 we get here? Roads were blocked off. We don't --
- 22 we don't know, you know. So we were getting that
- 23 information from Broome County Emergency Services,
- 24 as well. So it runs the gamut. It covers -- then,

- 1 where can I get furniture. Where can I get help in
- 2 rebuilding or where can I -- we need clothes or,
- 3 you know, what have you. So.
- 4 MS. CALCATERRA: If -- if the power
- 5 did go out and the two-one-one system did go down,
- 6 would having a generator --
- 7 MR. HERTEL: We are actually working
- 8 on it. We have battery backup for about -- I think
- 9 it's six hours and we're working to get the funds
- 10 together for a generator backup, yes.
- 11 MS. CALCATERRA: This conversation was
- 12 very, very helpful. I mean actually -- you brought
- 13 up something unique that no one has brought up
- 14 before, is the value of those two-one-one and
- 15 three-one-one lines when we're thinking about
- 16 critical infrastructure. We haven't thought about
- 17 that. We've thought about telecommunication
- 18 providers like AT&T and Verizon --
- MR. HERTEL: Right.
- 20 MS. MAHONEY: Nine-one-one centers.
- MS. CALCATERRA: -- when -- when they
- 22 go down, but we haven't thought about that --
- MR. HERTEL: Right.
- MS. CALCATERRA: -- as yet another

- 1 avenue.
- 2 MR. HERTEL: I -- I think numbers I've
- 3 seen after Superstorm Sandy is the two-one-one
- 4 centers handled -- the last numbers I saw were
- 5 somewhere in the range of a hundred and
- 6 seventy-eight thousand calls. So they do play a
- 7 critical role in a community.
- And just for grins, we recently
- 9 experienced a phone interruption that lasted three
- 10 days, but it was because of dig in, in a cable.
- 11 And that's another -- whole other situation, but I
- 12 did learn that there is a priority --
- 13 telecommunications priority service restoration
- 14 system that's a federal program. So I'm pursuing
- 15 that, as well.
- MS. MAHONEY: We all learn a lot going
- 17 through these. But you know, I just want to just
- 18 briefly acknowledge what you just said about in
- 19 three different places but when you put it all
- 20 together it puts it in perspective. The -- the
- 21 high percentage of people that you said were living
- in poverty and the high percentage of people that
- 23 were affected themselves by the storm and the fact
- 24 that out of this community you raised a million

- dollars for neighbors, it's really -- that's
- 2 incredible.
- 3 MR. HERTEL: We didn't have to raise
- 4 it. They just gave it.
- 5 MS. MAHONEY: That's what I mean, that
- 6 the community could be so generous when they were
- 7 all in the same boat.
- MR. HERTEL: Right. We're fortunate.
- 9 Okay?
- 10 MS. CALCATERRA: Thank you very much.
- MR. HERTEL: Thank you.
- MS. CALCATERRA: The next speaker is
- 13 Doug Rose, followed by Brett Chellis, and
- 14 thereafter, Shelley Bierwiler. I do apologize for
- 15 pronunciations.
- MR. ROSE: Hi. I'm Doug Rose. I'm
- 17 one of the fire chiefs here in Vestal. As Pete
- 18 said, and you know I can't reiterate it enough,
- 19 we've had really good cooperation with NYSEG.
- 20 During 2011, they actually put crews with fire
- 21 crews. So as we were responding to areas, we had a
- 22 line crew, we had a gas crew. So when we would go
- 23 in an area -- I mean and again the same thing goes
- 24 with the river gauges. You know, we've been doing

- 1 this for years. Even when it's call in, but now we
- 2 can look at it on the Internet. We know that at
- 3 approximately this time the river's going to be at
- 4 this depth which means Castle Gardens is getting
- 5 evacuated. We know at this depth we're going to be
- 6 evacuating this area. So we're going there, going
- 7 door to door, telling people it's time to leave.
- 8 NYSEG's coming through with us turning off the
- 9 power, turning off the gas. So we're -- a lot of
- 10 preventative stuff right up front. It works well.
- 11 The problem is getting to that point.
- 12 You know, the routine calls, the tree and wires
- down, you know, they're obviously looking at high
- 14 impact areas and sometimes, as you said earlier, it
- would be more helpful I think if they would come
- 16 through, render an area safe, disconnect the power.
- 17 Okay. It's affecting a number of people, but if
- 18 you disconnect it, then we can work on clearing the
- 19 road. The problem is we're sitting there for a
- 20 couple hours because they're working on a high line
- and all these roads stay closed because we don't
- 22 have access to people. And again, you know the
- 23 monetary part of not having the crews or whatever,
- 24 that is an issue until you get the mutual aid

- 1 there.
- 2 But during the storm when we know it's
- 3 going to be big, they're putting people with us.
- 4 It's preventative and it's working well to that
- 5 point.
- 6 We have access to the river gauge
- 7 information by the Internet. We have access to
- 8 NYSEG's power return on the Internet. The problem
- 9 then becomes when the power's out, where's the
- 10 Internet go. A lot of people are using cable for
- 11 their telephone. Cell phones are -- the towers are
- 12 fine for a while, but at what point -- you know,
- 13 number one, everybody's using them so now it's
- 14 tough to get on your cell phone because they're
- 15 flooded, not water-wise, but information-wise. And
- 16 again, even that eventually becomes a power issue.
- 17 The river gauges, like I said, I can't
- 18 reiterate that enough. I mean we rely on that from
- 19 the beginning of the storm to the end. I can bring
- 20 it up on my phone and look at what the water trends
- 21 are and we know what area of town we need to go
- 22 through. Broome County has computer modeling that
- 23 we can say when the water is X number of feet, this
- 24 area is going to be affected and we can look at

- 1 that. So when we go into an area -- during 2011,
- 2 my son had just joined the fire department. My
- 3 daughter's away at college. My son and I are
- 4 running with the fire department. My wife's home
- 5 alone, oh, by the way without power, and calling me
- 6 every half an hour, going do I need to leave? And
- 7 I -- you know, and I can bring it up on the
- 8 computer and say no, you're good. But everybody
- 9 else without power has no means of finding that
- 10 out.
- 11 And it's the same thing after the
- 12 storm, until that power is restored, how do you get
- 13 the information to people? They don't have T.V.,
- 14 they don't have telephone, they don't have
- 15 anything. So getting the information out -- when
- 16 they have access, they're calling, hopefully,
- 17 two-one-one instead of nine-one-one to get that
- 18 information.
- 19 But NYSEG works well with us. You
- 20 know, the line crews, like I said, working with us
- 21 gives us coordination. And once that's in place,
- 22 it's huge. NYSEG is here in Vestal. They had --
- 23 they got flooded. Their whole yard got flooded and
- obviously they're impacted, but they were still

- 1 there with us. And as Pete said, you know, a lot
- 2 of them are -- are throughout areas of the state so
- 3 now the -- the backup is stressed and -- and
- 4 getting those people in place sometimes is a
- 5 difficult issue.
- 6 But again, you know, I mean if you had
- 7 five hundred people instead of a hundred people,
- 8 you're still going to stress those people based on
- 9 the magnitude of the storm. The tree trimming
- 10 and -- and preventative maintenance, like you said,
- I think that's the first thing that goes. It's no
- 12 different than at home. If you have X dollars
- 13 budget and you need five times X dollars budget,
- 14 you have to prioritize what you do. And
- 15 unfortunately, you know, the tree trimming or the
- 16 preventative maintenance is an issue.
- 17 As Pete said, again, the -- the
- 18 substation in Castle Gardens, they moved it in
- 19 anticipation of this is going to happen again.
- 20 Well, who knew? Right. And -- and okay, what's
- 21 next? You're going to put on thirty-foot pillars?
- 22 You know, at what point doesn't it work. But they
- 23 can't just pick it up and move it.
- 24 And I think that the critical

- 1 infrastructure, the gas stations, things like that,
- 2 as -- as the previous speaker said, you know we
- 3 have the advantage of being spread out. So this
- 4 area may be drastically impacted by power, but
- 5 three miles up the road, it might take you an hour
- 6 to get there because you have to go up over the
- 7 hills, but they have power. If it was a more
- 8 widespread larger disaster or something like that,
- 9 then that's going to be a huge problem. And I know
- 10 there's discussion about generators at gas stations
- 11 and things like that. We, also, have a very, very
- 12 busy tank farm area here. We supply a huge region
- of New York and Pennsylvania with fuel that comes
- 14 out of the pipeline. It's delivered to the tank
- 15 farms here in Vestal. I think they have some
- 16 backup power capabilities, but at what point do we
- 17 overstress that as well.
- So you know, all of those things come
- 19 together, but the -- the -- you know, they're doing
- 20 what they can do, I think. And again, I think that
- 21 the -- they work well with us and there's always
- 22 room for improvement, absolutely, but you know, for
- 23 the most part it's not like some of the issues you
- 24 ran into in Long Island. That's for sure,

- 1 thankfully.
- 2. MS. MAHONEY: This has been -- this is
- 3 really incredible. If we could scale this up, you
- 4 know.
- 5 MR. ROSE: You know, I mean -- and
- 6 it's true. You know, all of the things that --
- 7 that come to play here, everybody's worried about
- 8 me, me, me. But when you look at the -- the scale
- 9 of it, you know. What happened in Boston, 9/11,
- 10 you know, who'd have thought? But when it does
- 11 happen, it kind of refocuses your -- your attention
- 12 a little bit. The good part is with those of us in
- 13 emergency services or even NYSEG or whoever, we've
- 14 been planning for these things and -- and you can't
- 15 plan for all of it. You know, I mean God forbid if
- 16 something really bad happens, how much can you
- 17 prepare for? You know, but you do what you can and
- 18 you prepare to deal with it and it always could be
- 19 worse.
- 20 MS. CALCATERRA: Do you ever -- as
- 21 fire chief, do you ever do drills with NYSEG or
- 22 have you done that in the past?
- 23 MR. ROSE: Yes. And they --.
- 24 MS. CALCATERRA: Talk me through those

- 1 drills. Is it --?
- 2 MR. ROSE: They provide a lot -- they
- 3 provide opportunities for training. And -- and not
- 4 as much drills, but they'll bring us in and do a
- 5 line demonstration. They have an area where we can
- 6 go and do natural gas fires and -- and work with
- 7 them. Electric -- if you're not an electrician,
- 8 you shouldn't be messing with it. But -- but they
- 9 do give us training to teach us what to and what
- 10 not to touch. Years and years ago, they used to
- 11 teach us to pull meters. They don't do that
- 12 anymore because bad things can happen. But you
- 13 know, back in the day, you know, we didn't have to
- 14 wait for them to get there for a house fire. We
- 15 pulled the meter on the side of the house. We
- 16 don't do that anymore. But they provide a lot of
- 17 training opportunities for us. And again, you
- 18 know, we -- we can bring them in at any time.
- 19 They're really good about, you know, doing that
- 20 type of stuff.
- MS. CALCATERRA: Thank you. Thank
- 22 you. Perfect. Thanks.
- 23 Brett Chellis is up and then Shelley
- 24 Bierwiler and then after that John Hroncich.

- 1 MR. CHELLIS: Thank you very much.
- 2 I'm Brett Chellis, Director of Emergency Services
- 3 for Broome County. I provided you with a written
- 4 statement. I will say that I'm, also, representing
- 5 the county executive, Debbie Preston, who couldn't
- 6 be here tonight. She did review this and got back
- 7 to me today that she totally concurs with the
- 8 written statement. I've made a number of notes.
- 9 MS. CALCATERRA: That's a good thing.
- MR. CHELLIS: Yeah. Good for me;
- 11 right?
- MS. CALCATERRA: I know, absolutely.
- 13 That's what I'm saying.
- MR. CHELLIS: Well, I wanted to make
- 15 sure. She was a former town supervisor of the Town
- of Conklin actually during this flooding event in
- 17 2011. So she -- her experience was at a town
- 18 level, much like Pete Andreasen's at that event.
- 19 So she obviously had a lot of opinions, as well,
- 20 and she wanted to -- I wanted to make sure that
- 21 they were in line with what my experience was at
- 22 the county level.
- I did make several notes, too, in
- 24 regards to things that the other speakers have

- 1 talked about. I might be able to shed a little bit
- 2 of additional information on, but would you like me
- 3 to read the whole statement, or do you want me to
- 4 try to paraphrase it, or do you want -- I can kind
- 5 of just go through it. It'll probably be quicker.
- 6 MS. CALCATERRA: Yeah. I would say --
- 7 yeah, just absolutely, if you could just go through
- 8 and paraphrase it.
- 9 MR. CHELLIS: Okay. This Susquehanna
- 10 River basin is very, very flood prone and -- and
- 11 the Lee -- the Lee incident, we've been flooded
- 12 dozens of times over the -- the last twenty years.
- 13 Almost every other year, we're -- we're evacuating
- 14 people somewhere. But they seem to be getting
- 15 worse. The 2004, '05, '06 floods. '06 was a flood
- of record and five years later we had 2011, which
- 17 was -- broke all those records by far.
- So a lot of our experience in this
- 19 area has to do with the flooding. But I will talk,
- 20 after I get done with Lee, because you're focused
- 21 on Lee, a little bit about the response to storms
- 22 and those types of issues, as well, that affect the
- 23 infrastructure more than flooding, if you know what
- 24 I mean.

- 1 Tropical Storm Lee was originally
- 2 forecast to affect the Chemung River basin. We had
- 3 conference calls with the weather service. They
- 4 are very good about forecasting in terms of with
- 5 the emergency management folks. It was the
- 6 Saturday before Lee struck, we were given a
- 7 heads-up that we really got to watch this system.
- 8 Somebody is going to be in a world of hurt. Okay.
- 9 This system is going to come up through central
- 10 Pennsylvania. And at that time they believed it
- 11 was aimed for the Elmira area. We were still
- 12 operating under Irene. We were lucky that only the
- 13 eastern portion of Broome County was really
- 14 affected with Irene. I think we had some like two
- or three-day power outages experienced there. It
- 16 was mostly east of us so we actually had a lot of
- 17 personnel in counties east of us, helping them.
- 18 Myself, I worked several days in Delaware County
- 19 right before Lee.
- 20 All in all, Lee dumped eight to ten
- 21 inches on western Broome County and eastern Tioga
- 22 County. This is where it lined up and stayed. And
- 23 we had significant flash flooding on the forefront
- 24 on the Nanticoke Creek Watershed, Route 26. Our

- 1 first evacuations were there. And these were flash
- 2 flooding events. They're much more life critical
- 3 because the creeks are coming out of their banks
- 4 and people have less time to -- to evacuate. So
- 5 that's where we initially were getting a lot of
- 6 inundation and flooding. But by mid-afternoon, as
- 7 we were getting updates from the weather service on
- 8 the forecast and forecasted river levels, we had to
- 9 step in our emergency plans. We were preparing for
- 10 a 2006 flood or worse. Initially, they said we
- 11 believe it will be a 2005 level, then 2006, and by
- 12 late day, they were saying we're in trouble. We're
- 13 probably going to go over the flood walls.
- 14 Previous speakers mentioned the river
- 15 gauges. We had some -- those are critical
- 16 infrastructure to this whole system because
- 17 everything is measured. The weather service flood
- 18 forecast centers, they can -- the river forecast
- 19 centers can predict exactly, based on the rainfall
- in the basin, where the river's going to come to.
- 21 We base our response plans on that. We do have
- inundation mapping which is a tool that our G.I.S.
- 23 department built. The Susquehanna River Basin
- 24 Commission had a grant from New York State to

- 1 actually do inundation mapping. They turned the
- 2 data layers over to the counties, as well as
- 3 putting it on their own website. Our G.I.S. was
- 4 able to take that so that I can enter the forecast
- 5 river level, as Chief Rose talked about, into the
- 6 website and it will tell us the inundation area.
- 7 We based our evacuation orders -- we
- 8 basically printed these out based on the latest
- 9 forecast. When they said it was going to go over
- 10 the flood walls, we brought it all up, printed them
- 11 out. I had an emergency meeting with the municipal
- 12 officials at the Emergency Operations Center and
- 13 advised them of the forecast, this is our
- 14 inundation mapping, what it's going to show. And
- 15 we based all of our evacuation on that, besides
- 16 what had happened in the -- was happening in the
- 17 flash flooding areas of the creeks and streams.
- That saved a lot of lives. It was
- 19 very successful. In all, we evacuated twenty-four
- 20 thousand residents, approximately, in Broome
- 21 County. And these were under states of emergency
- 22 executive orders. We set up mass care shelters,
- one of the largest was right here at Binghamton
- 24 University, working in partnership with the

- 1 University and the Red Cross. We had a general
- 2 population and special needs shelter here and we
- 3 had animal shelters set up as well. So we were
- 4 running into it, working, municipalities with the
- 5 county. NYSEG was present throughout. As soon as
- 6 I gave the orders of opening the EOC, they sent a
- 7 representative.
- But even more so, with the way we
- 9 operate the EOC, is we have at least twice daily
- 10 conference calls with all the municipal leaders and
- 11 the major partners in the disaster response. The
- 12 Red Cross is on. NYSEG is on. And we go through
- 13 situation reports. We get reports from each of the
- 14 municipalities, what they're experiencing, and what
- 15 their problems and needs are so that the county EOC
- 16 can react to that and respond. We had state O.E.M.
- in by then. And I had requested two things when we
- 18 knew the level of things and that was the National
- 19 Guard to come in to assist. We needed them in '06.
- 20 And, also, I requested an incident management team.
- The State was kind enough to send me
- 22 New York City Fire Department, which is one of the
- 23 highest rated incident management teams in the
- 24 country. They were with us for three weeks and

- 1 helped us operate in the EOC. Nobody took anything
- 2 over. The State didn't. The -- New York City
- 3 didn't. But they were huge partners and a lot of
- 4 experience. So it was very helpful to give us the
- 5 people we needed to run an efficient operation.
- 6 NYSEG was engaged throughout, as I
- 7 said. And due to many lessons learned in 2006
- 8 flooding, a number of steps were taken early to
- 9 pre-position their resources and safeguard natural
- 10 gas and electric services as early as possible. We
- 11 had two house explosions in the '06 flood due to
- 12 natural gas leaks. We -- they were very
- 13 preventative that if we knew those most flood prone
- 14 areas, I think as much as possible, they went in to
- 15 try to secure the gas meters and so on as people
- 16 were being evacuated. That was very helpful. In
- 17 Broome County, we did not experience any gas
- 18 explosions in 2011 and the footprint was at least
- 19 ten times what the '06 flood was. I think -- I
- 20 can't say and I don't want the testimony to reflect
- 21 they were able to do that in every area. I think
- 22 it got ahead of them, you know, as far as the
- 23 resources needed to do that and the flooding once
- 24 it went over the walls.

- 1 NYSEG provided representatives
- 2 throughout the E.O.C. They participated in our
- 3 regular conference calls, as I stated. And the
- 4 provision of rigorous status reports was critical.
- 5 Every call we got the number of people out, gas and
- 6 electric, and what they were doing. A lot of this
- 7 does go back to codes where you get an area
- 8 flooded, we did initial damage assessments as soon
- 9 as the water receded, and due to New -- New York
- 10 code and for safety reasons, NYSEG had to go in and
- 11 pull the meters if the -- if the flood waters got
- 12 to the panel. And there were a lot of unhappy
- 13 people. We -- we had to actually send the police
- 14 with NYSEG on numerous occasions where people had
- 15 just returned to their homes. I can understand
- 16 they were you know despondent over the damage and
- 17 next thing you know NYSEG shows up to pull their
- 18 meter. And you know, that was very hard on the
- 19 people, but there are safety reasons that that has
- 20 to be done and it's New York State law basically.
- 21 So I'm not going to -- I think a lot of people were
- 22 angry at NYSEG over that, but they -- they need to
- 23 understand that the safety of the public is -- is
- 24 most important.

- 1 They had strike teams available as
- 2 soon as the people were able to have their power
- 3 restored. They got the work done necessary. They
- 4 had a strike team of gas and electric utility
- 5 people ready to go in and restore the power just as
- 6 soon as they got the request. They were able to
- 7 get a thirty-day waiver working with the code
- 8 enforcement and municipalities. We instituted a
- 9 thirty-day waiver on the final inspection that as
- 10 long as -- because that was a big backlog, was code
- 11 enforcement being able to keep up with the demand.
- 12 There was a thirty-day waiver that as long as a --
- 13 a licensed electrician did the work and they
- 14 concurred with it, NYSEG would restore the power
- and give them thirty days to provide the inspection
- 16 from the municipality.
- 17 MS. CALCATERRA: How -- how was the
- 18 electrical inspection communicated to NYSEG for
- 19 them to put the power on within those -- you know,
- 20 and wait for the thirty days? Was there something
- 21 transmitted? A letter?
- MR. CHELLIS: Yes. They had to have a
- 23 waiver like signed from the resident that they
- 24 concurred they had a licensed electrician to -- did

- 1 the work and therefore agreed to having the power
- 2 restored. That did help a lot to get people back
- 3 in power. This storm happened around, you know,
- 4 Halloween and it was getting cold guick and we were
- 5 very concerned about low income apartment complexes
- 6 without power in the city. We had shelters full of
- 7 low income people from housing projects and high
- 8 rises, downtown Binghamton, that did not have
- 9 power. Their apartments weren't flooded, these
- 10 were high rises, but all the utilities were flooded
- 11 and it was going to be weeks, if not months, for
- 12 the high rise to get all the main service replaced,
- 13 switch panels and everything, in order to get these
- 14 housing projects back in business.
- We had a number of people, though,
- 16 individual homes, that were living in their homes
- 17 without power for weeks. And -- and I'm sure Sandy
- 18 made this thing look small. I mean, I went to Long
- 19 Island myself, served six days down there helping
- 20 in Nassau County and I was just amazed by the
- 21 footprint of that incident compared to what we
- 22 experienced in Lee so --.
- I don't feel that NYSEG had an
- 24 unreasonably long waiting period for service, but

- 1 again, it was a flood. It was not an ice storm
- 2 where we had tons of heavy transmission lines. It
- 3 was a whole different picture than probably what
- 4 you experienced on Long Island with a hurricane and
- 5 the wind damage to the infrastructure.
- 6 Pete -- I won't go into the
- 7 substation. I mention it in the report, that same
- 8 substation he was talking about in Castle Gardens
- 9 where they were very proactive in replacing the
- 10 power.
- Dry ice and water, I thought went much
- 12 better than in previous incidents. It seemed that
- 13 they -- they had a plan and had stuff coming in
- 14 just as fast as possible. I know we -- Memorial
- 15 Day of 2011, we had a long-term -- a lot of storm
- 16 damage during some heavy thunderstorms and it --
- one to five days in restoration around the county
- 18 and that was probably the longest period that we've
- 19 seen in a long time around here for actual wind
- 20 storm damage. And they had difficulty getting dry
- 21 ice at the time. There was a big demand for it.
- 22 But this time, it seemed to go much more
- 23 efficiently. I think their suppliers, they had
- 24 changed, and so on.

- 1 They always work with us on critical
- 2 infrastructure. What do you need? You know, they
- 3 recognize -- we have an emergency plan in our
- 4 comprehensive emergency plan for power outage. It
- 5 does recognize, you know hospitals, nursing homes,
- 6 you know, major utility places, pump stations, you
- 7 know, these type of things to get service restored.
- 8 And NYSEG was very helpful throughout that.
- 9 The river gauges, just to clarify,
- 10 there are six in Broome County. They are funded
- 11 through NOAH. The issue here is that the federal
- 12 government does not have it as a line item in their
- 13 budget. They -- it's like they have to search
- 14 around every year or two for somebody to be willing
- 15 to pay for it. And it's ridiculous for something
- 16 that is such a life safety issue, that that
- 17 wouldn't be a regular line item in the budget and
- 18 we have to go through a circus here every one or
- 19 two years when they say, you know, funding's being
- 20 cut in March to operate these unless somebody steps
- 21 up and funds them. And that needs to be addressed
- 22 because our whole emergency response is based on
- 23 that. And I don't know if this is in your
- 24 jurisdiction, but it certainly is critical.

- 1 The tree trimming, I have witnessed in
- 2 the last year a big step up. I know in my area, I
- 3 live in a rural town in Broome County, they've had
- 4 contract crews throughout. In fact, they've been
- 5 working out of our fire station. Their
- 6 contractors, we let them park and stage their
- 7 equipment there at night. I don't -- I couldn't
- 8 tell you exactly what they're -- you know, the
- 9 crews told me that they want to get around a
- 10 minimum of every ten years, but I can't tell you
- 11 exactly what -- how well that's been done
- 12 throughout the county. But I can tell you they
- 13 have had a number of contractors in the area this
- 14 last summer throughout working on tree trimming.
- I've been advised by NYSEG there's
- 16 been changes in terms of storms, in terms of their
- 17 response, where they now render issues safe. Chief
- 18 Rose brought this up. They will go in and render
- 19 power lines safe before they actually restore it.
- 20 You know, they'll go around, safe -- make things
- 21 safe and then go back and start restoration. So
- that does tend to lengthen, in some cases, the
- 23 restoration process. However, it does make things
- 24 safer and I guess we have to live with that.

- 1 Cell towers are critical
- 2 infrastructure. I feel they should be required to
- 3 have emergency backup power. People are -- you
- 4 know, as much as gas stations. The people are
- 5 depending on them for nine-one-one service now and
- 6 I am very, very concerned about the trend towards
- 7 people leaving traditional phone service for using
- 8 just cell phones and VoIP cable based services.
- 9 The cable based services are dependent on power.
- 10 When there's a power outage, they don't work. And
- 11 a lot of people say well I'll put a U.P.S. in my
- 12 house for the little unit. Well that's fine, but
- 13 there's power boosters throughout the system that
- 14 have to have power for the cable telephone to work.
- 15 And we found when we have widespread power outages,
- 16 we've got tens of thousands of people without phone
- 17 service. They can't even call nine-one-one. I
- 18 feel that that is something that needs to be
- 19 addressed on the Public Service side to require
- 20 them to provide the same level of service as
- 21 traditional phone companies in terms of backup
- 22 power and so on. That -- that is very critical.
- Fuel supplies, we almost felt it with
- 24 Sandy here, believe it or not. I was on the phone

- 1 with our fuel suppliers here in Vestal, two
- 2 different ones. They were starting to get
- 3 strained. The pipelines that supply these tank
- 4 farms come from New Jersey and areas affected by
- 5 Sandy, not necessarily all of them, but a good bulk
- 6 of the supply. And this was having a trickledown
- 7 effect all the way from Long Island and New Jersey
- 8 as tank farms were being emptied to try to supply
- 9 the problems down there. I actually had requests
- 10 here for tankers of gasoline to go to New York City
- 11 to try to provide fuel for emergency responders and
- 12 so on that were working in New York City with no
- 13 fuel for their vehicles. So that's how far they
- 14 were going to try to find gas.
- So I commend you for working in that
- 16 area of response. That's something that was never
- on my radar and I think it was a huge lesson
- 18 learned. But I could see that even a major ice
- 19 storm here, if we had one such as they had in the
- 20 Adirondacks in, I believe it was '98, I'm thinking,
- 21 where you have multiple counties affected by a
- 22 major ice storm, I could see us having major fuel
- 23 issues because of gas stations if you had that kind
- 24 of a widespread power damage to the infrastructure.

- 1 So that is a great thing that that's being
- 2 addressed in emergency planning.
- I think I made one other note here.
- 4 As far as public information that was mentioned,
- 5 Chief Rose mentioned getting the public information
- 6 during storms, the dependency on the Internet. It
- 7 is very, very important that that be done. We've
- 8 been working in partnership with our public
- 9 television and radio station, provided -- we got a
- 10 grant through Homeland Security funding to pay for
- 11 equipment to be able to do videoconferencing
- 12 through -- to the public television and they will
- 13 then put it on the footprint of both phone and
- 14 radio emergency information. So that is a huge way
- 15 that we're stepping up because we understand the
- 16 person that's lost power isn't going to be looking
- 17 at their -- their computer or their television. So
- 18 they will be able to listen to a battery powered
- 19 radio and still get information through this plan
- 20 and that information is being shared with the
- 21 commercial markets as well, through -- through
- 22 them. So that is one thing I wanted to add to the
- 23 prior statements.
- MS. MAHONEY: Is -- is that what you

- 1 just talked about on the county's website?
- 2 MR. CHELLIS: No. That is a separate
- 3 project. The county website is the G.I.S.
- 4 inundation mapping that I was talking about.
- 5 MS. MAHONEY: That is very helpful.
- 6 MS. CALCATERRA: That was very
- 7 helpful. I actually -- you answered most of our
- 8 questions because you wrote down our earlier
- 9 questions and responded to them.
- 10 MR. CHELLIS: Sorry I talked so long.
- 11 I'm known for that.
- MS. CALCATERRA: So that's fabulous.
- 13 Never apologize. The more public input we get, the
- 14 better our recommendations and sharper that they're
- 15 going to be. So thank you so much for taking the
- 16 time. I really appreciate it.
- 17 MR. CHELLIS: If I could, could I add
- 18 one thing I just remembered?
- MS. CALCATERRA: Absolutely.
- MR. CHELLIS: The storm response and
- 21 houses on fire, gas leaks, that is an area that
- 22 needs to be looked at close. Back -- I remember
- late '70s when there was a gas emergency, I know
- the gas company was required to have somebody on

- 1 the scene within like thirty minutes. I don't know
- 2 what the exact requirements are today, but it's --
- 3 you know, the gas is still better than the
- 4 electric. But again, I think because of cuts, they
- 5 don't have twenty-four-seven crews on and they have
- 6 to call people in. So we'll get a supervisor first
- 7 to the scene and then they will have to call in a
- 8 crew, if deemed necessary, to -- to get an actual
- 9 service truck there that can do the work. We've
- 10 had house fires where there's over an hour response
- 11 time to get a crew. And I do feel that that needs
- 12 to be addressed in terms of twenty-four-seven
- 13 coverage for -- for the smaller scale emergencies.
- 14 NYSEG has been a great partner in the
- 15 major emergencies, working hand in hand with us and
- 16 providing data to us that we can judge where the
- damage is and respond accordingly and work with us
- 18 on priorities. I think I've addressed the other
- 19 areas that could use improvement. Thank you.
- MS. MAHONEY: Thank you very much.
- MS. CALCATERRA: Thank you so very
- 22 much. We have three speakers that are registered
- 23 for this evening. And if anyone has not testified
- 24 and is not one of the following three speakers,

- 1 make sure that you sign up, but we'll certainly
- 2 allow you to come up afterwards and speak. But we
- 3 just want to make sure you're signed up. But our
- 4 next speakers we have Shelley -- Shelley Bierwiler,
- 5 John Hroncich, and Donald Castellucci. Then that's
- 6 it for our list.
- 7 MS. BIERWILER: Hello. My name is
- 8 Shelley Bierwiler and I am the Community Chapter
- 9 Executive of the American Red Cross in the southern
- 10 tier. The southern tier, for us, is Tioga, Broome,
- 11 Chenango, and Delaware counties. And just -- just
- 12 a few comments that I have in reference to the
- 13 events over the last several years. And as you can
- imagine, whether it's Irene, Lee, Sandy, the Red
- 15 Cross has been involved in one way or another. And
- 16 when we didn't respond on this end up here for
- 17 Sandy, many of our volunteers and our resources
- 18 went downstate for Sandy. So we're always on the
- 19 ready to respond wherever.
- 20 And in saying that, I think one of the
- 21 things that is extremely important and I think that
- 22 we as a community need to be more cognizant of is
- 23 the mutual aid and understanding that -- it doesn't
- 24 matter where I go on disaster response. I've been

- on many responses and it seems to be the same thing
- 2 with the utility companies and the power companies.
- 3 You're seeing mutual aid all the time. If we were
- 4 geared up for the largest event all year long, we
- 5 couldn't afford it. We couldn't afford it as a
- 6 community, as private citizens, and you know we
- 7 operate the same way with the Red Cross. We depend
- 8 on mutual aid. Ninety-four percent of our -- of
- 9 our staff, basically, are volunteers. So when an
- 10 event happens, we can't be geared up a hundred
- 11 percent of the time to respond to any one single
- 12 event.
- So I think keeping that in mind, we
- 14 probably would go broke if -- and we have had a
- 15 great relationship with NYSEG. They have been very
- 16 supportive, not only in the time of disasters, but
- 17 year round. They're very responsive and they're
- 18 interested in reaching out into the community and
- 19 being part of the community. We, as a Red Cross,
- 20 work very closely here in Broome County and the
- 21 surrounding counties with our county government.
- 22 And like Brett had mentioned, you know, we follow
- 23 their lead and if we're opening up a shelter --
- 24 they're opening up a shelter, the Red Cross is

- 1 there to provide the staffing and the services to
- 2 do that sheltering.
- An area that I, also, wanted to touch
- 4 on was the safety. And I -- and I think about this
- often, especially with Sandy. Although we may be
- 6 waiting days and weeks to get back into our homes
- 7 or the buildings, safety is number one. And we, as
- 8 a Red Cross, would much rather have these utility
- 9 companies say we need to err on the side of safety
- 10 because what we have to remember, as a Red Cross,
- is if individuals go into an unsafe area, they're
- 12 coming back to us and we're sheltering them. And
- 13 so when we release individuals or they leave our
- shelters, we want to make certain that they're
- 15 going to a place that is safe. And if it means a
- 16 few extra days with power being reconnected or
- 17 making sure that that's safe, that's important to
- 18 us. Otherwise, they're repeat customers and we
- 19 want to release people to safe places.
- Here, during Lee, we worked with the
- 21 county, as I said. We sheltered right in the
- 22 ballpark of eighteen hundred individuals from this
- area here, actually on this campus at the B.U.
- 24 Center and over four hundred in Johnson City at a

- 1 school. Now for us as far as power, one of the --
- 2 the thing that's very important to us is
- 3 preparedness. And so when we go out to set up a
- 4 shelter before any event takes place, what we're
- 5 looking for are places that we can go to open up
- 6 shelters that have generators, so that we can count
- 7 on the power. And we have a list a mile long of
- 8 shelters and shelter agreements so that wherever an
- 9 event may take place, we know that we're going to
- 10 have power. Unless the end of the world comes and
- 11 then we're not going to have to worry about the
- 12 power. But so we're very cognizant of that.
- Now I do have to say during Lee we
- 14 lost power in our building, in the Red Cross
- 15 building, which -- that doesn't really look good
- 16 when you're the Red Cross and you lose everything.
- 17 But we -- our building was flooded for the first
- 18 time. It was quite a large event, which displaced
- 19 our headquarters for the response, so that we moved
- 20 out into the community. And I do need to say that
- 21 we totally lost the first floor of our building and
- 22 our power was restored and we were back in our
- 23 building after a week's time, which is outstanding
- 24 because all of these utilities were underwater --

- 1 totally underwater. And so that response to help
- 2 us get back on our feet was -- was outstanding.
- 3 And just something I want to -- it's
- 4 important for me to say, as a Red Cross, is
- 5 preparedness is so key. And we as individuals and
- 6 community members need to make an effort to prepare
- 7 ourselves in the event and not automatically say
- 8 that an event happens and everybody else needs to
- 9 take care of us. And we really have a strong drive
- 10 to get out in the communities and say, hey, how
- 11 prepared are you? If we know we're flood prone
- 12 here, are you prepared for the next event? It's
- 13 not if it's going to happen; it's when it's going
- 14 to happen. So how are you going to take care of
- 15 you and your family, your loved ones, and know that
- 16 we can't depend on everyone else in the community,
- 17 so what can we do as citizens to become more
- 18 prepared? And that's really important for us.
- But I -- but I do have to say that the
- 20 relationship with us as far as NYSEG and being in
- 21 the community year-round, it's not just showing up
- 22 if -- if there's a disaster, but being engaged and
- 23 being part and being supportive has meant a lot to
- 24 us.

- 1 MS. MAHONEY: Thank you.
- MS. BIERWILER: Okay.
- 3 MS. CALCATERRA: Yes. Thank you very
- 4 much. We have our final two speakers, John
- 5 Hroncich, followed by Donald Castellucci.
- 6 MR.HRONCICH: Hi. Good evening.
- 7 Thank you for coming. My name is John Hroncich. I
- 8 work at B.A.E. Systems here in Endicott, just
- 9 across the river. My title is Strategy and Market
- 10 Development Manager for our HybriDrive Solutions
- 11 business.
- 12 What I'd like to talk about
- 13 tonight --.
- 14 MS. CALCATERRA: What is B.A.E.
- 15 Systems, for the record, because this is a
- 16 transcript so --.
- 17 MR.HRONCICH: B.A.E. systems is an
- 18 aerospace and defense company. We have a facility
- 19 here in Endicott, New York, which is just a few
- 20 miles away. It houses three divisions of the
- 21 company, commercial avionics, defense avionics, and
- 22 HybriDrive Solutions. I'm in the HybriDrive
- 23 Solutions business. We do heavy duty HybriDrive
- 24 propulsion systems for vehicles like transit buses.

- 1 Did you have a question?
- MS. CALCATERRA: Thank you. No; that
- 3 was good.
- 4 MR.HRONCICH: What I'd like to talk
- 5 about -- and you mentioned earlier about trying to
- 6 gather best practices across the state. I'd like
- 7 to talk about a technology at B.A.E. that we have
- 8 developed that I hope to be a future best practice.
- 9 B.A.E. Systems, back in 2011, during Tropical Storm
- 10 Lee, was completely flooded. We had a facility, it
- 11 was six hundred thousand square feet, housed
- 12 thirteen hundred employees, and had four to six
- 13 feet of water come in it during the storm. The
- 14 building was deemed unusable. It's empty today;
- 15 it's vacant. We had to move out. Thankfully, the
- 16 State was very supportive and helped the company
- 17 get back on its feet and we relocated at the former
- 18 I.B.M. campus in Endicott, which was just a few
- 19 miles away. We had the privilege of hosting
- 20 Governor Cuomo on December 5th as part of our
- 21 regional economic development proposal. While he
- 22 was doing his statewide tour, he came, along with
- 23 Lieutenant Governor Duffy and members of the
- 24 governor's staff, and the timing of it was great

- 1 because it was just two weeks after we reinstated
- 2 ourselves in our new facility so we were very
- 3 thankful for that. We did a big thank you to the
- 4 governor and he got to meet employees, many of whom
- 5 were personally affected by the flood, not just
- 6 through work, but their homes.
- 7 During the flood B.A.E. developed --
- 8 can I approach the Commission? I have a
- 9 photograph. I think it will help describe --
- 10 during the flood of 2011, B.A.E. sent out a
- 11 military vehicle. It's a Humvee. It's a
- 12 demonstration vehicle and what it had on it was a
- 13 very unique technology. It's what we call
- 14 exportable power. And so what this vehicle
- 15 enables -- and it was designed for actually
- 16 checkpoints in Iraq and Afghanistan where Army or
- 17 Marines would be in a remote location, they needed
- 18 power, and all they had was their vehicle. What we
- 19 can do is take the -- basically the engine on board
- 20 a vehicle and add equipment to allow soldiers to
- 21 export power to drive com's gear, lighting, things
- 22 of that nature.
- During the flood we had this vehicle
- 24 on site. It did manage not to get damaged from the

- 1 flood. We deployed it in neighborhoods surrounding
- 2 our flooded facility. And what you're looking it
- 3 is a street just across the road from where our
- 4 facility used to be in Johnson City. What we did,
- 5 through volunteers, is take this vehicle, house to
- 6 house, and these homes were destroyed, and provided
- 7 power to run shop vacs, lighting, vacuuming
- 8 equipment, power washers, to residents who didn't
- 9 have power for days.
- 10 What I'd like to propose is what if we
- 11 take this capability of exporting power and apply
- 12 it to larger vehicles? What -- what if we took
- 13 this technology and put it on transit buses and
- 14 refuge trucks and public school buses, of which
- 15 there are hundreds, if not thousands, of. That New
- 16 York City bus fleet has over sixteen of our
- 17 HybriDrive buses in their fleet. We've worked with
- 18 the M.T.A. before, in the past. Their fleet is
- 19 over seven thousand buses. During the -- during
- 20 hurricane -- or Superstorm Sandy, the bus fleet
- 21 came to the rescue when the -- the metro rail lines
- 22 failed, when the subways were flooded. It was the
- 23 bus fleet, and many of them hybrids, came to the
- 24 rescue and helped --.

- 1 MS. CALCATERRA: May I ask you, how
- 2 much is this technology?
- 3 MR.HRONCICH: That's a good question.
- 4 That right there, the technology is retrofitable,
- 5 so it can be -- you can have a traditional vehicle.
- 6 MS. CALCATERRA: The one on the
- 7 Humvee?
- 8 MR.HRONCICH: The hardware is probably
- 9 fifteen thousand dollars. You know, that's just
- 10 the hardware itself. To scale it to a bus,
- 11 probably two X that. And I hope -- I know this is
- on record, so I hope this doesn't come back to bite
- 13 me.
- 14 MS. MAHONEY: Yeah. When they come
- 15 back with their checkbooks.
- MR.HRONCICH: My -- my point is I've
- 17 been doing a lot of reading about hospitals and
- 18 data centers and school districts buying
- 19 generators.
- 20 MS. CALCATERRA: Is it run -- is it
- 21 run off of the battery on the vehicle?
- 22 MR.HRONCICH: No; it's run off the
- 23 engine. So what it does, it takes -- it takes
- 24 mechanical energy and, through power conditioning

- 1 equipment, which is basically a fancy word for
- 2 inverters, enables a mechanical engine to act as a
- 3 generator. When you buy a generator at Lowes,
- 4 essentially it's an engine with the same equipment.
- 5 What we can do through our expertise in vehicles
- 6 and buses and heavy duty equipment and in power
- 7 electronics, is we can retrofit this technology
- 8 onto these types of vehicles. I mean the -- the
- 9 department of sanitation has hundreds of refuse
- 10 trucks. There's got to be hundreds, if not
- 11 thousands, of school buses on Long Island. The
- 12 irony of Superstorm Sandy is that there was a lack
- of generator power and there were thousands of
- 14 municipal vehicles sitting idle, school buses,
- 15 transit buses, garbage trucks, fire trucks, while
- 16 power was needed at gas stations, hospitals, and
- 17 data centers.
- MS. CALCATERRA: We understand. We
- 19 get -- we --.
- MR.HRONCICH: Okay.
- MS. CALCATERRA: This has been
- 22 tremendously helpful. It really does. We'll take
- 23 it back, but it's not necessarily something that
- 24 the Moreland Commission would recommend because

- 1 this is not -- I'm not too sure whether or not this
- 2 is within our purview, but the Governor has put
- 3 together other commissions to take a look at the
- 4 issue of generation power and so we'll certainly
- 5 bring this idea back.
- 6 MS. MAHONEY: It's very interesting.
- 7 MS. CALCATERRA: Thank you.
- 8 MR.HRONCICH: Thanks.
- 9 MS. MAHONEY: Is this available
- 10 already?
- 11 MR.HRONCICH: It's mature technology.
- 12 It's not commercially available. It was designed
- 13 for the military.
- 14 My last point I'd just like to make is
- 15 we've approached New York City in the past, before
- 16 Superstorm Sandy -- and when I say New York City, I
- 17 mean the MTA. And I agree with them. They're --
- 18 they're a transit agency. They're paid to move
- 19 people. They're not paid to provide emergency
- 20 backup power. This technology, if put on their
- 21 fleet, would provide mobile power where it's
- 22 needed. We don't know where power is going to go
- 23 out, where the hospitals or where the power is
- 24 needed.

- 1 The last point I'll make is a lot of
- 2 money's being spent on generators. A lot of money
- 3 will go into maintaining those generators.
- 4 Agencies like the M.T.A. have dozens of mechanics
- 5 that are paid to keep engines up and running
- 6 full-time, twenty-four seven, every day of the
- 7 year. A school district buying a generator and
- 8 paying to keep -- the upkeep of that generator when
- 9 they have a fleet of school buses --.
- 10 MS. CALCATERRA: We understand.
- 11 MR.HRONCICH: Okay.
- MS. CALCATERRA: We do. Thank you so
- 13 very much.
- 14 MR.HRONCICH: Thank you for your time.
- MS. CALCATERRA: You are quite
- 16 welcome.
- MS. MAHONEY: Thank you.
- 18 MS. CALCATERRA: Okay. Donald
- 19 Castellucci and after that we do not have any other
- 20 speakers signed up. So if there are additional
- 21 speakers, please sign up and we'll welcome you up
- 22 afterwards. Thank you.
- MR. CASTELLUCCI: Good evening and
- 24 thank you for providing this forum. My name is Don

- 1 Castellucci. I'm the Town of Owego Supervisor.
- 2 I've been on the council for eighteen years, the
- 3 last four as supervisor. It's a community that's
- 4 about twenty minutes west of here. It's a good
- 5 thing I'm going last as my points have already been
- 6 taken, so I'm just going to piggyback on them
- 7 quickly.
- 8 During the event of 2011, we had a
- 9 very good working relationship with NYSEG. They
- 10 were very -- they were in communication with us all
- 11 the time. They were working practically
- 12 twenty-four-seven. They were at our E.O.C. which
- 13 the first gentleman that spoke today talked about.
- 14 I was getting constant emails or telephone calls on
- 15 the -- updates on where power was going to be on.
- 16 So we were very happy with what they did.
- 17 As far as the tree trimming, in our
- 18 community I've noticed in the last -- over the last
- 19 two years, they have subcontracted out to a company
- 20 and they've been doing a lot of work in our town
- 21 with clearing the lines and -- and doing that kind
- of work. So they've been very in the public with
- 23 that in our community.
- During the flood, we had dry ice and

- 1 any materials through the county to all our
- 2 distribution centers in our town and there was
- 3 never any lacking for any of those type of things.
- 4 The substation has been mentioned a
- 5 couple times. That does affect the eastern part of
- 6 our town and about seven hundred more homes. And
- 7 in 2006, we had five or six days where they did not
- 8 have power. The same thing did happen in 2011, but
- 9 they had worked on it and I am in communication
- 10 with them. Since that flooding, they're working on
- it again to make it so it doesn't happen again the
- 12 best they can. It's a situation that you know they
- 13 have a substation in the water. But they have been
- 14 very proactive since this last flood to try to
- 15 mitigate that issue. So we're happy with that.
- The gauges have been mentioned. In
- 17 Owego, the river came up seven feet higher than
- 18 2006. It was very devastating. We were probably
- 19 one of the more hardest hit towns during that
- 20 event. And those -- and those gauges are very
- 21 important. I think that, as Brett said, they're
- 22 funded through NOAH. We're talking about a couple
- 23 hundred thousand dollars here out of a
- 24 trillion-dollar budget. I think they might be able

- 1 to find it. But that's just me.
- 2 A couple things I wanted to mention.
- 3 You talked about communication. And as simple as
- 4 this sounds, I've told our town residents and we're
- 5 just about finished with our emergency plan, I'm
- 6 having them buy a transistor radio. It's very
- 7 simple. We have a lot of -- we had a lot of
- 8 communication problems in the town of getting
- 9 information out in Tioga County. We -- we have our
- 10 local radio station that actually got flooded and
- it was in an area that you would never expect to
- 12 get flooded, but it did. And they opened up --
- 13 they drove up to the north side of the country
- 14 where their tower is, put a camper there and
- 15 they -- and they started communicating from there.
- 16 And we drove up there and we put out information
- 17 that we could, but if you don't have a transistor
- 18 radio or you don't have access to the radio because
- 19 of power, you weren't getting a lot of that
- 20 information. So as simple as it sounds, a
- 21 transistor radio in your house can get you a lot
- 22 more information than your cell phone or your iPad,
- 23 whatever you got there.
- Another simple thing and imitation is

- 1 a form of flattery, the Town of Vestal in 2006 put
- 2 out a packet that had all the information, FEMA
- 3 numbers, emergency numbers, et cetera. I
- 4 piggybacked on that in 2011 and we put all the
- 5 information we possibly could in ten -- eleven
- 6 pages and I had the Parks Department go out to all
- 7 the areas that were affected and put them in their
- 8 mailbox. So we had a lot of information that we
- 9 got out to residents just by doing something as
- 10 simple as putting a packet together and just
- 11 driving out. And I would say two, three hundred
- 12 residents minimally that were in the worst areas
- 13 got the information through this packet.
- 14 Two things that weren't mentioned that
- 15 I think need to be mentioned is NYSEG also created
- 16 a grant program. And they've been giving a lot of
- 17 money out to businesses and municipalities if you
- 18 applied. And all you got to do is apply and show
- 19 your bills and they tried to help a lot of people
- 20 that got hurt in this flood. So they're very
- 21 socially responsible in the community and we were
- 22 very appreciative of that in the town. I know a
- lot of town residents applied for some of these
- 24 things and they were happy with that.

- 1 I think probably the most important
- 2 thing that hasn't been discussed and it comes with
- 3 everybody working together in this area, there was
- 4 no loss of life. And I think that was probably the
- 5 most important thing that you can garner out of all
- 6 of this.
- 7 That's all I have, unless you have any
- 8 questions.
- 9 MS. CALCATERRA: Just can you tell me
- 10 a little bit about how you've coordinated tree
- 11 trimming with them in the past.
- MR. CASTELLUCCI: I actually have not
- 13 done that. It's been on their -- well, when we
- 14 have an incident, they work with our highway -- you
- 15 know, like if any kind of storm, we'll have our
- 16 highway department, our fire police in that
- 17 particular district. We have a couple different
- 18 fire districts. And they all work together to --
- 19 we'll come and move trees out if we have to. They
- 20 come and do what they have to do and the fire
- 21 police is there protecting residents, running
- 22 traffic, et cetera, so depending on the incident we
- 23 have a pretty good working relationship in that
- 24 regard.

- 1 MS. CALCATERRA: Interesting.
- MS. MAHONEY: This has been very
- 3 interesting. It's interesting that on the eleventh
- 4 hearing you can still get so much new information.
- 5 It's great.
- 6 MS. CALCATERRA: We don't have any
- 7 more speakers who are registered. Is there anyone
- 8 in the audience who hasn't signed up who is
- 9 interested in speaking? Did you --?
- MS. DeJOHN: I did sign up.
- MS. CALCATERRA: You did? Perfect.
- 12 Come on up. And what's your name? Great. Thank
- 13 you.
- 14 MS. DeJOHN: Good evening. My name is
- 15 Sandy DeJohn. I'm the utilities manager here on
- 16 the Binghamton University campus. And I'd just
- 17 like to share a little bit of my experience for
- 18 the -- during the 2011 flood, my experience working
- 19 with NYSEG.
- This campus did not lose power, but we
- 21 were very close to losing power because the
- 22 substation, the Goudy Station, which is where our
- 23 power feed came from, was underwater. And NYSEG,
- 24 at one point, needed to take our power offline in

- 1 order to do some repair over there. And so I -- I
- 2 was in touch with NYSEG. I said we have eighteen
- 3 hundred people on campus in our emergency shelter
- 4 here. And they were creative enough to refeed our
- 5 campus without cutting off our power supply. So we
- 6 were able to have power throughout this entire
- 7 disaster period. And -- but two days after the
- 8 flood, the temperature went up to eighty-some
- 9 degrees, so all of sudden there's a high demand on
- 10 the power, on that circuit that they used to refeed
- 11 us. And so NYSEG called me back and said now we
- 12 need a favor. If you guys can drop low, then we
- 13 can, you know, try to reduce the -- the risk of
- 14 overloading the circuit. So we immediately
- 15 responded. You know, we -- we cut off some of our
- 16 unnecessary power usage and we responded within
- 17 fifteen minutes of their call. So that was a
- 18 two-way street. We worked very well with NYSEG in
- 19 that regard.
- 20 As for our -- we do have a building in
- 21 downtown Binghamton that had emergency generator
- 22 running up until the power -- the water level
- 23 actually went over the top of emergency generator.
- 24 And so -- but through all this outage period, we

- 1 were trying to determine whether or not the
- 2 emergency generator stopped running because NYSEG
- 3 turned off the gas supply to the emergency
- 4 generator or because the equipment was flooded.
- 5 And the forensic evidence kind of showed us because
- 6 the generator was overcome by the flood water and
- 7 actually the gas supply was never cut off by NYSEG.
- 8 So that was something that we went back and
- 9 rechecked. Just wanted to make sure who is
- 10 responsible for the flooding of our building in
- 11 downtown Binghamton because if the generator kept
- 12 running, we could have stayed dry. We probably
- 13 could have salvaged a lot of equipment in the
- 14 basement, but because generator died, the sump pump
- 15 stopped working, so that building went out of
- 16 business for a good eight months, almost a year.
- 17 But NYSEG came back and responded with
- 18 a temporary power hookup to our facility downtown.
- 19 So we were able to start doing the recovery work
- 20 and reconstruction -- you know, remediation and
- 21 construction. And their response to -- to that
- 22 building recovery was -- was very, very quick.
- So my impression with NYSEG as a
- 24 utility company -- by the way, I used to work for

- 1 NYSEG, years ago, too. Yes, they have reduced a
- 2 lot of their staffing level. And -- and tree
- 3 trimming was the first thing that we did notice was
- 4 really lacking, especially after Iberdrola took
- 5 over the ownership. And, you know, in -- in
- 6 Memorial Day -- on Memorial Day 2011, there was a
- 7 storm that came through this area and that took
- 8 down a lot of power lines. I think it had a lot to
- 9 do with a lack of tree trimming. So the outage
- 10 lasted four days where I lived and luckily we had
- 11 an emergency generator so we survived. But a lot
- 12 of other people didn't.
- 13 And after that, we did recognize their
- 14 tree trimming effort improving. They had been
- 15 calling us about dumping their -- their chips --
- 16 you know, the chip branches and leaves on our
- 17 campus. You know, we have a nature preserve that
- 18 we could use that material for paving and for --
- 19 for the trails and all that. So they have been
- 20 showing efforts and -- and we -- we see the results
- 21 too.
- Lastly, I just want to know with the
- 23 revenue decoupling mechanism in place for NYSEG and
- 24 all the other utility companies, if they lose their

- 1 revenue because of outages and all that, is there
- 2 still -- are they still eligible to recover the
- 3 revenue, are they held harmless, I guess, for not
- 4 performing, to restore all the power outages in
- 5 time? I mean that's one thing, you know. I do
- 6 like to know if there's no penalty for them to
- 7 speed up the recovery process because of the
- 8 revenue decoupling mechanism, I'm not sure, you
- 9 know, if there's any incentive for them to work
- 10 better or not.
- 11 And I guess my last comment is I,
- 12 also, have a cousin that used to work at NYSEG as a
- 13 lineman. And he had made a comment about their
- 14 procedure for restoring power had changed quite a
- 15 bit. They used to be able to restore one segment
- 16 at a time and turn on power in different areas, but
- 17 they have a new procedure in place where they have
- 18 to restore the entire circuit before they are
- 19 allowed to turn on power. So that really slowed
- 20 down a lot of the -- the restoration work. And I
- 21 don't know if that is something that was
- 22 implemented because of more stringent codes or if
- 23 that was just something that -- that they use as an
- 24 excuse, you know. I -- I don't know.

- 1 MS. CALCATERRA: The first question
- 2 that you had concerning revenue decoupling, we'll
- 3 get back to you on that. If you -- if you signed
- 4 in, I'm going to have Justin and Aylin make sure
- 5 that they get your information so we can respond
- 6 back to it. But did you sign in with your email
- 7 and your phone number?
- MS. DeJOHN: Yes, I did.
- 9 MS. CALCATERRA: Okay. So we'll
- 10 definitely get back to you on that one. The second
- one, we don't have anyone on the panel here that
- 12 works for the P.S.C. We do have members of
- 13 Moreland Commission that do work for the P.F.C. --
- 14 P.S.C. are on the Moreland Commission, but we don't
- 15 have anyone here this evening that has that
- 16 experience, so I don't want to -- so I don't know
- 17 what your answer is, whether or not that was
- 18 regulated or this is something that the -- that
- 19 NYSEG is now doing internally, but we can get back
- 20 to you on that one, as well.
- MS. DeJOHN: Okay.
- MS. CALCATERRA: Thank you.
- MS. MAHONEY: Those are good
- 24 questions.

- 1 MS. DeJOHN: Just one other thing,
- 2 too, because NYSEG has so many critical
- 3 infrastructure right by the river and I don't know
- 4 if there's anything in their long term plans to
- 5 relocate, you know, like such as Goudy Station, to
- 6 higher ground or, you know, somehow refeed this
- 7 community from a more secure place.
- 8 MS. CALCATERRA: We're looking at that
- 9 statewide with all the utilities. We've got in Con
- 10 Edison the Fifteenth Street Substation is -- has
- 11 critical facilities right there that actually power
- 12 lower Manhattan. We have the same thing with
- 13 substations on Long Island that are in flooded --
- 14 flood zone areas that weren't in the flood zone
- 15 before. So it's actually a statewide issue that
- 16 we're looking at what each one of the utilities are
- doing and what the options are to start preparing
- 18 for different types of storms that we're having, as
- 19 well.
- MS. DeJOHN: Okay.
- MS. CALCATERRA: So we'll look at the
- 22 same. But thank you so very much. I appreciate
- 23 you taking the time and coming on up here.
- Do we have any other witnesses who are

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interested in testifying who have not registered?
 1
 2.
                  Well, Commissioner Mahoney, I would
 3
     say --.
 4
                  MS. MAHONEY: With that, we can close
 5
     this public hearing and thank you all very much for
 6
     some very valuable input and for your time. And
     thanks again to Binghamton to -- for hosting us
 7
     here tonight, if you'll take that back to your
 8
 9
     president. Thanks.
10
                   (The hearing adjourned at 8:15 p.m.)
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     STATE OF NEW YORK
 2
     I, G. Michael France, do hereby certify that
     the foregoing was reported by me, in the cause,
 3
 4
     at the time and place, and in the presence of
 5
     counsel, as stated in the caption hereto, at
 6
     Page 1 hereof; that the foregoing typewritten
 7
     transcription, consisting of pages number 1
 8
     through 105, inclusive, was prepared under my
 9
     supervision and is a true record of all
10
     proceedings had at the hearing.
11
                   IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have
12
     hereunto subscribed my name, this the 6th day
     of May, 2013.
13
14
15
16
     G. Michael France, Reporter
17
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24

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