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MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
HEARING ON POWER OUTAGES

November 29, 1999
Dearborn, Michigan

Aug-4-12269
Commission
Wideman
Elc.

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MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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SECRETARY'S OFFICE

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(2:05 PM)

COMMISSIONER STRAND: I think we should probably begin the meeting. For those who agreed to speak, Dorothy Wideman, over there, who is the executive secretary of the Michigan Public Service Commission has a pad in the back where you sign in. We have about three people right now who have signed in, I'm sure there are others.

We would ask that you sign in beforehand simply because if there are a number of people that want to speak, this way people who come here first can hopefully speak first and do whatever they want instead of waiting an hour or so.

So please sign in if you do wish to speak. My name is John Strand. I'm Chair of the Michigan Public Service Commission. We have present the other two commissioners of the MPSC, Davis Svanda and Bob Nelson. This is the first time we've been to Dearborn in at least a bit.

Generally after there a number of power outages, usually we've found storms in a particular area. The Commission in the past has held hearings in that particular area to go over the particular problems; whether in fact the response of the particular company was good, bad, where it was

1 helpful, where it was not so helpful. Things that
2 hopefully could be done in the future so that
3 people who are out of electricity for maybe three,
4 four, five days could be out for one or two
5 instead.

6 And the other thing is of course to focus
7 on those areas that tend to be habitual problems,
8 that tend to have power outages even without a
9 storm. The typical line is when there's a big gust
10 of wind, the lights go out in a particular area.
11 Those are the areas we would like to hear about so
12 those areas hopefully can be targeted and
13 hopefully, you know, if some change is left to be
14 made in those areas, those can be made.

15 Our staff has issued a report on this
16 particular problem with the Detroit Edison system
17 now, and there are a number of recommendations, and
18 for those who wish to read it, it is on our
19 internet site.

20 And for those who don't know it, you can
21 get to the State of Michigan site, then get to the
22 Consumer and Industry Services site, CIS, and that
23 will then get you to the PSC site. so you
24 basically have to do three clicks.

25 And we have copies of the report here,

1 too. So those who wish to read it certainly can.

2 When you testify, we would ask that you
3 identify yourself and spell your name. We have a
4 court reporter here and the one thing we don't want
5 is for the court reporter to mangle your name
6 because she's not sure how the last name is
7 spelled. So, to the extent you can do that that
8 would also be helpful.

9 We are in Dearborn today. We are in
10 Farmington Hills tonight. And we are going to be
11 in Rochester on Thursday night. And those
12 communities were not picked by accident but they
13 happen to be kind of the epicenters of where we
14 received the greatest number of complaints,
15 particular this summer.

16 And so that is why we are visiting these
17 particular communities now. Not that we don't want
18 to visit your area in the future, but hopefully if
19 we do, it won't be because of this type of
20 situation. At least that's the hope.

21 Okay, with that, I think we came here
22 primarily to listen rather than to talk. So I think
23 I'll shut up and the other two commissioners have
24 indicated they want to listen. And we do have
25 staff people here.

1 So with that, I think we'll begin right
2 with the people who want to testify.

3 The first person I have on the list, and I
4 apologize to any of these people if I mispronounce
5 your name. But the first person I think is Marvin
6 Sanow.

7 Mr. SANOW: My name is Marvin Sanow, S-A-
8 N-O-W. And, a few years back, maybe three years,
9 not that long, we were without power I think almost
10 three weeks.

11 COMMISSIONER STRAND: Sir, could you
12 indicate your address?

13 Mr. SANOW: 22461 Heinze, H-E-I-N-Z-E.
14 And we're on the south side of Heinze Street. It
15 seemed that at that time, the south side didn't
16 have any power, but the north side of the street
17 did. And we couldn't figure out why. It was just
18 the one block in that area. But the whole thing
19 was that we didn't have any power and it was before
20 Mayor Guido started bringing out the dry ice. So
21 we had to get rid of everything in our
22 freezer/refrigerator.

23 But it seemed that recently there have
24 been like maybe two, three second blackouts or
25 power outages, recently. But nothing that was

1 sustained. That's about it.

2 Just since last July, of course, you
3 probably know that we were without power again for,
4 I can't remember how many days.

5 COMMISSIONER STRAND: More than four or
6 five?

7 Mr. SANOW: Yeah. I think it was about a
8 week that we were out then.

9 COMMISSIONER SVANDA: And at that time was
10 just the south side of the street out?

11 Mr. SANOW: No, the north side, too, was
12 without power. Thank you.

13 COMMISSIONER SVANDA: Thank you Mr. Sanow.

14 COMMISSIONER STRAND: Sir?

15 Mr. SANOW: Yes?

16 COMMISSIONER STRAND: When you were
17 without power for three weeks, and in these last
18 instances, were you getting good information about
19 when your power would be restored and what the
20 problems were?

21 Mr. SANOW: Well, we called the number
22 that Edison tells you to call and "They're taking
23 care of it. They're working on it." That's the
24 answer you get all the time. "They're working on
25 it, they'll get to it eventually."

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And, I guess eventually they did get to it.

COMMISSIONER STRAND: Thank you. Second person is David McElron.

Mr. McELRON: Good Afternoon. M-C-E-L-R-O-N. I'm here not only as a citizen, but as a public official.

COMMISSIONER STRAND: Can you identify your title?

Mr. McELRON: I'm the deputy fire chief for the city of Dearborn Heights, representing Mayor Canfield.

As far as non-storm conditions, this past summer we had a gentleman who lives in our city on a cul-de-sac, and he was in a brown out condition for three months; he lived out of a cooler. And he called Edison two or three times a week and got the same answer, "We're working on it, we're aware of the situation."

And it took three months for it to finally get resolved. Seemed like an extended amount of time for a response.

Also, during storm conditions this past summer on Westpointe Street in our city we had a primary wire down. It was taped off and they had

1 an Edison employee sitting on it for four days.
2 That's after the storm. I think that was a long
3 response time also.

4 Also, in the summer of '98 storm --

5 COMMISSIONER SVANDA: Could I interrupt
6 just to go back and ask a couple questions about
7 each of these as your mentioning them?

8 With respect to the first incident, the
9 brown out for three months, was that one residence
10 on the cul-de-sac and the others were not affected?

11 Mr. McELRON: No, they were all affected,
12 but the one at the end of the cul-de-sac was the
13 worst, He couldn't use his air conditioning. His
14 TV wouldn't operate. He was the worst one of the
15 bunch. But the whole street was affected.

16 COMMISSIONER SVANDA: Do you have an
17 address that would identify that?

18 Mr. McELRON: I can get it for you. I
19 don't have it with me.

20 COMMISSIONER SVANDA: Okay, if you would,
21 please, and that way we can do better follow-up.

22 Mr. McELRON: Sure.

23 COMMISSIONER SVANDA: And, on the
24 Westpointe Street, did you have people assigned to
25 that?

Mr. McELRON: Initially, we did. They were there for approximately nine hours - between 8 and 9 hours before they were relieved by Edison, but then it was four days, and it was a primary line so it was serious enough that they had personnel on the scene.

COMMISSIONER SVANDA: Thank you.

Mr. McELRON: One other incident that I can recall was in the Summer of '98, the storm. We had a fully involved house fire and all our personnel were tied up on wires down and we could only commit one fire engine and four people to that house fire. Needless to say, we lost the house because of lack of manpower.

In the past two years the city of Dearborn Heights has spent \$96,000 in overtime costs for firefighters, and these were all storm related for sitting on wires.

20 Our city feels that that's taking
resources away from our citizens protecting life
and property. Even though we are protecting life,
22 we're sitting on someone else's responsibility and
tax payers are paying for it. Thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER STRAND: The next -- I looks
25 like Gus Damiau. I may have --

Mr. DAMIAN: You're close, but not quite there. I'm Gus Damian, D-A-M-I-A-N. I live at 5826 Neckel, and I live directly across the street from the Fordson High School, on Neckel.

The lights have been out off an on now for the last two and a half weeks. I've called several times and even the -- one of the members there that answers the phone from the Edison company recognized my voice and knew who I was.

And, of course, I called the hot line, 1-800-477-4747. And I told the people down the street there -- because I'm the acting representative of the Fordson neighborhood association.

And the problem we have over there, we have an older -- it's an older neighborhood, a lot of retired people there, older people. And when you can't get out after supper to walk or go anyplace, because it's so dark.

20 Now, I had a situation there where I got a
22 hold of the Dearborn Police Department to give us
24 some patrol assistance. I called several people
from the city of Dearborn and they say they'd do
everything they could for me.

Now, I have no quarrel with the person

1 answering the phone and taking my complaint. But
2 my argument is, if we have an emergency out there,
3 I want them to tell me what the emergency is that
4 they will protect -- protect the rest of us.

5 Now, the deal here is I don't want to talk
6 to a secretary, because I've had two secretaries
7 when I worked for Ford Motor, okay? I want
8 somebody with a little more brass or whatever to
9 talk to me and tell me what the score is going to
10 be.

11 Now here, they turn down the lights to be
12 frank about it. Now, the school had torn down
13 three buildings at the corner of Elber and Neckel,
14 okay? Now, if they hit some switch there, I was
15 understanding that there was a switch that was hit.

16 Now, I know that Neckel Street that I live
17 on between Donald and Ford Road is a unique street
18 to Dearborn where it has the water, gas, and
19 electric in the middle of the street. But that
20 doesn't solve the problem or -- where there's a
21 problem, they should tell you when it's going to
22 be. Well, "We'll take care of it", okay?

23 Now, here, the Thursday before
24 Thanksgiving we had some of the lights come on.
25 And I thanked the fellas going by there with the

1 truck and I told them what a nice job they did and
2 I'm glad to see that the lights are on.

3 Lo and behold, the next day they're out
4 again. Then I called the same number again and I
5 get a call that we're having people come in from
6 outside the state or whatever to take care of it.

7 Now, I did call them -- I didn't call them
8 Friday because Friday the lights went on late. So
9 I knew there would be nobody there so I called them
10 yesterday and I told the lady that I want to thank
11 her for the cooperation and we have our lights on
12 and I apologize if I was rude or if I was being
13 very sarcastic about my way.

14 And by the way, I'm a stockholder, too.

15 COMMISSIONER NELSON: Mr. Damian, this has
16 been going on for two and a half weeks you said?

17 Mr. DAMIAN: Yes.

18 COMMISSIONER NELSON: How about before
19 that? Was there any problem with your service
20 before that?

21 Mr. DAMIAN: None.

22 COMMISSIONER NELSON: Just the last two
23 and half weeks?

24 Mr. DAMIAN: Yes.

25 COMMISSIONER NELSON: And you have not

been told what the cause of it was?

Mr. DAMIAN: Well, I've heard many stories but I don't want to repeat them, because I don't know.

COMMISSIONER STRAND: I'm trying to find out how extensive this is. Now is this just in your select, little area, or is --

Mr. DAMIAN: Yeah, this is from Ford Road to Donald on Neckel, N-E-C-K-E-L.

COMMISSIONER STRAND: And these are the street lights, only?

Mr. DAMIAN: Only street lights.

COMMISSIONER STRAND: Okay. So the houses have power?

Mr. DAMIAN: Yes.

COMMISSIONER STRAND: Did they have power last night?

Mr. DAMIAN: Yes.

COMMISSIONER STRAND: Okay. But they were on and off for the last two and a half weeks is what you're saying?

Mr. DAMIAN: Yes.

COMMISSIONER STRAND: Well, obviously it's something that needs to be looked at.

Mr. DAMIAN: But what we want is -- we want to be sure that we get somebody with a little

1 brass over there that calls somebody who is either
2 with the city or representing the area there to
3 know what it is all about. I don't want to take 50
4 phone calls from people around there. I don't get
5 paid for that. I'm retired.

6 COMMISSIONER STRAND: Thank you. Next we
7 have Dale Wafford.

8 Mr. WAFFORD: Good afternoon, gentlemen,
9 I'm Dale Wafford, I live in Westland. I hope that
10 doesn't make me a carpetbagger like one of the New
11 York senate candidates. The last name is spelled
12 W-O-F-F-O-R-D.

13 COMMISSIONER STRAND: We can't be
14 everywhere.

15 Mr. WAFFORD: I may differ in one respect
16 from the previous speakers in that I'm blessed,
17 thank goodness, or thank God, if I can say that in
18 a municipal building. I haven't had an outage of
19 any duration since July of '98.

20 At that time there was a hot line number,
21 I don't remember what it was. We called it once.
22 We were called back twice in a very short period by
23 two very capable, courteous people. I was
24 surprised that they knew where I was and they were
25 able to cite cross streets, et cetera, without me

1 telling them where I was. So my experience has
2 been okay.

3 Ten years ago I attended a Energy
4 Efficiency conference that you folks sponsored in
5 Lansing. And I've wanted to go back every year
6 because I became a proponent of energy efficiency.
7 But I'm told that those have been discontinued.

8 In lieu of that I go to other seminars
9 sponsored by Detroit Edison on geothermal energy,
10 energy efficient home building where they bring
11 together lots of vendors with energy efficient air
12 conditioners. And I do believe that the payback
13 potential is greater if we educate consumers on
14 energy efficiency than something like trimming tree
15 limbs, but I'm not an expert in that area.

16 Three years ago a lady with an obvious ax
17 to grind named Sally Phillips with the Lansing
18 Michigan United Conservation Club wrote an op-ed
19 article in the Detroit News and she makes a rather
20 inflammatory, overbroad statement, perhaps, which
21 may be unfair.

22 She says that the Public Service
23 Commission has shut down every energy efficient
24 program operated by Michigan's electric utilities.
25 She doesn't say whether that's two or three or one

1 or nine or whatever.

2 I would love to hear your comment on that.
3 But, finally -- I will sit down very soon -- I
4 would like to see your regulatory body do more to
5 help those of us who are out preaching gospel on
6 energy conservation.

7 And, if I can get in one final comment,
8 and you may rap the gavel and chase me out of here
9 and say this is not germane to the agenda. But my
10 problem is far, far, greater with Ameritech.

11 And in this blown up copy from 1998 in USA
12 today it mentions that the number of complaints for
13 scamming is twice that of slamming. And when I
14 surf your web I find a11 sorts of rather hefty
15 fines levied upon Ameritech for slamming, but they
16 never have to pay any penalty for scamming.

17 And I wish that I could find anybody's
18 secretary at Ameritech to talk to me, but they
19 won't, and I am left with recorded menu items and
20 so on.

21 So, that's all I have. I thank you for
22 listening to me. If you have any questions for me
23 I'd be happy to respond.

24 COMMISSIONER STRAND: Maybe we can take
25 the last first. Understand, this commission has

1 only the authority that the legislature chooses to
2 give it. And, for example, last year the
3 legislature chose to, in fact, pass a law giving
4 the Public Service Commission authority in the
5 slamming area and the ability to, in fact, impose
6 fines in that area.

7 Some people have suggested, in fact, there
8 is a bill in regarding the cramming problem which I
9 think is similar to the scamming you're talking
10 about. That bill has not passed the legislature
11 yet.

12 But we, as I said, only have the authority
13 to impose fines when the legislature tells us we
14 do. If it's not found specifically in state law we
15 don't have authority to do it. And so that is
16 fairly simple.

17 As far as the energy efficiency,
18 basically, to some extent, it's the same case. We
19 do have authority under state law to permit
20 utilities that voluntarily do certain things. We
21 improved the wind project in Traverse City. We
22 approved the solar project for Detroit Edison. I'm
23 sure I'm missing a few here and there.

24 But what many of the programs -- in fact,
25 what the programs basically were beforehand was the

Commission essentially ordering the companies to do this, this, this, and this. And, as particularly the Michigan Supreme Court of last summer specifically told us, if it ain't in the statute, we don't have authority to order it.

So, to the extent voluntary programs can be done, in which people voluntarily can do things -- and, you can have rate incentives built in, and if the companies want to do that, we do have authority to that and we have done that on a number of occasions.

To the extent there is a command and control program where we basically tell the companies, basically, to do certain things -- and we can get into whether those programs do or don't work -- but, to put it bluntly, I can tell you that to the extent we started such a program I think it would last probably a few minutes in the courts in the state of Michigan.

If the legislature wants to give us the authority basically to do that, they certainly have the authority to do it, if that's what they want to do.

The other thing, though -- and I'm not saying it isn't germane, because it is an important

1 issue -- but the problem we're having here -- and
2 there are two problems in Michigan regarding the
3 overall delivery of power.

4 The one is whether we have enough overall
5 power generated in the state to supply all of our
6 needs particularly in the summer, but all year
7 round. And that is a particular area where you're
8 concerned of energy efficiency in fact would come
9 in to play.

10 The other one, however, which we're really
11 dealing with today is regardless of whether we do
12 or don't have enough power overall, is whether the
13 current distribution system can get the power from
14 point A to point B.

15 And, unfortunately what we're finding is
16 that those are problems regardless of whether we
17 have -- whether we have a surplus or a deficit of
18 power at the state level, those are problems
19 plaguing particular areas regardless of the
20 oversupply. I'm not saying that energy would or
21 wouldn't help there. Basically it's a problem
22 that's maybe marginally related, if at all, to the
23 energy efficiency argument.

24 So I mean yes, you have a definite valid
25 concern. I'm not so sure, though, whether you have

1 all the energy efficiency programs in the world, if
2 we have a problem with a particular circuit in a
3 particular area, whether that's going to help that
4 situation.

5 Mr. WAFFORD: Well you are continuing to
6 educate me, and I appreciate that. I did not know
7 that you did have the power to levy fines for
8 slamming and not for scamming. So, in retrospect,
9 perhaps part of my statement was unfair. Because I
10 certainly assumed and implied that you were lax in
11 one area. But obviously, based on what you say,
12 which I accept, the legislature has hamstrung you
13 on that. So thanks again.

14 COMMISSIONER SVANDA: Prior to your
15 leaving, if I could add a couple comments to what
16 the Chairman indicated with regard to energy
17 conservation issues.

18 He mentioned a few of the programs
19 certainly in this territory, photovoltaics, and in
20 particular, fuel cells that are being actively
21 promoted by Detroit Edison and invested in by
22 Edison and I think it's encouraging the automotive
23 companies will go a long ways, I think down the
24 road, on the issue of conservation, on issues of
25 distribution and transmission that are at least as

1 hard as primary power plants to cite in our
2 neighborhoods and our commercial and industrial
3 zones. You might want to keep an eye on those.

4 I would add that each summer and along
5 these lines you had indicated you used to come to
6 Lansing and don't any more. Each summer, and I
7 think it's probably in late July or early August
8 there is a distributed generation fair that occurs
9 in conjunction with the PFC and Michigan State
10 University and a number of other parties. And you
11 might want to connect to that as well. You can get
12 information about that fair. It's on web site,
13 and, very consistent with the interests that you're
14 expressing.

15 COMMISSIONER NELSON: I think it's fair to
16 say that the Commission still is very much
17 interested in promoting energy efficiency and
18 conservation. It's just that the legislature has
19 not allowed us to mandate programs like that. But,
20 they are still considering that. And so you can
21 make your views known to the legislature as well.

22 COMMISSIONER SVANDA: And there's great
23 progress being made in those areas in well. Both
24 in a large scale and small scale. For example, and
25 I don't know if your interests roll over past

1 conservation into the environmental issues. It
2 sounds somewhat like they do.

3 Work that we've done very recently has
4 helped in large scale projects that have been
5 proposed to reopen the coal facilities and their
6 non-natural gas facilities and certainly much more
7 friendly than earlier proposals. And again those
8 small scale projects are beneficial.

9 COMMISSIONER STRAND: Next, we have David
10 LeDuc.

11 Mr. LeDuc: You pronounced my name right.
12 It's spelled L-E-D-U-C. I live at 740 Morley Court
13 in Dearborn. I live in the area that follows the
14 Rouge River basin north of Michigan Avenue. And
15 mostly when we have a sever storm, damage to wires
16 is the result of fallen limbs. A lot of trees in
17 our neighborhood, a number of which have been
18 removed since the 1998 storm.

19 We lost a tree during that storm
20 ourselves, and, as a matter of fact, a neighbor's
21 tree crashed into ours and was balanced
22 precariously against the electric wires and our
23 tree. Luckily, we didn't lose any electricity
24 during that time. However, a number of our
25 neighbors did and we stored food for one neighbor

1 and ran an electrical line to the other one from
2 our plug.

3 But, one of the concerns in our
4 neighborhood is that we do have so many electric
5 wires that are exposed to trees. On our particular
6 case, we have electric wires that go around on
7 three sides of our house; across the front and down
8 both sides.

9 And my biggest concern is that --
10 especially since our area is about to be named a
11 historic area, why there's a problem with burying
12 wires. I think that, you know, equivalent cities
13 in the western suburbs like Canton and Livonia have
14 their wires buried. And I know that our wires were
15 put up a number of years ago, but I see no reason
16 why, with the present technology that can't be
17 done.

18 And I think that would alleviate a lot of
19 the problems we have in our neighborhood with
20 falling limbs.

21 COMMISSIONER STRAND: I guess the only
22 question I have would be what's the situation been
23 recently as far as -- I mean, is this --

24 Mr. LeDuc: In the last year and a half,
25 as far as I know, there have been no real problems.

1 We haven't had any problems since -- but every now
2 and then you get a -- every about two or three
3 years you get a storm that knocks a lot of trees
4 out.

5 Eventually you get enough trees knocked
6 out I guess that there are no trees left to knock
7 down wires, but it -- the wires that we have in our
8 neighborhood are very unsightly. I mean they're
9 every where.

10 So, is there any movement on the part of
11 your Commission to bury wires?

12 COMMISSIONER STRAND: Well, we have --
13 obviously we don't have authority to tell the
14 companies where they put the wires. We certainly
15 talk to them regarding above or below ground.

16 Part of the problem, to put it bluntly, is
17 that it is very, very expensive to put the wires
18 below the ground as compared to above the ground.

19 Now, one can make the case that there is
20 probably less maintenance cost once they're below
21 rather than above. Although I can tell you, since
22 we're currently discussing a Ms. Dig bill in
23 Lansing regarding underground and wires being -- I
24 mean, you're not guaranteed you're not going to
25 have a problem if they're below ground, but it's

1 less likely to occur.

2 The problem is if we were to basically
3 indicate that all the wires that were above ground
4 would be put below ground -- I forget what the
5 number was. Our staff did a study once that would
6 add like a billion dollars or beyond that to the
7 electric bills of the people of the state of
8 Michigan simply because of the cost that would be
9 incurred by doing that.

10 And what we've, you know, told the company
11 is that to the extent it makes sense in certain
12 areas - -particularly in areas where they do have a
13 substantial number of outages, and, you know, for
14 cost purposes they do do that on occasion. And I
15 below the law is that basically for new
16 subdivisions they are basically buried.

17 But, I don't know if there's any way we
18 could just -- I mean, understand, there would be a
19 rather substantial rate impact if basically all the
20 wires would have to be buried.

21 COMMISSIONER SVANDA: You mentioned you're
22 in an historic district.

23 Mr. LeDuc: It's not named an historic
24 district yet. They're working on it. We're in
25 what's called the Arsenal District, which is where

1 the old Dearborn Arsenal used to stand. In the
2 grounds of that.

3 COMMISSIONER SVANDA: Okay. But it is not
4 a designated at this time?

5 Mr. LeDuc: Not at this point. It's
6 basically the area where the original founders of
7 West Dearborn lived.

8 COMMISSIONER SVANDA: That wasn't just
9 idle curiosity. I was trying to think in terms of
10 cost, too. And if you were in a truly designated
11 historic district, that would probably only
12 increase the costs as historic sidewalk structures
13 and things like would have to be dealt with.

14 COMMISSIONER NELSON: The rule that the
15 Chairman referred to was promulgated by the
16 Commission of 1970 regarding new plan of
17 subdivisions which have to be underground in the
18 lower peninsula.

19 But, it's very disruptive to go into
20 existing neighborhoods and trying to get
21 underground all the way through those neighborhoods
22 for a variety of reasons. But, it's something, I
23 think, when it makes sense, that we would
24 encourage.

25 COMMISSIONER STRAND: We were given a

letter f'rom a Gary Crosbie, C-R-O-S-B-I-E, who is not able to be here this afternoon because of a work schedule. But, just anyhow, the letter is;

"Please ask Detroit Edison to explain why there was no reason to the attached letter which certified mail indicated was received September 23, 1999. And note that the content of the letter addresses the topic of the current hearing." And, wants a reply.

And, again, it says "This location would be among the simplest to bury the high voltage lines and would have great benefit because of the proximity of so many trees in the adjacent wooded green belt."

His address is 1430 Culver. And then he talks about arranging "for the trimming (or removal) of a tree that would soon be in contact with a high voltage line at 1430 Culver. Some of the tree limbs are now in contact with the utility pole crossbars at the NW corner of the property."

And, basically, the letter was written to Anthony Earley, who is the chair of Detroit Edison.

Anyhow, we will put this in with the record and we'll basically show it to our staff and to the folks from Edison who are here today.

Is there anybody else?

(No response.)

If anyone wishes to address the commission or to talk on the record please see Dorothy Wideman so we can put you on the record.

The other thing, also, is if people don't feel comfortable with talking on the record but do wish to talk to the Commission afterward, we will be here. I realize not everybody wants to talk in front of 50 people and the news media and that type of thing.

The next person who wants to talk is Bob Lienen. I'm sure I'm mispronouncing that.

Mr. LEINEN: Leinen. Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, Thank you.

COMMISSIONER STRAND: Please spell your last name.

Mr. LEINEN: L-E-I-N-E-N. And I'd like to identify myself as a public official. I'm the deputy director of public works for the city of Dearborn and my comments are in that capacity.

And I'd like to speak to a different aspect of the storm related damage. The news release that came out announcing these hearings said one of the principal objectives was to

identify whether there are changes needed by Detroit Edison to deal with future storm damage. And I would like to address that aspect.

Most of the focus, of course, has been on restoring power. And that's not what I want to speak to. I would like to speak to clean up, or the aftermath of the storm; perhaps on the heels of the gentleman that just preceded me.

One of the major problems that we experienced, especially back in the July '98 storm was that there were numerous trees and tree limbs that came down, bringing down power lines.

Normally, when Detroit Edison comes through our community on scheduled maintenance where they're trimming trees, they have an excellent, very effective, system. They cut the limbs, and as they fall to the ground they're cut up. They have a chipper with them, or a shredder. They're chipped and shredded. Limbs that are too large to go through the chipper or shredder they cut up into fire log sized chunks and they're neatly stacked.

And generally, in almost every case, some neighbors will come along and pick them up and use them in their home fireplaces. Excellent system.

1 However, when we get a major storm,
2 Detroit Edison informs us, and I'm sure properly
3 so, that under emergency storm related conditions
4 they have an exemption from having to comply with
5 any local ordinances that would normally deal with
6 cleaning up the aftermath of a storm.

7 Unfortunately what happens, of course, is
8 they come through the neighborhoods and they cut
9 down the offending limbs or branches, whatever's
10 involved here. They're pretty much left wherever
11 they fall. Sometimes they fall in an adjoining
12 neighbor's yard. It's not even his tree nor his
13 power line -- his or hers.

14 And we get numerous calls from very upset,
15 very irate citizens, many of which are senior
16 citizens. And they say "How are we to deal with
17 this? These limbs are far too large. You know, it
18 wasn't our fault. We certainly didn't cause it.
19 We don't have the means to cut them up. And we
20 don't have the means to carry them out."

21 And they call the city and there's little
22 we can do for them at that point because generally
23 we're very busy cleaning up the aftermath of the
24 same storm because we have trees coming down in our
25 parks and along our public thoroughfares and our

rights or way that we are responsible for.

So it's a bad situation at that point. It certainly imposes a hardship on the citizens and the city, and there is a cost to both. I didn't bring any cost figures with me, but they probably could be generated.

I think everybody understands the immediate urgency, the priority, following a major storm is to restore the power. I think everybody accepts that and Detroit Edison certainly works very hard in doing that as quickly as they possibly can.

But we didn't view that as being a reason to totally exempt them from the responsibility to clean up the mess that's generated in the process. And we're kind of wondering whether the exemption they have been granted could be revisited.

We see no reason that they couldn't come back a week later, or two weeks later, once the power has been restored to all customers, to then attempt to clean up the mess that's been left behind.

So we would ask that perhaps that's an area that could be looked at; a better way to deal with future storm related damage.

COMMISSIONER STRAND: We appreciate those comments. In your capacity, are you familiar at all with the procedures that the company, Detroit Edison, uses in trimming trees within the city?

Mr. LEINEN: General. And my superintendent of parks here is with me today, Bruce Yinger, and he's very familiar with it.

COMMISSIONER STRAND: Would you have any comments about the typical maintenance type work they would do on trimming trees in a non-storm related situation?

Mr. LEINEN: Bruce?

Mr. YINGER: Bruce Yinger, Y-I-N-G-E-R.

COMMISSIONER STRAND: I have him next on the list, so that's fine.

Mr. YINGER: I wasn't sure exactly what Bob was going to cover. So I thought I'd help out, or make it worse, depending on that situation.

COMMISSIONER STRAND: Okay.

Mr. YINGER; First of all, as far as my capacity, I provide all the tree maintenance here in town. I'm aware of the challenges that Detroit Edison faces in trying to maintain line clearances and perception of what trimming trees has to be and what not to be.

I think what Bob brings to light is what constitutes the timing on these storms. I'm aware of the fact that the line clearance people that I work with are very effective in scheduling some of the areas. And any of the scheduled maintenance that's performed on trees, whether it be the city's trees or backyard trees, the debris that's generated from that is taken care of in an orderly fashion, whether it be shredded or cut up, and acceptable to the homeowner.

I think where we run into problems is that over the last several years since the July storm, where we've had some of these lines that have been reserviced or restrung, it is still constitutes in some capacity as an emergency response. Edison's contractors, or people of the areas of electric companies, would come in and perform maintenance clearances for these new lines.

And under the auspices of those being storm related work, the debris then was left. As Bob points out, if it falls in a yard where the lines were being worked on, that's fine. If it falls in an adjacent neighborhood, that's where it stays. And, as Bob points out, it becomes an issue for the city.

1 Our current policies require the residents
2 to cut and bundle their brush to be disposed of
3 properly without a fee. And we're set up that way
4 through waste management systems.

5 So it's an imposition for us to have loose
6 brush handled that way. And that's where there're
7 service fees involved. Let alone, in some cases
8 for the debris to be left in the backs of the yards
9 where elderly people or people who are
10 incapacitated can not bring that out to the front,
11 it becomes an issue for the city to deal with.

12 And it's not an isolated instance. I
13 think that things have gotten better. But I think
14 there's still this gray area as to what constitutes
15 scheduled maintenance versus response to a storm.
16 And I don't necessarily mean the magnitude of the
17 one in July. I certainly understand that. And
18 some of the confusion -- and there was enough trees
19 and debris down from everybody's yard that it
20 wasn't an issue whose was what.

21 But, that particular storm, by the way
22 generated over 48,000 cubic yards of brush for this
23 town to dispose of.

24 And, on a positive side, is that over the
25 last couple of years, we've worked with the Detroit

Edison people and we've removed approximately 500 trees that were in these power outage areas as far as the direct proximity to the power lines.

The question remains that I'd like to be able to put some plant materials back there that will never characteristically grow into those wires again. They'll prevent problems in the future for those sites.

But, at the same time we're looking for some costs to try to offset that as far as relandscaping some of those areas. And that's the area that I'm working right now.

But I think that specifically to deal with those gray areas as far as a storm related situation or a response as a result of an outage, becomes a storm related situation where the debris has to be dealt with in a different manner would solve our problem.

Other than that, I think we have some very good working relationships with those people. And on the flip side of that, it's worked out quite well in my capacity with the people in the line clearance areas and some of the things that I deal with as far as providing service along those lines. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER STRAND: Thank you. I don't have anyone else on the list. Does anyone else wish to testify today?

(No response.)

COMMISSIONER STRAND: I know that there are a number of folks from Edison here. Do any of the folks from Edison want to respond on the record, or do they want to go later when they discuss this matter with staff? It's up to you.

Okay. You'll wait until you -- I know you have two other days of hearings which you want to hear, too. Or, tonight and Thursday.

Yeah?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I guess I would like to say --

COMMISSIONER STRAND: could you identify yourself, please?

Mr. ROBERTS: My name is Tom Roberts, manager of system planning and engineering. And I would like to say I do have staff here. So if any of the complainants would like to talk to individual staff members after the meeting here, we would be glad to do that. In some cases we may already have solutions. I do have line clearance people here. And I have street lights, too.

1 So, if any of them would like to -- most
2 of us are sitting up there in the corner.

3 COMMISSIONER STRAND: Could you raise your
4 hands, so people can see where you are? Okay. In
5 that general area.

6 Mr. ROBERTS: Yeah. So if they'd like to
7 come up and deal with their complaints
8 individually, we'd be glad to do that.

9 COMMISSIONER STRAND: That's an excellent
10 suggestion. Does anyone else wish to testify?

11 (No response.)

12 COMMISSIONER STRAND: As I said, we'll
13 remain afterwards in case you want to talk with us,
14 but just not in front of everybody. And tonight
15 we're going to be in Farmington and Thursday we're
16 going to be in Rochester.

17 COMMISSIONER NELSON: Again, if
18 anybody wants a copy of the staff report, it's
19 right up here on this blue box. So, you're free to
20 take a copy.

21 COMMISSIONER STRAND: We'd like to thank
22 you very much for your attendance and your
23 testimony. Dave, one more?

24 COMMISSIONER SVANDA: And in addition to
25 the people that are being thanked right now, we

1 should probably publicly thank Mayor Guido and the
2 city of Dearborn for making the facility available
3 and all of their hospitality and helping to arrange
4 the hearing.

5 COMMISSIONER STRAND: It was very, very,
6 helpful. Thank you.

7 (Whereupon, the hearing was concluded at 2:51 PM.)

STATE OF MICHIGAN

COUNTY OF WAYNE

I certify that this transcript, consisting of 39 pages, is a complete, true, and correct record of the Public Service Commission hearing held on November 29, 1999.

December 22, 1999

Michelle Ann Toth

Michelle Ann Toth CER6327
19850 Fort No. 104
Riverview, Michigan 48192

To: Detroit Edison

Transmittal:

[Please hand the attached correspondence file to a Detroit Edison representative at Dearborn hearing, November 29, 1999. Because the hearing is set during work hours, I am not able to attend (this time).]

Please ask Detroit Edison to explain why there was no response (at least six weeks of "no response") to the attached letter which the certified mail receipt indicates was received Sept. 23, 1999.

Please also note that the content of the letter addresses the topic of the current hearing. A reply would be welcomed.

This location would be among the simplest to bury the high voltage lines and would have a great benefit because of the proximity of so many trees in the adjacent wooded green belt.

Though much time has passed (and the first question was answered based on an 800 call), I would very much appreciate a responsive reply (not a form letter) to the second Sept. 23, 1999 request.

Gary M. Crosbie
313-337-1208

1430 Culver

1430 Culver Ave.
Dearborn, MI 48124-5018
September 22, 1999

Anthony F. Earley, Jr.
Detroit Edison
2000 Second Ave.
Detroit, MI 48226-1279

Dear Sir:

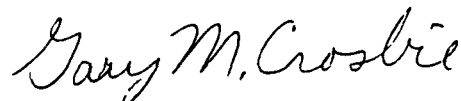
Please re-direct these two requests to the appropriate department(s) in order that the requested action "A" can be completed within the next three months and the evaluation of "B" can be completed within the next six months.

A. Please arrange for the trimming (or removal) of a tree that will soon be in contact with the high voltage (4800 volt?) lines at the rear of our property (1430 Culver). Some of the tree limbs are now in contact with the utility pole crossbars at the NW corner of the property. Utility equipment (such as a bucket truck) can gain access (as long as it is not too rainy) to the rear easement from the dead-end of Glover, which is two houses SW of our property, along Culver. By taking preventative action now, adverse consequences can be avoided.

B. Because of the repeated storm-related power outages we have suffered, I believe that the utility (and specifically the high voltage power) lines should be placed underground. The other property that is adjacent to easement is a Ford property known as Snow Woods. Because there is no construction of any sort on the Ford property, the underground installation would be simpler than for any other developed area. This property is full of mature elm and poplar trees, which can and do fall directly on the high voltage power lines when there are high westerly winds.

Your help in these matters will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,



Gary M. Crosbie
313-337-1208

Detroit
Edison
Letter

Z 332 386 299

US Postal Service

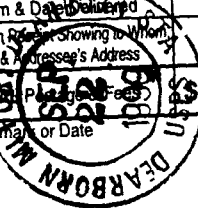
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Certified Fee	140
Special Delivery Fee	
Restricted Delivery Fee	
Return Receipt Showing to Whom & Date Delivered	125
Return Receipt Showing to Whom, Date, & Addressee's Address	
TO: Postage & Fees	298
Postmark or Date	

PS Form 3800, April 1995



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- ☐ Write 'Return Receipt Requested' on the mailpiece below the article number.
- ☐ The Return Receipt will show to whom the article was delivered and the date delivered.

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2. ☐ Restricted Delivery

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Anthony F. Farley, Jr.
Detroit Edison
2000 Second Ave.
Detroit, MI 48226-1279

4a. Article Number

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- ☐ Express Mail
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[Signature]

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