



## **TOWN OF HULL Town Manager's Office**

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### **POWER OUTAGE IN HULL OCTOBER 7<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Phil Lemnios, Town Manager**

Last evening a brief windstorm brought down multiple large trees in Hingham that fell across the main transmission lines that feed the Town. The area of failure is not easily accessible and the amount of damage is significant. We are being advised by National Grid the restoration period will be approximately 24 hours. The lines are owned by National Grid and are the responsibility of National Grid. Neither Hull nor Hingham Municipal Light Department has any authority to repair the lines.

Over the last several years these lines and the maintenance of the right of way have become unreliable. The Town has met several times with National Grid representatives to voice our concerns and complete dissatisfaction with National Grid's management of the lines. Our State Representatives have also participated in these meetings. While we have received a commitment for better right of way management from National they to date have not been willing to address the fundamental problem which is the need to rebuild the transmission lines using best practice design which would make the lines much more resilient from tree damage.

Based on our legal review, the responsibility to upgrade the 1935 vintage power lines is a cost that should be borne solely by National Grid and their shareholders. Hull's ratepayers should not have to pay for something that is National Grid's responsibility.

Nonetheless we continue to explore various options to alleviate Hull from this continuing loss of power. The options include pursuing legal action against National Grid as well as identifying feasible by-pass routes. Our legal review is well underway with a firm that specializes in utility law. We have also made headway in identifying engineered solutions including creating back-up generation for the Town. It should be noted however that the preliminary costs for these options are significant and would have an impact on rates. We will continue to pursue these options but we should not let National Grid out of their responsibility to either upgrade the line or helped to pay for an alternative option.

Please be assured we are doing all we can to address this situation. The world of utility law and regulation is complex and heavily weighted in favor of investor owned utilities like National Grid. We will continue to press National Grid, a multibillion dollar corporation, to perform responsibly on their obligations. This is a true David and Goliath fight but in the end David won!