



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

ATTORNEY GENERAL GEORGE JEPSEN

CONSUMER COUNSEL ELIN SWANSON KATZ

**AG/OCC: REGULATORS SHOULD FINE CL&P FOR FAILED REPAIRS
TO UNDERGROUND DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM IN WATERBURY**

For immediate release

THURSDAY JAN. 19, 2012

HARTFORD – Attorney General George Jepsen and Consumer Counsel Elin Swanson Katz said state utility regulators should fine Connecticut Light & Power Co. for failing to correct and upgrade long-standing problems in an underground electric distribution system in Waterbury.

They made the recommendation in separate written exceptions, filed Wednesday, to a draft decision by the state Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA). The Authority, which has been investigating the safety of the underground system for more than five years, issued a draft decision Jan. 4.

The Attorney General and the Office of Consumer Counsel agreed with PURA that CL&P's upgrade of the system contained many defects that threatened both reliability and injury to employees and contractors. They also agreed with PURA's findings that CL&P must improve its oversight of work done by its contractors.

However, they asked the regulators to reconsider their draft position and impose sanctions on CL&P for its failure to maintain a safe and reliable system in Waterbury. CL&P, and not the company's customers, should pay for the cost of a third-party consultant who evaluated work on the system, the Attorney General and Consumer Counsel said.

"PURA should not require CL&P's customers to continue to fund the Company's repeated efforts to meet its most fundamental obligation of making its system adequately safe and reliable," Attorney General Jepsen said. "CL&P has had many chances to upgrade its system and has failed to do so."

Consumer Counsel Elin Swanson Katz said that after reviewing the consultant's report, her office was "shocked by the defective workmanship in CL&P's upgrade of the Waterbury underground electric system. The errors include numerous items of missing equipment or incorrectly installed equipment, the use of improper support materials for cables, and failure to appropriately mark equipment in manholes."

"Yet PURA's draft requires ratepayers to pay for the consultant and refuses to fine CL&P either for poor oversight of its contractors or for filing information in the proceeding that turned out to be false," Katz said. "PURA needs to make a concerted effort to evaluate the situation in Waterbury and not leave it to CL&P to inspect itself, as the Draft proposes."

Assistant Attorney General Michael Wertheimer is representing the Attorney General in this matter with Associate Attorney General Joseph Rubin. Attorney Joseph Rosenthal is representing the Consumer Counsel.

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