

## APPENDIX 4: TWO STORM PANEL REPORT FINDINGS ON TREE TRIMMING

In January, 2012, the eagerly-awaited *Two Storm Panel Report* was issued as “a robust review and evaluation of Connecticut’s approach to the prevention, planning, and mitigation of impacts associated with emergencies and natural disasters that can reasonably be anticipated to impact our State (p.1, *Two Storm Panel Report*).” The findings and recommendations on tree trimming follow:

### Two Storm Panel Report Findings

- Trees have great value, both aesthetic and economic, and Connecticut residents not only take great pride in their beauty, but benefit significantly from them. Testimony presented by the Urban Forestry unit of DEEP showed the heating and cooling costs of a home were lowered with the presence of appropriate trees.
- Trees knocked down 90% of the utility wires that fell in Tropical Storm Irene.
- Data presented to the Two Storm Panel indicated that Connecticut has one of the most dense tree canopies in the United States (# 1 in the U.S. for our Wildland/Urban Interface tree density). Connecticut’s tree profile, also, revealed trees with larger circumferences than average. UIL Holdings estimated that over 300,000 trees are planted in the utility pole rights of way (ROW) in its 17 town territory.
- Tree trimming and removal budgets consist of four sources:

Source of Tree Trimming Budget	Amount of Budget (2011)
Municipal (Used primarily for maintaining health of town trees, not for utility rights-of-way)	Approximately \$10 million a year
Connecticut Dept. of Transportation (Used primarily for roadway clearance and safety)	\$550,000 per year
Telecommunications companies	Failed to provide a tree trimming budget to Two Storm Panel
CL&P (For 143 towns)	\$24,625,000
UI (For 17 towns)	\$3,418,883

- In its proposal to harden or strengthen its pole and wire infrastructure that CL&P submitted to the Two Storm Panel, the company recommended that they be approved to spend \$366 million over the next ten years, essentially a 50% increase over what CL&P spent in the previous ten years, on tree trimming and vegetation management.

- There does not exist in Connecticut specific industry standards for tree trimming aside from the safety standards in ANSI Z 133.1 and OSHA 1910.269 and the operation standards in the ANSI A 300 series to direct the actions of tree wardens or of those performing utility pruning.
- There are also no criteria by which a person may be appointed a tree warden.

**Two Storm Panel Report Recommendations:**

- 20)** Conduct a state-wide tree risk assessment and prioritization schedule particularly targeting hazardous trees.
- 21)** Establish a state-wide Hazardous Tree Removal Fund that will provide matching grants to homeowners for the removal of trees on private property that endanger utility wires.
- 22)** 1.5 % of all funds approved for utility vegetation management by PURA should be used to fund the private property Hazardous Tree program for 5 years.
- 23)** Establish a State Vegetation Management Task Force (SVMTF) that will develop standards for road side tree care in Connecticut, vegetation management practices and schedules for utility rights of way, right tree/right place standards, licensing standards for tree wardens, municipal tree inventories and pruning schedules. This Task Force should consist of State, municipal, utility and nonprofit environmental organizations. The Commissioner of the DEEP or his/her designee should be its Chairperson.
- 24)** DEEP should convene appropriate State agencies, municipalities and utilities for the purpose of creating a 5 year collaborative effort for an enhanced tree maintenance program and the development of an educational effort regarding the use of appropriate and diverse tree species in both public and private spaces.
- 25)** At least four entities—electric utilities, municipalities, telecom utilities, and the State of Connecticut—engage in tree trimming/removal activities that may protect the necessary infrastructure. On a semiannual basis, these activities should be coordinated amongst them to maximize the effectiveness of each entity and goals/targets should be established. This activity would be monitored through the SVMTF.
- 26)** Increase DOT Tree Maintenance budget by \$1 million a year for three years for road/ tree safety program.
- 27)** Legislation should be adopted providing for the removal of “hazard trees” from private property by utilities or municipalities, which should include reasonable protections for property owners.