



Electricity Subsector
Coordinating Council

Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Infrastructure Rebuild and Restoration Work Continues After Hurricane Helene, As Industry Prepares for Hurricane Milton and Dual Response

WASHINGTON (October 7, 2024) – Hurricane Helene caused historic and catastrophic damage that left nearly 6 million customers* in 10 states without power. As of 3:00 p.m. EDT, power has been restored to approximately 5.74 million—or 95.6 percent—of those customers. In the hardest-hit areas, investor-owned electric companies, public power utilities, and electric cooperatives continue to work day and night to restore power to the remaining customers who are able to receive it.

We are grateful for the patience and support of our customers and for all of the workers involved in one of the largest and most complex industry restoration efforts in U.S. history.

While around-the-clock work continues to rebuild grid infrastructure in the communities most impacted by Helene, the ESCC is also closely monitoring Hurricane Milton. Currently a Category 5 hurricane, Milton is forecast to make landfall along the Gulf Coast of Florida midweek, bringing life-threatening storm surge, strong winds, heavy rainfall, and significant inland flooding as it moves across the Florida peninsula.

Potentially impacted entities in the path of Hurricane Milton have activated their emergency response plans and are prepositioning equipment, resources, and mutual assistance crews in advance of the storm to minimize the time needed to begin damage assessment and recovery efforts once it is safe to do so. Already, tens of thousands of crews from at least 29 states are dedicated to the Milton response, the second large-scale mutual assistance mobilization in weeks.

Given the forecasted conditions for Milton, assessing damage and restoring power may take several days or more in some areas. We urge customers in Milton's path to heed all local safety and evacuation warnings and to prepare for the possibility of long-duration power outages.

Power restoration is a team effort, and strong industry-government coordination and cross-sector collaboration are essential. The CEO-led Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council (ESCC) is working in close coordination with senior federal government officials to support the ongoing Helene restoration, as well as the preparation and staging activities and the movement of mutual assistance crews in advance of Milton. The ESCC will hold its sixth call tonight related to Hurricane Helene to address any remaining resource needs from that storm and to help support entities in Milton's path. ESCC coordination will continue.

The first step in any restoration is damage assessment—in some cases, crews may not be able to gain access to the most heavily damaged and flooded areas until the storm clears and it is deemed safe for them to enter. Crews will not be able to use certain equipment, including bucket trucks, until high winds subside. Search and rescue and life safety will be the top priorities once the storm passes.

Safety is our top priority. For customers in the path of Hurricane Milton, we urge you to:

- Prepare now. Have your emergency outage kit stocked and ready.
- Pay attention to local alerts and heed all evacuation warnings.

Customers also should be aware of the dangers present during and after a hurricane. We remind you to:

- Never use a generator inside a home, garage, crawl space, or anywhere deadly exhaust fumes can enter enclosed spaces. Plug appliances directly into the generator; do not connect them to your home's circuits.
- Stay away from downed or sagging power lines. Assume that all fallen wires and anything touching them are energized.
- Avoid standing water, as it may be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.
- Be aware of areas where floodwaters have receded and watch out for debris. Floodwaters often erode roads and walkways.
- Keep roads clear for first responders and restoration workers. If you have evacuated, return home only when authorities say it is safe.
- Do not approach crews working in the field.

It is critical that customers allow the first responders to do their jobs. Stay off roads, beaches, and waterways, and avoid returning home until state emergency officials have indicated it is safe to do so. Having roadways clogged with traffic will only impede restoration efforts.

**It is important to remember that outages measure customer meters impacted, not the number of individuals without power. Due to the nature of the storm, customers may have experienced more than one outage.*

About the Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council

The ESCC serves as the principal liaison between leadership in the federal government and in the electric power sector, with the mission of coordinating efforts to prepare for national-level incidents or threats to critical infrastructure. Protecting the energy grid from threats that could impact national security and public safety is a responsibility shared by both the government and the electric power sector. The ESCC facilitates and supports policy- and public affairs-related activities and initiatives designed to enhance the reliability and resilience of the energy grid. These activities include all hazards, steady-state preparation, and emergency preparedness, response, and recovery for the nation's electricity sector.

More information is available at: <http://www.electricitysubsector.org/>
