

JACK REED  
RHODE ISLAND

COMMITTEES

APPROPRIATIONS

ARMED SERVICES, RANKING MEMBER

BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

INTELLIGENCE, EX OFFICIO

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3903

Washington, DC

728 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-3903  
(202) 224-4642

Rhode Island

1000 Chapel View Boulevard, Suite 290  
Cranston, RI 02903-3074  
(401) 943-3100

One Exchange Terrace, Room 408  
Providence, RI 02903-1744  
(401) 528-5200

1 (800) 284-4200

TDD Relay Rhode Island  
1 (800) 745-5555

<http://reed.senate.gov>

November 15, 2019

Mr. John Pettigrew  
Chief Executive Officer  
National Grid  
40 Sylvan Road  
Waltham, MA 02451

Dear Mr. Pettigrew,

I write to request information regarding National Grid's ongoing preparations for the upcoming winter and efforts to ensure that there is an adequate supply of natural gas to provide heat to homes and businesses in Rhode Island throughout the season. I am also sending a similar letter to Enbridge.

Following the natural gas outage on Aquidneck Island in January, many residents and business owners went without the necessary heat supply to safely remain in place due to the extreme cold weather. In response, the Pipeline and Hazardous Material Safety Administration (PHMSA) and the Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission (RIPUC) investigated the cause of this prolonged gas outage. Their recently issued reports found that with the proper planning, equipment maintenance, supply management, and communication with network partners this outage could have been prevented. Specifically, the reports identified that National Grid failed to:

- Adequately plan or forecast for the use of liquefied natural gas (LNG) at either of its facilities on Aquidneck Island and Fields Point, or utilize other contingency options for peak weather events;
- Effectively resolve, or prevent the need for, emergency repairs to its system in the event of a valve malfunction or disruption to other equipment in order to quickly restore service to its customers;
- Ensure that agreements and contracts between National Grid, its customers, and Enbridge, allowed for increased natural gas capacity in order to avoid service disruption; and
- Communicate to Enbridge and state regulators in a timely manner that the Fields Point LNG facility experienced a power supply outage that limited National Grid's ability to deliver additional capacity to meet the surge in demand with existing resources.

The report also notes that National Grid deployed a significant number of personnel to Aquidneck Island to restore service in difficult conditions. National Grid and its employees should be commended for how they responded during the crisis. I am also encouraged by recent reports that National Grid intends to provide additional supplemental capacity during the winter

through a temporary LNG facility in Portsmouth. Nonetheless, given the findings of the reports and concerns I have heard from constituents, I request additional information regarding National Grid's preparations for the coming winter months:

- Will the temporary facility that National Grid intends to establish in Portsmouth be sufficient to ensure National Grid can respond quickly to peak weather events and what, if any, contingency planning is National Grid making to quickly deploy surge LNG capacity?
- How is National Grid improving forecast modeling and assessments in order to determine the amount of natural gas supply needed to adequately serve its customers, particularly during extreme weather events?
- How does National Grid intend to improve its emergency management response system?
- What is National Grid's short and long-term maintenance plan for addressing equipment malfunctions with its infrastructure?
- How does National Grid intend to improve its communication with other entities within the system, including regulators, to minimize service disruptions and potential violations?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter, and I look forward to your prompt reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Jack Reed". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jack Reed  
United States Senator