

Dear Editor:

There has been considerable controversy about Southern California Edison's restoration efforts following the recent wind storm. We have acknowledged shortcomings in our response—particularly underestimating restoration times and our customer communications—which we will improve.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that our field crews worked around the clock for days in a difficult and dangerous environment. Thousands of hours were spent removing trees, rebuilding entire electrical lines, installing over 200 poles and restarting service for hundreds of thousands of customers. Yet, we did not experience a single serious injury to the public or to any of our personnel.

In an emergency such as this, there needs to be an appropriate and practical balance between restoration efforts and preservation of removed materials for later regulatory analysis. Restoration of electrical service had to take precedence in the situation we faced. Indeed, once the CPUC's staff indicated the extent to which it believed materials should be preserved, instructions were given to our field personnel to comply with the request. As a result, we now have in storage more than an acre of fallen pole material preserved as "evidence."

Accusations by the staff of the California Public Utilities Commission that our workers failed to preserve "evidence" misses the mark. There is an implication about the integrity of our workers and our company which is unjustified. It also distracts everyone from the real and necessary improvement efforts ahead.

SCE is conducting a thorough internal review of our storm response. Additionally, we have engaged a storm restoration expert to conduct an independent evaluation. And we intend to continue cooperating fully with the Commission and its staff throughout the remaining course of their investigation. The point of these reviews should be focused on what can be learned and applied to improving storm response in the future.

Respectfully,

Ron Litzinger  
President