

September 20, 2011

Mr. Vinnie Burruano, President
Fairfax Station Homeowners' Association
P.O. Box 162
Fairfax, VA 22039

Subject: Your letter of September 6th; Hurricane Irene

Dear Mr. Burruano:

I am writing in response to the letter you sent me via email on the morning of September 6th, in which a number of "observations and concerns" were conveyed regarding the performance of NOVEC's feeder circuits serving that portion of the Fairfax Station subdivision within our service territory. Before responding in detail to the questions posed, I wish to respond to some inaccuracies and contradictions contained within the letter. First, NOVEC serves Fairfax Station from one "grid," not two. There are two feeder circuits fed from two separate and distinct sources, one from the Moore Substation (Circuit 252), and the other from the Popes Head substation (Circuit 463), available to serve Fairfax Station. Since June 10th of this year, NOVEC has been serving the entirety of its customer base in Fairfax Station with Circuit 252, and there have only been two outages during that period. The first occurred on the evening of Sunday, June 12th, when powerful thunderstorms ripped through Loudoun and Fairfax Counties. The duration of that outage in Fairfax Station was 6 ½ minutes. The second outage occurred in the early morning hours of Sunday, August 28th, during Hurricane Irene, and was the subject of your letter. The duration of that outage was 2 hours and 32 minutes.

In contrast to your characterization in the first paragraph that the NOVEC infrastructure was exposed to "mild tropical storm winds and rain," a statement in the second paragraph references that at the time of the outage (2:13 AM) there were "...estimating [sic] winds of 40 to 50 mph with driving rain." In reality, at that hour there were winds in excess of 50 mph. Hurricane Irene was no small weather event. In Virginia alone, more than one million customers lost power; some went without power for many days. The fact that NOVEC incurred less damage than neighboring systems can be mostly attributed to the robustness with which the system is designed and constructed. And while the intensity of the storm was less than that experienced along much of the Atlantic coast, this was an enormous storm that inflicted heavy losses on most of the power companies in Virginia, and on all of the power companies serving the DC metro area. There were hundreds of thousands of customers without power in Northern Virginia, including more than 7,000 on the NOVEC system. The additional fact that NOVEC was the first power company to restore all of its customers is a testament to our preparedness and the professional skills displayed by our control center and field personnel. After completing the storm restoration on our system on the afternoon of Sunday, August 28th, NOVEC

released its contract crews to work on neighboring systems in need of help, and sent NOVEC line crews to help in the areas of the worst devastation.

The following bullet points will address your questions. Where required, clarifications to misstatements and inaccuracies in your letter will be addressed:

- As noted above, the entirety of the NOVEC customer base in your subdivision has been served by Moore Circuit 252 since June 10th. Circuit 252 is shorter in length than Circuit 463 and to date has been the beneficiary of more upgrades and improvements than Circuit 463. As a result, it is the preferred circuit for serving Fairfax Station, unless it were to become unavailable, at which time Circuit 463 would be remotely switched in.
- At the time that Mr. McKinney experienced his outage, all the NOVEC customers in the subdivision experienced the same outage; all customers were served via Circuit 252.
- Mr. McKinney's conversation with the control center supervisor was recorded (a standard practice), and has been reviewed by the Hurricane Irene Incident Commander and other senior company officers. In response to Mr. McKinney's challenges as to the adequacy of the level of staffing at that hour, he was told that all of the people (including supervisory decision-makers) that needed to be present were there. The statement in your letter that "...In our opinion, their presence at this point could have prevented our prolonged outage..." is simply incorrect. As the supervisor explained repeatedly, circuits 252 and 463 were "faulted," most likely from trees, which proved to be the correct analysis. Neither circuit could provide service to Fairfax Station until the trees were removed and the faults cleared. No amount of additional personnel in the control center would have expedited the work of removing the tree from circuit 252. The outage was restored at 4:45 AM (duration: 2 hours, 32 minutes).
- You asked the following: What and where were the faults?
 - The fault on Circuit 463 occurred at 1:14 AM, caused by trees. That circuit was restored later on Sunday morning, at 5:13 AM.
 - The fault on Circuit 252 was caused by trees on Chapel View Court.
- Did the remote changeover work properly and was the switching protocol followed?
 - Yes, the remote changeover plan was followed and would have worked according to protocol; however, Circuit 463 was already out of service, making it unavailable at 2:11 AM. The probability of both circuits being out of service at the same time is slight; however, it can occur and it happened that night. Similarly improbable is the occurrence of three natural disasters within a 14-day span (earthquake, hurricane, and flood), and yet, that happened.
- How did the current upgrades help to prevent or reduce the outage?
 - The upgrades and system enhancements reduced outages (and durations) in the Fairfax Station/Clifton area during Hurricane Irene.

There were fewer outages of shorter duration than those that occurred during comparable storms in the past.

- The Popes Head Substation remained “in service” throughout the entirety of the hurricane. The spacer cable project involving the 35,000 volt feed from the Compton Substation to the Popes Head Substation was completed earlier this summer, and no outages occurred along that feeder circuit during the hurricane.
- Trees have been trimmed or removed along Circuit 252 in selected locations; however, that work has not yet been completed. The tree that faulted Circuit 252 was in a section that was slated for tree trimming/removal work later this year.
- The 12,500 volt spacer cable project along Circuit 252 through a remote, heavily wooded section was completed earlier this summer.
- Will the soon-to-be-implemented final upgrades have affected [sic] or improved [sic] the outcome of this storm’s outage or a comparable snowstorm?
 - Yes, the planned improvements and tree trimming/removal should improve reliability further. The remaining work should be completed before the end of this year.

Two final thoughts: First, your letter made no mention of the fact that Fairfax Station NOVEC customers experienced no interruptions in service since June 10th, other than the two noted above, despite a myriad of thunderstorms, an earthquake, and even a hurricane (a flood occurred after the receipt of your letter and, again, there was no interruption of service). Second, the performance of our system, and our personnel, during the hurricane was unmatched by any of the neighboring power companies. Your opening paragraph acknowledged that NOVEC was the top performing company during Irene. We appreciate your recognition of our performance, and we believe that, over time, our commitment to improving the reliability in your subdivision will manifest in the form of fewer outages of shorter durations.

Yours truly,

Stan C. Feuerberg
President and Chief Executive Officer