

Date: 10th December 2003

Energy Networks Association welcomes findings of inquiry into improved storm performance for electricity distribution networks.

The Energy Networks Association, which represents the licensed gas and electricity transmission and distribution companies in the UK, has today welcomed the publication of the findings of the Network Resilience Working Group into improved storm performance for electricity distribution networks. The inquiry was initiated in response to the impact of the severe storms on the electricity network in October 2002. It is the culmination of ten months of work carried out by a group of experts from across Government and industry. This joint initiative included representatives from many Member Companies of the Energy Networks Association.

A Met Office report was commissioned to review weather patterns and indicated that no significant changes are predicted over the next few years although south westerly winds may increase and lightning strikes may become more intense.

The Group identifies trees near overhead lines as the major cause of storm damage. They have also highlighted a range of best practice techniques throughout industry that can improve resilience. The need for effective communication was seen as key to resolving more effectively future interruptions.

Welcoming the Report, Professor Robin Maclaren, Chairman of the Energy Networks Association, said "The Working Group demonstrates the commitment the Distribution Network Operators have to ensuring that customers have a reliable supply. This is indicated by the actions our members have already initiated such as improvements in tree management.

The report highlights that the industry is keen to learn from the findings but is clear that there are no simple solutions. Our Members will listen to the needs of their customers but an effective incentives regime is needed to ensure that those needs are met."

NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. The Energy Networks Association came into existence on 1 October 2003. It was formed by the Gas and Electricity Transmission and Distribution Licence holders who were members of the now defunct Electricity Association.
2. The Network Resilience Working Group is a joint DTI, Ofgem, Energywatch and Distribution Network Operators (DNO) group established to propose initiatives to improve the resilience of electricity distribution networks during severe weather events.

David Smith, Director of Policy
Energy Networks Association
18 Stanhope Place, Marble Arch, London, W2 2HH
t: +44 (0)20 7706 5106
david.smith@energynetworks.org