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Utilities Advance Power Restoration After Irene

By Julie Johnsson and Edward Klump - Aug 29, 2011

Thousands of workers began clearing tree branches and repairing electrical lines to restore power to about 5.48 million U.S. homes and businesses after Hurricane Irene left a trail of destruction from North Carolina to [Maine](#).

Most companies expect to restore service in days, as they recover from power failures reported as the result of a East Coast storm. Downgraded to a tropical storm yesterday and moving through New England and into Quebec, Irene drew comparisons to hurricanes Gloria in 1985 and Isabel in 2003. The storm cut power to as many as 5.94 million customers. About 4.2 million customers lost electricity from Isabel and 3.2 million from Gloria.

An estimated 938,519 customers are without power as of 10 a.m. local time in [New York](#), according to a U.S. Energy Department [report](#). Irene didn't pack the hurricane-force winds that were predicted when it made landfall yesterday in the state.

Power disruptions affected homes and businesses in 13 states and the [District of Columbia](#), according to the department. Irene hit the coast of North Carolina as a Category 1 hurricane on Aug. 27.

Fallen power lines and flooded substations cut electricity supplies to 523,000 customers on Long Island. About 368,000 homes and businesses remain without electricity this morning, according to the Long Island Power Authority.

[New York City](#)

There was less damage in New York City, where Mayor Michael Bloomberg allowed residents evacuated from low-lying areas to begin returning yesterday after the storm passed. The mayor is founder and majority owner of Bloomberg News's parent, Bloomberg LP. Subway service resumed today with some delays, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority said in a [statement](#).

About 92,000 [Consolidated Edison Inc. \(ED\)](#) customers were without power as of 12:19 local time today, according to the utility's [website](#). That included 55,800 homes and businesses in Westchester County and about 6,800 on Staten Island.

Consolidated Edison expects to restore power to most of its New York City customers by midnight tomorrow and to most of its Westchester customers by midnight on Sept. 1, according to the website.

Hurricane Gloria, which followed a similar path in 1985, left 750,000 customers without power in Long Island, Michael Hervey, chief operating officer of the Long Island Power Authority, said in a conference call yesterday.

Resuming Service

More than 600,000 customers remain without power in Virginia. About half of the 2.4 million customers that Dominion Resources Inc. serves in Virginia and [North Carolina](#) lost power, making Irene the second-worst storm in the company's history after Hurricane Isabel, Chet Wade, a Dominion spokesman, said in a telephone interview yesterday.

Dominion expects to restore power to up to 95 percent of its affected customers by the end of the day on Sept. 2.

[Constellation Energy Group Inc. \(CEG\)](#)'s Baltimore Gas & Electric utility has restored power to almost half of the customers affected by the storm, according to a statement today. The "vast majority" of customers will be restored by Sept. 2, the company said.

In [Connecticut](#), Irene knocked out electricity to more than 693,000 customers, about 44 percent of the state, according to the department's report. It could be a week or longer before all customers of [Northeast Utilities \(NU\)](#)' Connecticut Light & Power get electricity back, the department said.

About 64 percent of Rhode Island customers were without power, the department reported. More than 47,000 homes and businesses were without electricity today in [Vermont](#), where Irene caused record flooding before sweeping into [Canada](#).

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