

RESOLUTION 2026-326

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BARNEGAT, COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, URGING A COMPREHENSIVE INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION AND PERFORMANCE AUDIT OF NEW JERSEY'S ELECTRIC UTILITIES

WHEREAS, reliable electric service is essential to protecting the public health, safety, welfare, economic security, and quality of life of New Jersey residents; and

WHEREAS, municipalities depend upon reliable electric service to operate police, fire, emergency medical services, emergency communications, traffic-control systems, water and wastewater infrastructure, schools, and other essential public services; and

WHEREAS, prolonged power outages jeopardize public safety, disrupt commerce, impair municipal operations, threaten vulnerable residents, and impose significant financial burdens upon families, businesses, and local governments; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey residents and businesses pay substantial electric rates, delivery charges, and infrastructure-related costs with the reasonable expectation of receiving safe, adequate, reliable, and resilient electric service; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey's electric distribution companies operate as regulated monopolies, leaving most customers without the ability to choose an alternative electric distribution provider based upon reliability or performance; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey residents, businesses, and municipalities pay substantial electric rates, delivery charges, and infrastructure-related costs with the reasonable expectation that those payments will produce safe, adequate, reliable, resilient, and modern electric service; and

WHEREAS, taxpayers and ratepayers are often the same people and are entitled to transparency, accountability, and measurable results for the rates, charges, and government-approved costs they are required to pay; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities is responsible for ensuring that regulated utilities provide safe, adequate, and proper service, while the New Jersey Division of Rate Counsel serves as the independent advocate for New Jersey ratepayers; and

WHEREAS, recent widespread and prolonged power outages affecting hundreds of thousands of New Jersey residents have raised legitimate concerns regarding utility infrastructure, maintenance, vegetation management, emergency preparedness, restoration performance, and regulatory oversight; and

WHEREAS, recurring electric outages over many years demonstrate the need for a comprehensive, transparent, and independent review of electric utility performance and regulatory accountability.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the governing body of The Township of Barnegat, County of Ocean, State of New Jersey, that it respectfully urges the Governor, the New Jersey Legislature, the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities, the New Jersey Division of Rate Counsel, and the Office of the State Auditor to undertake a comprehensive and independent investigation and performance audit of New Jersey's electric utilities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the investigation should include, at a minimum:

1. An evaluation of electric system reliability, outage frequency, restoration times, and long-term performance trends throughout New Jersey.
2. A review of utility infrastructure investments, maintenance practices, vegetation management, emergency preparedness, staffing, customer communications, and restoration procedures to determine whether ratepayer-funded investments have produced measurable improvements in reliability and resiliency.
3. An assessment of utility compliance with applicable reliability, maintenance, customer service, reporting, and infrastructure investment requirements, together with a comparison of New Jersey's performance to nationally recognized utility standards and best practices.
4. An evaluation of the effectiveness of regulatory oversight exercised by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities, including whether existing performance standards, enforcement mechanisms, penalties, and accountability measures adequately protect New Jersey residents and ratepayers.
5. An Action Plan, including compliance time frames, with recommendations for legislative, regulatory, operational, and infrastructure reforms necessary to improve electric reliability, modernize the electric grid, strengthen accountability, and better protect the public, together with the public release of findings and recommended corrective actions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the governing body respectfully requests the New Jersey Division of Rate Counsel to review whether New Jersey ratepayers have received the level of reliability reasonably expected in light of approved rates and infrastructure investments and, where appropriate, pursue available remedies to protect the interests of New Jersey utility customers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the governing body respectfully urges the Governor and the Legislature to review the findings of these investigations, conduct public oversight hearings, and implement appropriate legislative and regulatory reforms to improve electric reliability and accountability throughout New Jersey.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Municipal Clerk shall provide a certified copy of this Resolution to the New Jersey Property Taxpayers Coalition so that the Coalition may maintain a public record of municipalities supporting its effort and this statewide initiative and assist in communicating those actions to appropriate public officials.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that certified copies of this Resolution shall be transmitted to the Governor of the State of New Jersey; the President of the New Jersey Senate; the Speaker of the General Assembly; the President and Commissioners of the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities; the Director of the New Jersey Division of Rate Counsel; the New Jersey State Auditor; the chairs of the legislative committees having jurisdiction over energy and public utilities; each member of this municipality's legislative delegation; and such other public officials as the Municipal Clerk deems appropriate.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the governing body encourages municipalities and counties throughout the State of New Jersey to adopt similar resolutions in support of reliable electric service, transparent regulation, meaningful oversight, and accountability to New Jersey's residents and ratepayers.

CERTIFICATION

I, Donna M. Manno, Municipal Clerk of the Township of Barnegat, County of Ocean, State of New Jersey hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted by the Township Committee of said Township at their regular meeting held in the Municipal Complex, 900 West Bay Avenue, Barnegat, NJ on the 1st day of September, 2026

Donna M. Manno, RMC
Municipal Clerk