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Witness: Jared A. Lawrence and Shamus O'Brien
Request from: Office of Consumer Counsel

Question:

(CUSTOMER SERVICE) Please provide key insights from J.D. Power's external customer research on customer perceptions of Eversource and other utility providers. Based on the external research the Company subscribes to, how do customer perceptions of Eversource compare to perceptions of other utility providers across the country?

Response:

J.D. Power research shows that customer satisfaction and customer perceptions with the utility industry have declined since 2020. Industry satisfaction peaked in 2020 and has declined since, with affordability emerging as a key driver. Other influencing factors include storms and wildfires that can cause widespread outages. Within the East Large region, the region in which the Company operates, Eversource has experienced the same decline in satisfaction. The East Large region provides the most relevant comparison for the Company because many of the utilities in this region operate in a deregulated market, experience similar peak seasonality and similar state energy policies.

The Company's Connecticut subsidiary has experienced a bit more of a decline in satisfaction versus the industry for two key reasons. Connecticut is a deregulated market and therefore does not own generation. Energy supply costs are passed through to customers and outside of the Company's control. Supply costs are adjusted twice a year during peak usage seasons. Therefore, Connecticut customers are hearing about rate adjustments more frequently than many utility customers across the industry. Global events and broader energy market conditions have contributed to higher supply cost adjustments over the past several years. Although these supply costs are separately shown on the bill, customers often view the total bill as being within the Company's control. Similarly, significant adjustments to the line items within the Public Benefits section of the bill in this time period have contributed to the decline in satisfaction.

The second key reason is due to the amount of media coverage, adversarial approach and comments by elected and appointed officials that keep the Company at the forefront of public discussion. J.D. Power is primarily measuring customer perception of utilities. The Company's efforts to change that perception are often overshadowed by the political rhetoric and negative media. The J.D. Power research reflects these perceptions, although not an indication of the Company's performance in delivering safe, reliable energy to its customers.

More specifically, between 2020 and 2025, Eversource Connecticut was among the utilities with the highest levels of perceived negative media recall among approximately 200 named or subsidiary utilities in the study, contributing to a more negative perception of the Company in Connecticut than in its other operating states. In Massachusetts and New Hampshire, where the relatively more negative environment was not present, the Company has consistently experienced higher satisfaction scores, lower negative media recall and more positive perceptions of the company, although customer views on energy affordability influence those satisfaction levels, as well.

To date in 2026, customer satisfaction and the perception of the Company is trending 4% higher while the industry remains stable when compared to the same period in 2025.