Date Filed: September 24, 2026

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

Question:

(CUSTOMER SERVICE) What notable patterns in customer perceptions of Eversource have been identified, based on the Company's own customer perception surveys and insights gained from external research? How has customer perception of Eversource changed in the past 6 years? What potential reasons have been identified for customer views changing or remaining constant?

Response:

The Company's customer perception surveys align with external research studies and the response to OCC-606[i]. Perception surveys completed by the Company have followed the J.D. Power industry and East Large region trends with satisfaction declining over the past six years as affordability, bill impacts and storm events have increasingly influenced customer sentiment to the negative.

As shared in OCC-606, these broader issues have been compounded by a challenging media and stakeholder environment, including public comments by appointed and elected officials regarding rates and Company performance. Internal surveys show customer media recall and specifically negative media recall having a significant correlation with satisfaction trends. Additionally, events such as Tropical Storm Isaias in 2020, the significant increase to supply costs in 2023, and the Rate Adjustment Mechanism in 2024 have had an impact on customer perceptions and contributed to the overall decline in customer satisfaction. Each event subsequent to Isaias was accompanied by a sharp decline in satisfaction, essentially resetting progress in improving customers' views towards the Company. Even if customers recognized that certain bill components, such as supply costs, were outside the Company's control, customers view the total bill as a measure of their energy costs. Therefore, affordability, significant outage events and the broader public and media narrative surrounding the Company can influence perception of the Company even when the underlying drivers are not wholly controlled by the Company.

Over the past year and similar to J.D. Power research, the Company is seeing a positive uptick in customer satisfaction scores within its perception surveys. This aligns with a more collaborative stakeholder relationship in the state.

Prior Referenced Response:

[i] OCC-606 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?

OCC-606 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.