

**From:** Fisher, Kristin

**Sent:** Friday, February 04, 2011 11:58 AM

**To:** Fisher, Kristin

**Cc:** Woody Woodroof; Allen Belt; Anne Davies; Chuck Schuster; Craig Ruppert; Fistere Dan (honeyacresfarm@hughes.net); David Scott, Jr.; David Weitzer; Doug Tregoning; Eric Spates; Frank Jamison; Fred Lechlida (robin@sunnyridgefarm.net); Gene Walker; George Lechlida; Jamie Jamison; Jane Evans; Jane Hunter; Jane Seigler; JG Warfield; Jim Clifford; John Fritzges; Keith Patton; Linda Lewis; Lois Stoner; Lonnie Luther (Lonnie.Luther@gmail.com); Martin Svrcek; Michael Sutherland; Pam Saul; Phillips Jean (phllpsfarm@aol.com); Beall Robert (robertbeall@verizon.net); Robert Butts; Robert Butz; Robert Raver; Robert Stabler; Roy Stanley; Teddy Butz; tigersma@verizon.net; Linthicum Tom (senecaayrtom@aol.com); Vince Berg; Wade Butler; William Willard; Wayne Warfield; Al Espinosa; Ann F. Brown; Avian Mead Organics; Ben Allnutt; Bill Lermond; Bob LaPorta; Bruce Connelly; Bruce Connelly; Callum Murray; Carol Rae Hausen; Carole Dell; Caroline Taylor; Celeste McGee; Charles Andres; Cherie Paisley; Chip Smallwood; Chris Holmgren; Chrissy Keys Heard; Daphne Boogard; David Heisler; Plummer, David C.; Diana Patton; Dick Thoms; Donald Whitmeyer; Eddie Kuhlman; Edward Irons; G. Steven Feys; Glen & Sue Cook; Greg Stone; Henry Hamm; J. Kelly Lewis; James and Barbara Lessig; Jane Kinzie; Jay Cinque; Jeremy Butz; Criss, Jeremy; Jim O'Connell; Joan Hobbs; Joanne Leatherman; John Fendrick; John Hughes; Zawitoski, John; Kevin Sullivan; Laurie Savage; Lee Langstaff; Lee Leak; Lori Larson; Margaret Coleman; Mark Israel; Mike White; Nancy Aldous; Nick Maravell; Paige Dunn; Patrick Brown; Paul Schoff; Randy Stabler; Ray Lewandowski; Rebecca Roach; Rick Terselic; Robert & Kathy Taylor; Robert Hilton; Robert Jamison; Sarah Chaney; Sharon Lofgren; Sheri Thornley; Stan Fisher; Stephanie Scuderi; Sugarloaf Mountain Vineyard; Susan Butler; Susan Butler; Thim Duvall & Nancy Kelso; Tim McGrath; Timothy Hunt; Victor and Patty Loun; Wade Pryor

**Subject:** Pepco Survey due Monday Feb 7th!

**Importance:** High

County Executive Isiah Leggett is soliciting your input concerning the continuing problem the County is facing with Pepco involving power outages. This is another opportunity to voice your opinions about tree trimming and power supply problems in Montgomery County. As Montgomery County Farmers living in the most rural areas of the County, you are probably the most knowledgeable and understanding of this ongoing issue. As each year passes and we experience an increasing frequency of storms, the incidences of extended power outages continues to rise. In response to this most recent incident, we have assembled a few bullets of themes and objectives that have been expressed to be critically important, not only to the agricultural community but every resident of the County.

#### Themes and Objectives

- Reliable electric service is critical to Montgomery County farmers and suburban and urban residents.
- The need for tree trimming along rights-of-way in Montgomery County is not a new issue

- February 9, 2009: The Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC), the Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board (APAB), and the Rustic Roads Advisory Committee (RRAC) submitted a joint letter to the County Council and the County Executive requesting that funding be set aside to regularly monitor and trim trees along roadways in Montgomery County. Due to the economic down-turn, this has not materialized.
- Montgomery County government, residents, and power supply companies such as Pepco are all players in the effort to keep power lines free of trees and branches that become problematic during extreme weather events and result in downed lines and service interruptions.
- Trees provide many benefits to improve the quality of life for residents, but they must be planted in a way that promotes safe, healthy, and sustainable communities
- A comprehensive plan to address tree trimming and troubles associated with downed lines and power outages must be developed.

Please participate in the online survey (link below) to encourage policy change in Montgomery County related to power supply reliability!

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PEPCOBUSINESS>

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PEPCORESIDENTIAL>

To assist you in completing the Survey, we have attached a listing of recommendations that have been raised previously by the agricultural community and should be considered once again:

- When utility company contractors are scheduled to trim trees in a given area, the appropriate county and state government representatives should be informed so that decisions can be made to perhaps remove a tree altogether versus trimming it back in accordance with the limited disturbance and limited authority that utility companies have.
- Coordinate the efforts of DOT contractors and utility companies to trim or remove trees along roadways in a manner which maintains the necessary clearance for utility lines without compromising movement of vehicles along the road.
- Provide additional training for utility companies so that trimming practices intending to maintain vertical clearance for power lines does not result in compensatory tree growth horizontally into the roadway itself.
- Coordinate tree trimming services offered by the DOT with clearing and grubbing services offered by regional Depot facilities to reduce the need for repeated minor trimming events on County roads. We need to evaluate the County's tree trimming policy which consists of repeatedly trimming the trees versus cutting the whole tree down and therefore more cost

effective in the long run.

- Finalize design guidelines for tree trimming by DOT in rural areas which takes into account the proximity of farming operations along specific stretches of roads and the height and width requirements needed for the passage of farm machinery. These design guidelines should be consistent with the Depot policies for clearing and grubbing as well as the Rustic Roads Executive Regulations.
- Secure landowner permissions to trim trees along stretches of rural roads where no County right-of-way exists. Alternatively, legislation could be introduced to authorize the County a right of entry along all prescriptive and non-dedicated roads in the County for a minimum of 10 feet from edge of payment. This area for right of entry would be used exclusively for road safety improvements drainage and for tree trimming purpose.
- The County needs to secure the support of other organizations that are experiencing accidents involving over grown trees on the rural roads. These organizations include: Fire and Rescue, and the Montgomery County Public Schools.

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Department of  
Economic Development

February 1, 2011

## ***e-Alert***

### **POWER to the People: Montgomery County's Resounding Plea to Pepco!**

Last week's most recent round of 3-6 day power outages at the hands of Pepco was likely the breaking point for many of the 100,000-plus Pepco customers throughout Montgomery County that were forced to suffer - YET AGAIN - for days in cold, dark, and powerless homes.

**You, as a Montgomery County resident, business-owner or both, STILL have a chance to share your power outage plight with Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett by completing one or both online surveys below, now being accepted through Monday, February 7th!**

The feedback you provide - on Pepco's service, the extent to which you have experienced outages, the economic impact of those outages and what, if any, additional costs you would be willing to incur in exchange for substantial service improvements - will help form the recommendations of the Pepco Work Group. The Group is comprised of community leaders appointed by Leggett to investigate the reliability of Pepco's service in Montgomery County and formulate concrete steps necessary to improve that service. Leggett will share the Work Group's final recommendations with Governor O'Malley, Pepco and the Maryland Public Service Commission (Pepco's regulatory authority).

So, if you were affected by power outages from last February's blizzard, last summer's storms in July and August, last week's winter storm - or all of the preceding, we **WANT** and **NEED** to hear from you! Please complete the appropriate survey below - one is for residential customers and one is for business customers. Please complete both if you live and own a business in Montgomery County:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PEPCOBUSINESS>

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PEPCORESIDENTIAL>

Montgomery County Executive Leggett and I remain committed to providing the best possible environment for County businesses to thrive. We understand that businesses need to spend time focused on their bottom line, not time worrying about the line and track of the next weather system headed our way and whether that will mean hours or days of lost power, time and money.

Sincerely,



Steve Silverman,  
Director

Montgomery County Department of Economic Development  
111 Rockville Pike, Suite 800 | Rockville, MD 20850 | 240-777-2000  
This email was sent to: [jeremy.criss@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:jeremy.criss@montgomerycountymd.gov)  
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