



Orange and Rockland Utilities, Inc.
One Blue Hill Plaza
Pearl River NY 10965
www.oru.com

March 2, 2020

Hon. Michele Dale, Mayor
Township of West Milford
1480 Union Valley Road
West Milford, NJ 07480

Dear Mayor Dale,

At Rockland Electric Co. (RECO) we are working hard to maintain our electric transmission lines.

Soon, we will be conducting vegetation management work in the **Township of West Milford** and I want to keep you informed of our planned activities.

During this maintenance cycle, RECO will be adhering to the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities N.J.A.C. 14:59 Vegetation Management requirements to remove any incompatible species from within their transmission rights-of-way. Incompatible is defined as any trees or vegetation located within the rights-of-way that could grow up into the transmission lines or any trees on the rights-of-way that have the potential to fall and contact the transmission lines. Any trees located off of the rights-of-way whose branches are growing into the rights-of-way must be trimmed back to the edge of the rights-of-way. Please find attached the PDF files of our Vegetation Management door hanger and Frequently Asked Questions brochure that are provided to our customers. Residents directly affected by this work will be contacted to be apprised of the maintenance program.

In certain locations along our rights-of-way, this work may be more thorough than our past practices. To facilitate communication between RECO and our customers, RECO's contractor personnel will be meeting with residents along the rights-of-way to explain the full scope of the project prior to commencing work.

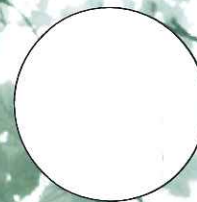
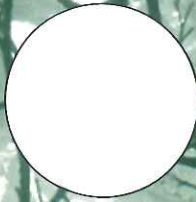
We want you to know our current schedule for transmission line tree maintenance. Beginning on or about **April 1, 2020**, and continuing for approximately three (3) weeks, JAFLO Inc., under RECO's supervision, will perform tree trimming and removal work along the following streets – **Burnt Meadow Road, Airport Road, Industrial Road, Lycosky Road, and Edgar Drive.**

We will, of course, notify you immediately if this schedule changes or if further distribution line clearance work is necessary. If you have any questions, or if I can be of assistance, please call me at 845-344-8882.

Sincerely,

Michael M. Grant
Manager – Regional and Community Affairs

cc: Bill Senande, Township Administrator/Municipal Clerk
James DeVore, Chief of Police



Lewis Tree Service contact information:

O&R contact information:

Comments:

Important Notification

Tree Removal Along Transmission Rights-of-Way

Date: _____

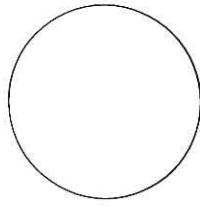
Dear Customer:

The largest blackout in North American history occurred in August 2003. It affected nearly 50 million people in eight states in the eastern United States and Canada. Outage-related financial losses were estimated at \$6 billion. The cause was a tree limb that came in contact with a transmission line.

Since then, state and federal regulatory agencies have developed stricter requirements for the management of vegetation on right-of-way land below and alongside high voltage transmission lines. The illustrations inside compare typical vegetation management practices before the Blackout of 2003 and the more comprehensive current ones along transmission rights-of-way.

Because the mandated guidelines are more comprehensive and extensive than what O&R had previously employed, we are notifying you of tree work or vegetation removal that must be done on your property. Additionally, because we want you to fully understand the scope of work that's required, our arborist will be available to meet with you at your request to discuss this matter in greater detail.

We would appreciate your completing the back of this form as acknowledgment that you're aware of the new tree maintenance guidelines. Please sign and hang this portion on your doorknob within 24 hours of this notice.



Address where right-of-way maintenance is required:

Right-of-way maintenance requirements:

- Removal of non-compatible vegetation in the right-of-way border zone.
- Removal of non-compatible vegetation in the right-of-way wire zone.
- Trimming of trees along the edge of the right-of-way.

Please check one and sign:

I have reviewed this information:

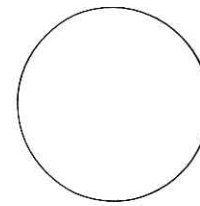
Name: _____
 Signature: _____
 Date: _____

I have reviewed this information and would like to be contacted before any tree work is started:

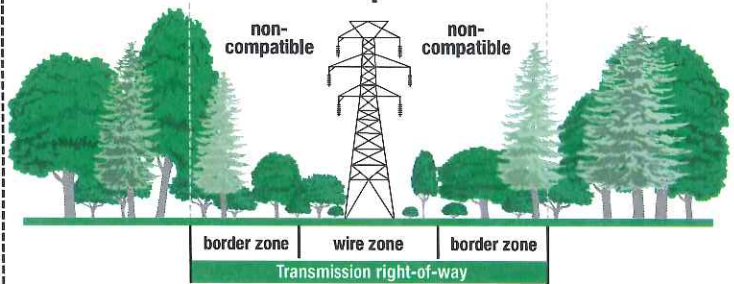
Name: _____
 Signature: _____
 Date: _____
 Daytime Phone: _____
 Evening Phone: _____
 Cell Phone: _____
 Comments: _____

I do not own the property. The owner is:

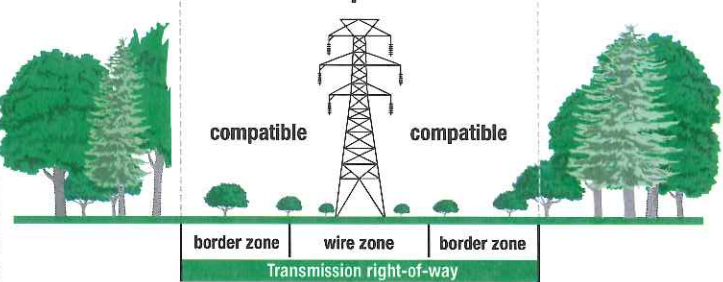
Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Phone: _____



Previous practices



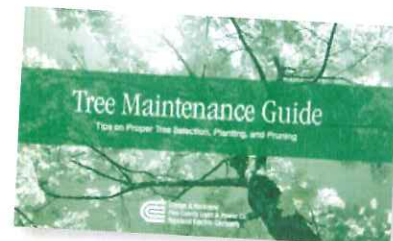
Current practices



Why have O&R's tree trimming practices changed?

O&R developed and implemented its vegetation management program to comply with state regulations which require that electric utilities remove any incompatible species within transmission rights-of-way. Incompatible is defined as any trees or vegetation located within the rights-of-way that could grow into the transmission lines or any trees on the rights-of-way that have the potential to fall and contact the transmission lines. In many cases, trees located off the right-of-way but whose branches are growing into the right-of-way will be trimmed back to the edge of the right-of-way.

For more information on compatible and incompatible tree species and tips on proper tree selection, planting and pruning, please refer to O&R's Tree Maintenance Guide which can also be accessed online at www.oru.com/treeguide.



Please detach this side of the form and retain for future reference.

Important:

Please complete the form above and sign.
 Detach and hang this portion on your doorknob
 within 24 hours of this notice.

Transmission Right-of-Way Management

Frequently Asked Questions – Municipal Officials

Why are you cutting down trees and removing vegetation in the Right-of-Way (ROW)?

Tree contact with power lines is the single leading cause of power outages on our system. Tree contact with a transmission line may impact literally thousands of electric customers. That's why we do everything we can to strike a healthy balance between our appreciation for trees and our obligation to provide safe, reliable electric service.

How often does O&R conduct its vegetation management work?

One complete ROW maintenance cycle takes about four years to complete. Therefore, roughly every four years, you'll see our contractor trimming and removing trees along the rights of way.

Has the program changed from past practices?

Since the blackout of 2003, which was caused by several trees that had grown close enough to a transmission line to cause a flashover and the initial line outage, state and federal regulatory agencies have developed stricter requirements for the management of vegetation on right-of-way land below and alongside high voltage transmission lines.

To comply with new regulations, O&R has developed a comprehensive vegetation management program that meets those requirements, and, at the same time, strikes a "neighbor-friendly" balance between aesthetics and service reliability.

O&R does not "clear cut" the ROW and in fact encourages compatible species to thrive there.

Do any regulatory agencies monitor O&R's vegetation management program?

Yes. As outlined in PSC Case 04-E-0822, issued in June 2005, O&R was required to submit a transmission ROW vegetation management plan to the New York State Public Service Commission. This plan was approved in 2007 and has been successfully implemented over the past three years. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) also oversees that utilities throughout the country maintain reliability through effective vegetation management practices. FERC has designated the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) as the Electric Reliability Organization responsible for enforcing the Transmission Vegetation Management Program Standard, FAC-003-1. Serious violations of this standard can result in sanctions up to \$1,000,000 per day for each requirement violated. Instances where utilities have been sanctioned for various violations of this standard can be found on the NERC website (www.nerc.com).

What are the regulatory requirements for ROW vegetation management?

O&R files a Transmission Vegetation Management Plan (TVMP) with each of its regulatory agencies in accordance with their specific requirements.

New York Regulatory Requirements

New York State Public Service Commission Order 04-E-0822 directs all New York transmission operators to remove all undesirable (non-compatible) vegetation species rooted within the transmission rights-of-way (ROW) to ground-level, including non-compatible vegetation buffers. Undesirable species are those species whose mature heights will encroach into the wire security zone.

New Jersey Regulatory Requirements

New Jersey Board of Public Utilities N.J.A.C. 14:5-9 - Vegetation management standard directs New Jersey utilities under 14:5-9.6 that a public utility shall not allow any vegetation that grows taller than 15 feet at maturity to grow anywhere within a transmission line right-of-way, and that the electric public utility shall not allow woody plants that naturally mature above three feet tall to grow in the wire zone (the area of the ROW floor directly under the transmission conductors).

Private property owners and municipal agencies should be aware of these requirements when planning any plantings near transmission ROWs.

Does O&R notify residents before starting vegetation management work?

Yes. O&R contractors hand out notification materials to residents living adjacent to or near transmission right-of-way up to two weeks before work begins. In 2010, revised notification cards are being designed to include a more specific work scope and additional background information. Depending upon where you live, O&R will also notify the applicable contacts in your municipality (e.g., Supervisor, Mayor, Administrator, Department of Public Works, Highway Department, etc.). An O&R contact phone number and company website information are included on each notification card

What is a right-of-way (ROW)?

A right-of-way is defined as a legal right of passage over another person's ground or the land used or owned by a public utility. The ROW agreements are attached to and recorded with the deed. The ROW spells out O&R's rights and in most instances permits the removal of any and all trees, shrubs, bushes or other impediments.

If requested, O&R will provide property owners with a copy of the legally valid right of way agreement.

Does O&R survey the property to determine the limits of the ROW/Easement before trimming or removing trees?

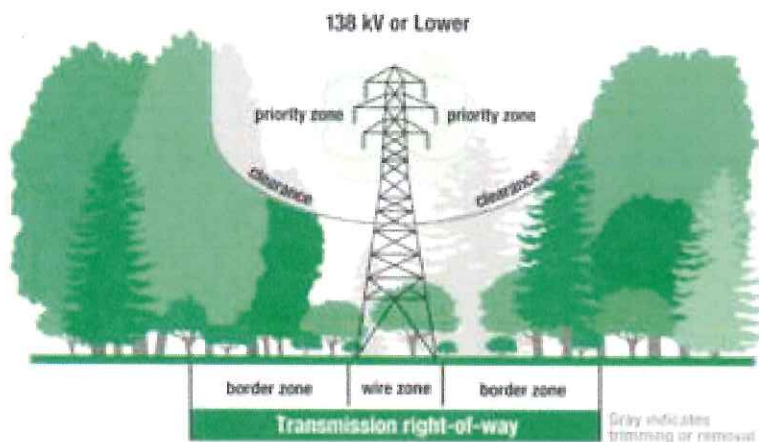
No. However, O&R or its contractor will delineate the border of the ROW by placing ribbons along the edge by measuring the distance from the structures in conformance to the ROW document.

How much of the ROW easement will be cleared under the O&R Transmission Vegetation Management Plan (TVMP)?

While rights of way may vary in width and topography, O&R's TVMP seeks to remove undesirable species from the entire length and width of the ROW.

What flexibility, if any, does O&R have? What is the O&R modified plan?

For transmission rights-of-way that traverse residential areas, O&R's plan provides the flexibility to permit trees to remain in the rights-of-way as long as they do not interfere, or have the growth potential to interfere, with the safe operation of the electric transmission system in the future, as shown below.



O&R will remove only those tall-growing species that are directly underneath the transmission lines (rooted in the wire zone) or have grown within close proximity to the wires (encroach into the priority zone).

All other healthy tall-growing species in the border zones of the right-of-way will be removed only if property owners have agreed to have them removed. Otherwise, the vegetation will be left alone or trimmed back to a specified clearance to eliminate the possibility of contact with the transmission lines.

Why does O&R remove small trees that may never grow tall enough to make contact with or fall in close proximity to transmission lines?

O&R removes undesirable vegetation from the ROW regardless of height. Undesirable vegetation is defined as woody plants with one or more trunks which can grow or fall within an unsafe distance of a transmission line. Certain tree species on our ROWs can grow up to ten feet per year and have the potential to negatively impact the transmission lines in a very short time. Trees do not have to make physical contact with a transmission line to cause a spark-over, so any tree that could grow to reach an unsafe distance from the lines is removed. The goal is not to remove every tree on the ROW regardless of species. In many areas of Westchester County, however, only undesirable vegetation may exist on the ROW and, when it is all removed, the result is an area barren of the large hardwood trees that were once there. There are specific areas of the overhead transmission system where compatible trees do exist and O&R's goal of achieving a meadow-like landscape consisting of low growing trees, shrubs and grasses is achieved. Trees may appear to be very far from the lines from one perspective, but in actuality, may not be as far away from the lines as you think. Tree clearances must be viewed from at least two or three different positions on the ROW before confirming that no hazard exists for the transmission line. O&R transmission line maintenance staff also measures tree clearance and fall-over risks with sophisticated laser surveying devices.

Does O&R apply herbicides to the ROW?

Yes. O&R applies a low volume foliar herbicide on select vegetation on the ROW and also applies a small herbicide treatment to tree stumps soon after cutting. Only chemicals approved by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) are used and applied by properly certified pesticide applicators. Herbicide application is an effective means for controlling undesirable vegetation and is recognized as a critical component of O&R's Integrated Vegetation Management strategy. This strategy is used by many utilities throughout the United States.

Now that the trees have been cut down, will there be soil erosion and flooding non adjacent properties?

Removing trees from the ROW alone does not cause flooding or soil erosion. Water flow, or run-off, is based largely on existing site topography and soil permeability. O&R's ROW vegetation management practices do not alter either of these conditions. O&R does recognize that root systems absorb water trapped within the soil to allow photosynthesis to occur. However, tree roots mainly absorb water trapped within the soil, not on the surface, and do not absorb greater quantities of water during rain events. Excess water received during rain events will continue to be trapped in the soil and filtered to groundwater at the soil rate. Once the soil is saturated, runoff will be determined by site topography.

Regarding soil erosion, any soil exposed during tree clearing activities is managed in accordance with the NY State Standards and Specifications for Erosion and Sediment Control. Common erosion control techniques include proper installation of various sediment barriers and re-seeding. All sediment controls are installed prior to land disturbance, routinely inspected throughout the duration of the clearing activities, and left in place until permanent vegetation has re-established on-site. In order to facilitate the re-establishment of vegetation all bare soil areas are re-seed utilizing a native seed mix and covered with mulch.

Will O&R be planting new trees in their ROW to replace the ones that were removed?

O&R has been working with individual homeowners on a case-by-case basis to replant compatible vegetation on their private property in exchange for permission to remove private trees that have the potential to threaten the transmission lines. O&R does not replant trees on the ROW since native shrubs and woody plants typically grow very aggressively during the summer months and would consume the new vegetation. Constant maintenance would be required for these new plantings as they adjust to the new soil conditions and, since O&R maintains over 600 miles of ROW, this would not be practical. O&R will spread native seed mixes, where needed, to promote stable, low-growing, transmission line compatible plant communities that are beneficial to wildlife and ecology.

Why do you use a tree contractor to trim the trees in your service territory?

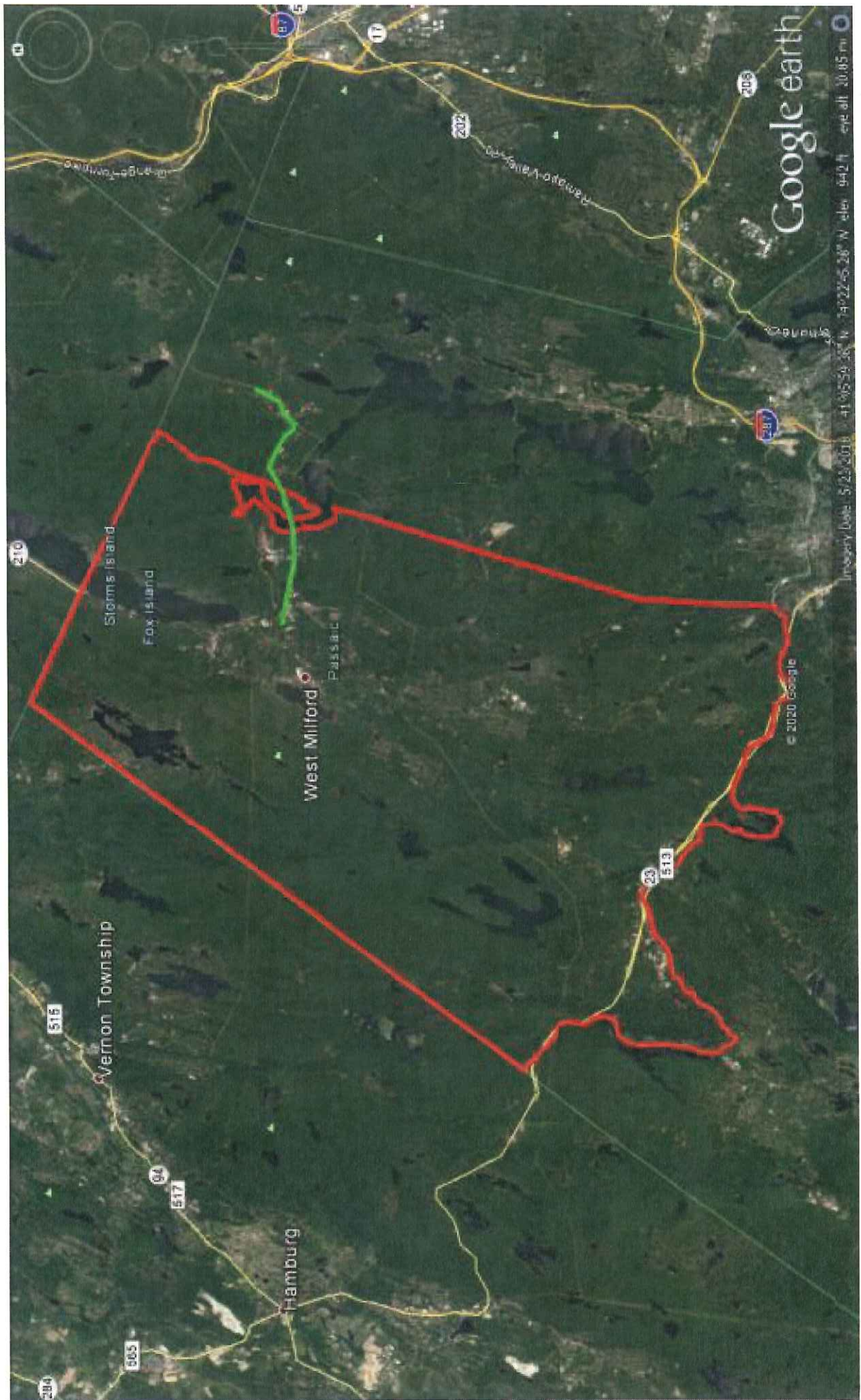
We hire tree contractors because they have superior knowledge and experience in directional pruning methods. Our contractors use the latest technology and have the know-how when it comes to implementing the healthiest way to achieve line clearance.

Who's responsible for removal of tree debris during ROW maintenance?

Our contractor will remove only the debris that results from their tree trimming. They also chip the debris and, on occasion, may cut larger limbs and trunks into manageable sizes and leave them behind as firewood if the property owner wishes. However, they will not remove tree stumps.

Who's responsible for damage resulting from the ROW management practices?

We are obligated to repair damage to the ROW and inadvertent damage outside the ROW. O&R or its contractor will implement complete the repairs within xxx business days, weather permitting, or by agreement with the property owner.



Google earth

Imagery Date: 5/25/2011 41°55'59.33" N, 74°22'55.23" W, Alt: 942 ft, Eye Alt: 30.05 mi

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Vernon Township

Hamburg

West Millford

Stigms Island

Fox Island

Passaic