

## **Family Of Essex County Mom Paralyzed By Falling Pole Gets \$125M Verizon Payout**

Valerie Musson 05/06/2020 3:12 p.m.

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Utility pole Photo Credit: *Wikimedia Arbitrarily0*

**In what is reportedly the largest settlement in New Jersey history, the family of an Essex County mom who was paralyzed by a falling utility pole will get \$125 million from Verizon, reports say.**

West Orange mom Maria Moser Meister, 50, was waiting for a bus on her way to work when a the pole fell in Union City on Jan. 23, 2017, [NJ.com reports](#).

The pole, which was co-owned by Verizon through an agreement with PSE&G, was rotted at the base and snapped after 43 years, causing lifelong injuries to Meister's body and head.

As a result of the incident, Meister suffered from multiple spinal and rib fractures as well as severe paralysis. She also has brain injuries, vision problems and limited function of her left arm, reports say.

Meister's family, including her husband, Peter, sued the utility companies as well as Altice USA, the report says. Verizon ultimately took responsibility for the pole's deteriorating condition, court records show.

The settlement includes a \$125 million payment from Verizon, a \$250,000 payment from PSE&G and a \$25,000 payment from Altice. It approved Monday by Essex County Superior Court Judge Stephen L. Petrillo.

Meister will also get \$118 million and Peter will receive \$7 million.

"Words cannot adequately express the remorse, sympathy and compassion that we have for Maria Meister and her family," said Verizon in a statement.

"Maria, her husband and children have been constantly on our minds since this happened and will continue to be in the years to come."

"While no amount of compensation can make up for what was lost, we hope the resolution of this case helps bring some measure of comfort and provides care for Maria and her family, now and in the future."

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