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John B. Rhodes, Chair

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**PSC Directs Utilities to Immediately Improve Communication and Coordination
with Municipal Officials During Storm Events
— Utilities Under Intense Regulatory Scrutiny After Back-to-Back Storms in March Left
590,000 Residences and Businesses in the Dark —**

ALBANY — The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission), as part of its investigation into the electric utilities' response to Winter Storms Riley and Quinn in early March, today directed the state's major electric utilities to immediately improve communications and coordination with municipal officials as part of the utilities' post-action reviews following the two storms. The failure on the part of some utilities to adequately communicate with municipalities during the storms was clearly one of the problems that appeared during the March storms. Other issues still being investigated include failure to adequately inform customers about estimated restoration times, poor customer communications in general, and the length of time to restore power overall.

"It is clear that some utilities' response and restoration efforts failed to meet the expectations of New Yorkers," **said Commission Chair John B. Rhodes.** "One of the most glaring examples of this were instances where some utilities failed to adequately keep municipal authorities informed about the restoration efforts. Storm response and restoration is a team effort, and the utilities need to remember that local elected officials are a critical part of the team."

On March 6, 2018, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo directed the Department of Public Service to conduct a full review of the utility companies and to examine the performance of the seven major electric utilities in New York — Con Edison, National Grid, NYSEG, RG&E, Orange & Rockland, Central Hudson, and PSEG LI.

The investigation includes an evaluation under the Public Service Commission's emergency response scorecard, a regulatory tool developed following Superstorm Sandy to gather data and assess utility performance. Utility filings of scorecard data were submitted April 12, 2018. Under Department rules, an emergency response performance assessment must also be completed by each company and filed by May 12, 2018. The public will have an opportunity to attend and participate in public statement hearings which will be held to provide input into the investigation, as well as comment on the companies' restoration efforts.

As part of the investigation, 20 public statement hearings will be held in nine counties to receive public comment regarding the preparedness and response to the March 2018 winter storms. If the Commission finds that a utility did not adhere to their approved emergency response plans, the utility's shareholders could face financial penalties.

A year ago, Governor Cuomo directed the Commission to investigate RG&E and NYSEG's performance regarding a March 2017 windstorm. In that investigation, the Commission found that the utilities failed to adhere to the approved plan; as a result, shareholders face millions of dollars in penalties.

In addition to directing utilities to improve communication efforts, the Commission approved the utilities' amended emergency response plans which were updated on April 10, 2018. The emergency response plans establish the steps to be taken in anticipation of an emergency event, defines roles and responsibilities of personnel for each activity, contains strategic contact information in the event the emergency response plan is activated, and sets forth communication protocols. Each electric utility is expected to carry out restoration efforts in compliance with its emergency response plan and include updates based on lessons learned during major events in its annual update.

Today's decision may be obtained by going to the Commission Documents section of the Commission's Web site at www.dps.ny.gov and entering Case Number 17-E-0758 in the input box labeled "Search for Case/Matter Number". Many libraries offer free Internet access. Commission documents may also be obtained from the Commission's Files Office, 14th floor, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223 (518-474-2500). If you have difficulty understanding English, please call us at 1-800-342-3377 for free language assistance services regarding this press release.