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GOVERNOR ANDREW M. CUOMO

## GOVERNOR CUOMO DIRECTS ACTIONS TO HELP CURTAIL STATE'S ENERGY USAGE

### *System-Wide Programs in Place to Reduce Demand for Electricity as Temperatures Climb; State Agencies Directed to Reduce Power Usage*

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today directed the New York State Department of Public Service, the state agency that regulates energy utilities, to take immediate steps to lower statewide energy usage due to weather predictions of high temperatures and humidity across New York State.

"The ongoing heat event is increasing electricity usage and placing additional demands on New York's power grid. As a result, we are taking action to conserve energy use when possible, and are encouraging New Yorkers to do the same," **Governor Cuomo said**. "As temperatures continue to climb across the state, it is important for everyone to take proper precautions to stay cool and act responsibly to beat the heat."

As a result of the high temperatures today, it is expected that the state's peak load will be 32,400 MWs, approaching the record set on July of 2013 of 33,955 MWs. One megawatt of electricity is enough to power between 800 and 1,000 average-sized homes. In summer, usage climbs each day during a heat wave causing the load to grow, peaking in the afternoon. When the electric system is stressed, it can result in localized brownouts, instances of low voltage or isolated outages.

To reduce demand, the state's electric utilities and the New York Independent System Operator have preparations in place to have industrial and commercial customers voluntarily reduce demand, if necessary. Meanwhile, Con Edison, the state's largest electricity utility, has used voltage reduction and demand response in some localized areas as a precautionary measure to reduce stress on equipment. Similarly, the New York Power Authority and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority announced they have also activated a program to reduce electricity use at designated MTA sites to offset demand. MTA service will not be affected.

Governor Cuomo also directed all agencies across the state to immediately lower their energy usage by turning off lights, raising air conditioning temperatures, closing window shades, and powering down unused computers, printers and other electrical devices. This step is expected to reduce demand by 60 MWs, or enough for 60,000 homes. Governor Cuomo strongly encouraged local public officials and municipalities to follow suit.

**Department of Public Service Chair Audrey Zibelman said**, "Given the prolonged heat wave we are experiencing, it's important for consumers to reduce their energy use

at this time. Equally important is for our residents to stay cool and stay hydrated as the hot and humid weather continues. Working together, we will be able to reduce unnecessary electricity usage during this heat wave and stay physically healthy.”

**Office of General Services Commissioner RoAnn Destito said,** “In response to the directive by Governor Cuomo, OGS is implementing its statewide energy reduction protocols in the buildings we own and manage. This includes reducing the use of non-essential lighting, reducing the use of air conditioning in common areas such as lobbies, slightly increasing building temperatures, shutting down selected escalators and turning off electrically powered displays.”

With temperatures forecast to reach 90 degrees through early next week across much of New York, the general public can also take action to lower demand. To reduce energy use, particularly during peak periods, consumers are encouraged to take some of the following low- or no-cost energy saving measures:

- Close drapes, windows and doors on your home's sunny side to reduce solar heat buildup.
- Turn off air conditioners, lights and other appliances when not at home and use a timer to turn on your air conditioner about a half-hour before arriving home. Use advanced power strips to centrally “turn off” all appliances and save energy.
- If purchasing an air conditioner, look for an ENERGY STAR qualified model. ENERGY STAR air conditioners use up to 25 percent less energy than a standard model.
- Fans can make rooms feel five to 10 degrees cooler and use 80 percent less energy than air conditioners.
- Set your air conditioner at 78 degrees or higher to save on your cooling costs.
- Place your air conditioner in a central window, rather than a corner window, to allow for better air movement.
- Consider placing the unit on the north, east or the best-shaded side of your home. Your air conditioner will have to work harder and use more energy if it is exposed to direct sunlight.
- Seal spaces around the air conditioner with caulking to prevent cool air from escaping.
- Clean the cooling and condenser fans plus the coils to keep your air conditioner operating efficiently and check the filter every month and replace as needed.
- Use appliances such as washing machines, dryers, dishwashers and ovens early in the morning or late at night. This will also help reduce humidity and heat in the home.
- Use energy-efficient, ENERGY STAR qualified light bulbs instead of standard incandescent light bulbs, and you can use 75 percent less energy.
- Microwave food when possible. Microwaves use approximately 50 percent less energy than conventional ovens.
- Dry clothes on a clothes line. If using a clothes dryer, remember to clean the dryer's lint trap before every load.
- Be mindful of the different ways you're consuming water throughout your home. Instead of using 30 to 40 gallons of water to take a bath, install a low-flow showerhead, which uses less than 3 gallons a minute.

Additional tips on how to conserve energy can be found on the Department's and NYSERDA's websites at [www.DPS.state.ny.gov](http://www.DPS.state.ny.gov) and <http://www.nyserda.ny.gov/Residents-and-Homeowners/Sustainable-Living/Energy-Saving-Tips>.

Governor Cuomo also urged New Yorkers to take precautions against heat related illnesses and limit strenuous outdoor physical activity especially young children, those who exercise outdoors, those involved in vigorous outdoor work and those who have respiratory disease (such as asthma).

Excessive heat is the leading cause of preventable, weather-related deaths each year, particularly among the elderly. According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, heat causes more than 650 preventable deaths in the United States yearly. In most years, excessive heat causes more deaths than floods, lightning, tornadoes, and hurricanes combined. According to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and National Weather Service statistics, there have been more than 80 deaths directly attributable to heat in New York State since 2006.

To help New Yorkers stay safe during excessive heat the Governor offered the following tips:

#### **PEOPLE WHO SHOULD BE AWARE**

- Elderly persons and small children are mostly affected.
- Persons with weight or alcohol problems are very susceptible to heat reactions.
- Persons on certain medications or drugs.

#### **BE PREPARED**

- Slow down on strenuous activity and exercise, especially during the sun's peak hours of 11 A.M. to 4 P.M.
- Exercise should be done in the early morning between 4 A.M. and 7 A.M.
- Eat less protein and more fruits and vegetables. Protein produces and increases metabolic heat, which causes water loss. Eat small meals, but eat more often. Do not eat salty foods.
- Drink at least 2-4 glasses of water per hour during extreme heat, even if you do not feel thirsty. Avoid beverages containing alcohol or caffeine.
- If possible, stay out of the sun and stay in air conditioning. The sun heats the inner core of your body, resulting in dehydration. If air conditioning is not available, stay on the lowest floor, out of the sunshine, or go to a public building with air conditioning.
- If you must go outdoors, wear sunscreen with a high sun protector factor rating (at least SPF 15) and a hat to protect your face and head. When outdoors, wear loose-fitting, lightweight and light-colored clothing. Cover as much skin as possible to avoid sunburn and over-warming effects of sunlight on your body.
- Do not leave children, pets or those who require special care in a parked car or vehicle during periods of intense summer heat. Temperatures inside a closed vehicle can reach over 140 degrees Fahrenheit quickly. Exposure to such high temperatures can kill within a matter of minutes.
- Make an effort to check on your neighbors during a heat wave, especially if

they are elderly, have young children or have special needs.

- Make sure there is enough food and water for pets.

The State Department of Health created an online list of cooling centers, where people can cool down on days of extreme temperatures. A list of addresses and phone numbers for cooling centers shared by local health departments and emergency management offices in each region is available [here](#).

For more information on how to stay safe during periods of excessive heat, visit:

<http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/emergency/weather/hot>,

or <http://www.dhSES.ny.gov/oem/safety-info/publicsafety/heataware.cfm>.

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