



For Immediate Release: 12/10/2020

GOVERNOR ANDREW M. CUOMO

GOVERNOR CUOMO ANNOUNCES VIRTUAL PUBLIC FORUMS ON TROPICAL STORM ISAIAS UTILITY PERFORMANCE

Customers Can Issue Statements for Public Service Commission Proceedings Seeking Record Penalties against Utilities

Long Island Residents, Businesses, and Localities Will Also Have a Public Forum to Issue Statements Concerning Any Alleged Harm Resulting from PSEG-LI's Performance

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced that the Special Counsel for Ratepayer Protection at the New York State Department of Public Service will hold four virtual public forums in December and January to receive comments regarding potential damages and harm suffered by ratepayers as a result of electric service providers' performance in response to Tropical Storm Isaias.

"The response by utility companies to Tropical Storm Isaias was nothing short of unacceptable and New York is fully committed to doing everything we can to ensure this doesn't happen again," **Governor Cuomo said**. "If utility operations are mismanaged, the customers are the last people who should be forced to foot the bill -- we pay them for a service and clearly that service was not provided. These hearings play a critical role in helping hold these companies accountable and I encourage all New Yorkers who were impacted by their failures to take this opportunity to make their voice heard."

Following a comprehensive investigation at the direction of Governor Cuomo, the New York State Public Service Commission has completed its investigation into the apparent failure of New York's electric utilities to adequately prepare for and respond to Tropical Storm Isaias, which ravaged large swaths of New York State this summer. As a result of the investigation, the fastest ever conducted by New York's utility regulator, three of the state's largest utilities — Con Edison, Orange & Rockland (O&R) and Central Hudson — now face potential penalties totaling \$137.3 million, with Con Edison and O&R also facing potential license revocation. All three will now be required to explain why penalties should not be imposed by the PSC for such apparent violations of the laws, regulations and orders that are designed to ensure the safety and reliability of the electric system. PSEG LI was also the subject of the investigation, and numerous failures were identified by DPS. The Department recommended enforcement actions to the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA) Board of Trustees and LIPA has since [filed a claim](#) against the utility.

The alleged violations include, among other things, alleged failures to properly track the storm and secure adequate staffing to promptly restore power; properly communicate with, and receive complaints from the public; and properly ensure the safety of life support equipment customers. Separately, DPS and the Special Counsel have urged LIPA to similarly take appropriate action in connection with PSEG-LI's alleged failures to properly prepare for and respond to the storm.

The hearing schedule is as follows:

Central Hudson Customers

Thursday, December 17, 2020, at 4 p.m.

Orange and Rockland Customers

Tuesday, December 22, 2020, at 4 p.m.

Con Edison Customers

Tuesday, January 5, 2021, at 4 p.m.

PSEG-LI Customers

Tuesday, January 12, 2021, at 4 p.m.

The complete hearing notice with sign-in details may be obtained by going to the Department's Documents section of at www.dps.ny.gov and entering Case Number 20-E-0586 in the input box labeled "Search for Case/Matter Number."

Special Counsel Rory I. Lancman said, "Collectively, these utilities face record fines and sanctions for their alleged failures, including for the harm they are alleged to have caused residents, businesses, and local governments alike. The public's testimony will be heard, and it will become an important part of the official record of this proceeding."

On the afternoon of Aug. 4, 2020, Tropical Storm Isaias struck New York, bringing strong winds and heavy rain that impacted the Mid-Hudson Valley, New York City, and Long Island regions. Tropical Storm Isaias caused extensive damage to electric distribution infrastructure that, in turn, led to lengthy outages for a substantial number of New York utility customers. Peak outages in New York State due to the tropical storm reached approximately one million customers, and roughly 1.5 million New York customers experienced power outages during this event.

###