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John B. Howard, Interim Chair

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PSC Approves \$800 Million Investment to Maintain and Improve Reliability, Achieve Climate-Change Goals, Enhance Resiliency of NYC Transmission Grid

Projects Strongly Supported by Environmental Stakeholders

ALBANY — The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) today approved a request by Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc. (Con Edison) to recover the costs of three transmission projects: the Rainey to Corona Project, the Gowanus to Greenwood Project and the Goethals to Greenwood Project. These projects are known collectively as the Transmission Reliability and Clean Energy Projects, or TRACE projects.

“It is clear that New York State is in the middle of a fundamental change in the generation and delivery of electricity,” **said Commission Chair John B. Howard.** “Priority has shifted to ensuring renewable, clean sources are integrated into the grid while polluting sources are being phased out. Given this fact, it is expected that additions and modifications to the utilities’ transmission infrastructure will be needed to accommodate the cleaner sources of electricity while ensuring reliability. These are much-needed, welcomed changes that will improve all of our lives for the better.”

Work is expected to commence immediately, with the first project, known as Rainey, operational by start of summer 2023 and the Gowanus and Goethals projects operational by start of summer 2025. Given the fact that the projects will have climate benefits statewide, the allocation and sharing of these projects’ costs will be evaluated and considered in future Commission orders.

The TRACE projects are needed for reliability in 2023 and 2025 and to address deficiencies in two of Con Edison’s transmission load areas because of the retirement or unavailability of older, higher air polluting power plants that generate power when demand for electricity peaks.

Simple-cycle combustion turbines (known as peakers or peaking units) are used to meet peak electric demand during the summer, which is typically the worst air quality period. In 2019, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation adopted regulations requiring peakers comply with regulations limiting allowable nitrogen oxide (NOx) during the ozone season, and if they can’t comply, they need to be retired.

The Sierra Club, New York City Environmental Justice Alliance and UPROSE support Con Edison’s TRACE projects because the projects are designed to reduce pollutants in environmental justice communities and facilitate transition to a cleaner, lower-carbon electric grid.

The peaker plants being retired are as follows: the Con Edison 59th Street GT1 (17.1MW) and 74th Street GT units 1&2 (37MW) in Manhattan; Con Edison's Hudson Ave unit 5 (16.3MW) in Vinegar Hill, Brooklyn; the Helix Ravenswood units 1,10 & 11 (68.6MW) in Long Island City, Queens; the NRG Astoria GTs (240MW) in Astoria, Queens; and the NRG Arthur Kill GT1 unit (20MW) in Staten Island.

The retirement of downstate fossil fuel-fired peaking generation units without the addition of any new fossil-fueled power plants is itself a significant, first step towards achieving New York's clean energy future. This is because the peaking units are located in and near to environmental justice communities and facilitating their retirement will bring near-term air quality improvement to those communities on the worst air quality days. The TRACE projects will also open pathways for the delivery of upstate and offshore renewable generation to the State's largest concentration of population and demand for energy.