



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

Senator Murphy Calls ON PSC To Take Action Against NYSEG

TERRENCE MURPHY August 2, 2018

| ISSUE: **NYSEG, STORM RESPONSE, HUDSON VALLEY, STORMS, STORM RECOVERY**



Albany, NY - Last winter, the Hudson Valley was battered by a series of storms that left more than 100,000 people in the dark. Many residents were NYSEG customers who were powerless for a week or more. Since then, power has been knocked out multiple times with seemingly a gust of wind. Just recently, in parts of Somers, North Salem and Lewisboro, many NYSEG customers marked their tenth outage this year.

Senator Terrence Murphy has seen NYSEG fail its customers and says enough is enough. [In a recent letter to John Rhodes, Chair for the Public Service Commission \(PSC\) and Chief](#)

Executive Officer for the New York State Department of Public Service, Senator Murphy outlined the lack of faith NYSEG customers harbor for their utility company, indicating that drastic steps needed to be taken.

"It is clear NYSEG cannot deliver reliable power to its customers. Therefore, it is past time for your agency to reopen the franchise for this region to allow a capable power producer to take over," said Senator Murphy. "People do not want to see another meaningless investigation by the PSC, and they are tired of lip service and empty promises. It is the responsibility of NYSEG to keep the lights on, and it is the PSC's job to make sure they do it."

Senator Murphy added that if the PSC is unwilling to act on behalf of NYSEG's customers, then they should be informed - in writing - why the PSC is not holding NYSEG accountable.

Murphy's request is supported by an endless series of service interruptions, including:

- On October 29, 2017, the fifth anniversary of Superstorm Sandy, tropical storm Philippe tore through the Hudson Valley, producing high-speed winds, torrential rain, and hazardous flooding. NYSEG was ill prepared for the swath of destruction Philippe left behind, including extended power outages and downed live power lines that blocked roads and driveways for several days.
- On March 2, 2018, Winter Storm Riley walloped many areas in New York with over a foot of snow. The storm also caused extensive flooding and generated winds that topped out at nearly sixty miles per hour. The winds uprooted trees and snapped power lines, leaving thousands without power. Repair crews were late to respond and many customers were given inaccurate and unrealistic restoration times, remaining powerless for days instead of hours.
- On March 7, 2018, the region was subjected to a second winter storm, Quinn, which produced blizzard-like conditions and knocked out power for more than a hundred

thousand additional customers. Once again, NYSEG kept customers in the dark about when the power would be restored. Customers were still without power from Riley.

In response to residents' many questions, and in his capacity as Chairman of the New York State Senate's Committee on Investigations and Government Operations, Senator Terrence Murphy hosted a hearing in Albany and a second in Somers to explore preparedness for Riley and Quinn, as well as steps that could be taken to ensure this sort of situation never occurs again by utility companies and state agencies.

In addition, Senator Murphy authored and passed S.7262A which would reform how utility companies respond to storm and power outages. Enhanced vegetation management, including the employment of an arborist, as well as a full review by the PSC of reimbursement policies are also included. Furthermore, the legislation directs the PSC to study whether NYSEG's storm restoration efforts were impeded by its noncontiguous service territory. The legislation passed the Senate but was never taken up by the Assembly.

"My office continues to work with dozens of constituents who have sought reimbursements from NYSEG for their losses from this year's storms and have yet to receive an adequate response," said Senator Murphy. "How much more do we have to go through? Residents and our partners in government are at the end of their rope and understandably so. If NYSEG cannot provide safe and reliable power then the PSC must find someone who can."