



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senator Martins' Legislation to Improve Public Service Commission's Oversight Signed Into Law

JACK M. MARTINS December 20, 2013

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Residents will have the ability to file complaints about utility companies online

When Superstorm Sandy hit the Long Island region in October 2012, many residents and businesses were without power for weeks, some for over a month. The lack of information provided by LIPA concerning when power would be restored frustrated an extremely difficult situation as many felt they had nowhere to turn.

New York State Senate Jack M. Martins fielded numerous calls in his district office and then went to work on a bill (S.4925) that allows residents and business owners to make complaints to the New York Public Service Commission (PSC), which provides oversight of New York's utility companies. Governor Andrew M. Cuomo recognized the necessity of Senator Martins' legislation by signing it into law.

"I think we can all agree that LIPA was a colossal failure after Superstorm Sandy. We pay some of the highest rates in the country and there is no reason that we should, literally, be left in the dark when the next storm hits," Senator Martins said. "This new law would allow us to file complaints regarding gas or electric service with the Public Service Commission so that the commission can provide the necessary oversight, ensuring that we receive the best

service possible during the times when we need it the most.”

Under the new law, customers of gas and electric companies would be able to file a complaint online directly with the PSC, streamlining the complaint process, and thus improving the effectiveness of PSC by ensuring that complaint procedures will be easy accessible on the PSC’s website.

The law requires the PSC to post a complaint form along with instructions on its website to give consumers easy access and a means by which to communicate their concerns about a utility company.

The legislation came as a result of bipartisan cooperation as Senator Martins worked together with Assemblyman David Buchwald (D-Westchester) to pass the bill. “I am very pleased for New York families that Governor Cuomo signed this important legislation,” said Assemblyman Buchwald said. “This legislation will help cut down on the length of service disruptions and better prepare us for future disasters. I want to thank Senator Martins for working alongside me to help this bill become law.”