



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

Details Set for Senate Hearing on Storm Response & Preparedness

TERRENCE MURPHY March 16, 2018

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Albany, NY - For residents of the Hudson Valley, the storm-related terms "bombogenesis" and "bomb cyclone" will forever be associated with misery. On March 2, 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. On March 7, 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. Together, the two storms caused more outages in Westchester than Hurricane Irene did in August 2011, with more than 160,000 Con Edison and NYSEG customers in the Hudson Valley left in the dark.

Now with the storms behind us, some residents have sought restitution, but most want answers as to why it took the two utility companies so long to respond to the widespread outages and get repairs crews out on the road.

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 will host a hearing to explore preparedness for the storm, and steps that can be taken to ensure this sort of situation never occurs again by utility companies and state agencies. Senator Joseph Griffo, Chairman of the New York State Senate Committee on Energy, and Senator Sue Serino, Chairwoman of the New York State Senate Committee on Aging, will co-host the hearing. The hearing will be held on Thursday, March 22 at 6:30 p.m. in the auditorium of John F. Kennedy High School, 54 Route 138 in Somers.

"We do not often see storms of this magnitude, but they should not have caught the utility companies by surprise. Their customers pay some of the highest electric rates in the country - they deserve better service," said Senator Murphy. "Roads were impassable due to fallen trees and wires; supermarkets and delicatessens had to throw out refrigerators full of food that represented a month's worth of profits, and seniors and families waited in the dark for a week or more for the lights to come on. The slow and inadequate response to a potentially life-threatening situation was wholly inadequate and we need to find out why."

Senator Griffo said, "During weather-related emergencies, we expect and require electric and gas companies to be adequately prepared and ready to assist with recovery efforts. It is imperative that we do our part to look into what happened and why it took so long for crews to respond so that similar occurrences do not happen again anywhere else in the state."

"While no one can predict the way storms like this will impact our community, I saw the devastation first-hand and heard horror story after horror story from residents who experienced hardship far beyond what should be considered reasonable," said Senator Sue Serino. "Residents of the Hudson Valley deserve answers and it's important that we get a clear understanding of what can be improved upon to ensure that our communities get back up and running when something like this happens."

Local elected officials whose towns and municipalities were affected by the storms have been invited to testify, including Somers Town Supervisor Rick Morrissey, Mt. Pleasant Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi and New Castle Supervisor Rob Greenstein. Westchester County Executive George Latimer and Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell have also been invited to comment on how the storms affected their residents, and representatives from businesses in the Hudson Valley will testify concerning the storms effect on their financial survival. Executives from Con Edison, NYSEG and Central Hudson have also been invited in the hope they will shed some light on their actions -or inaction - during the storms. Additionally, Chairman of New York State's Public Service Commission, John Rhodes, has also been asked to testify about the State's actions in advance of, during and after the storms.

The public is invited to attend. Oral testimony is by invitation only. Written testimony can be submitted to John Winton at winton@nysenate.gov . For more information, contact Senator Murphy's District Office at 914-962-2624.