



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

Senator Murphy Takes Charge, Moves Utility Reform Bill Through Senate Energy Committee

TERRENCE MURPHY May 18, 2018

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Albany, NY - Public utilities may soon be held accountable in New York and subject to minimum benchmarks for their emergency plans. On Wednesday, The State Senate's Standing Committee on Energy and Telecommunications met to review and approved legislation proposed by Hudson Valley Senator Terrence Murphy, who joined the committee to provide detailed information on the legislation he authored, S.7262.

Among its provisions the bill sets benchmarks that public utility companies must meet in order to provide accurate estimates for restoration times, communicate with the general public and elected officials and create policies to adequately review reimbursement policies for customers who suffer damages due to a power loss incident. It also strengthens emergency plan requirements, creates an annual review process and allows for public comment.

"In the past 10 weeks Mother Nature has rained down on the Hudson Valley with severe weather that has left our region in the dark for days," Murphy explained. "People recognize the severity of these weather events but can't understand the lack of communication by the utility companies. This legislation will provide clear benchmarks that they would have to meet or face heavy fines."

In March, two nor'easters pummeled the Hudson Valley in less than a week, leaving customers without power for nearly two weeks. On Tuesday, microbursts and tornadoes have left parts of Putnam and Westchester County in pieces. As of Friday afternoon, more than 10,000 NYSEG customers remained without power.

"We have made it clear to NYSEG that all eyes are on their response to this most recent storm," Murphy continued. "Customers pay an incredible amount of money for their services and deserve greater communication, understanding and accurate estimates as to when their power is to be returned. Once again, NYSEG's website provided misinformation and residents received robocalls and text messages that their power was restored when that was not the case. This is unacceptable and the legislature needs to pass meaningful reforms to hold these monopolies accountable."

Following the March storms [Senator Murphy held a bipartisan hearing](#) at which the CEOs of Central Hudson, Con Edison and NYSEG answered pointed questions about their protocols

and procedures. The hearing revealed several investigations initiated by the Governor's office following major storms provided little to any changes or accountability.

In April, [Senator Murphy and Assemblyman Byrne held a public forum with Con Edison and NYSEG](#) at JFK High School in Somers. Dozens of residents voiced their frustrations with the lack of communication from the utility companies.

The legislation authored by Murphy is now able to be sent to the floor for a full vote by the Senate. In the Assembly, Westchester Democrat David Buchwald carries the legislation.