



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David Carlucci

## Sen. Carlucci Demands O&R Answer Tough Questions During PSC Investigation

SEN. CARLUCCI April 24, 2018

| ISSUE: **ORANGE AND ROCKLAND CUSTOMER SERVICE**

Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland/Westchester) is calling on Orange and Rockland to explain how communications and customer service will be improved ahead of the next major storm during the course of the Public Service Commission's investigation. Following back-to-back winter storms Riley and Quinn, more than 13,000 people in Rockland County were left without power, and the first nor'easter prompted a response from the National Guard.

After hearing from a number of residents, Senator Carlucci said, "Orange and Rockland's service and communication with customers was not adequate or acceptable."

In an effort to better understand how to prevent a similar situation from happening again, the Senator sent a letter to Orange & Rockland in March (see attached). Mounting questions that have gone unanswered include:

1. Many residents say Orange and Rockland sent them automated text alerts or made automated phone calls to let them know their power was restored, when in fact it was not. In some cases, residents texted the proper prompt to let Orange and Rockland know power was not restored, but no one came and the prompt never changed. What steps are

being taken by Orange and Rockland to improve the automated system?

2. In most cases, residents who received incorrect alerts about their power being restored say they had no way of reaching a customer service representative because the phone lines were tied up. How will Orange and Rockland fast track customers who receive automated responses so they can get to a customer service representative?
3. Can Orange and Rockland implement a system by which customer service representatives follow up with customers shortly after their power has been restored? This way if an alert is incorrect the customer is able to explain the situation.
4. Many customers say they were not given accurate estimates on when their power would be restored. Some say they were told one day and time, which turned into 2-3 days later. For people trying to book hotel rooms or stay with family, an estimate can be essential for not losing boarding. Will Orange and Rockland review their process for estimating time of restoration and explain how this will be better communicated to customers?
5. During the storm, the Orange and Rockland Outage Map went offline. During a devastating weather event, customers often depend on this information. What steps is Orange and Rockland taking to improve their online platform to make sure the site does not fail during a future storm?
6. On the Orange and Rockland website, under "Smart Meter FAQs" the following statement is posted: "Smart meters will alert us immediately about problems, so we can get to work restoring power even faster." Following the recent snowstorms, many Orange and Rockland customers were without power for several days. Can you please explain whether smart meters were effective in restoring power more quickly, and if so how?

Sen. Carlucci encourages all residents in Rockland impacted by the storm to attend the Public Service Commission's hearing this evening at the Ramapo Town Hall at 6 p.m. in an effort to have their voices heard.