



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shelley B. Mayer

Statement of Senator Mayer on Announcement of Legislative Hearings on Response to Tropical Storm Isaias

SHELLEY B. MAYER August 10, 2020

| ISSUE: TROPICAL STORM ISAIAS, CON EDISON, UTILITIES, PUBLIC HEARINGS



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This storm has demonstrated the inadequacy of our utility companies, our telecommunications providers and frankly, the Public Service Commission, in protecting New Yorkers. With the announcement of joint State Senate and Assembly hearings, we should promptly come up with new approaches to force policy change, exact fiscal penalties, and

drastically improve communication and oversight. With some modest exceptions, most of our local utility and telecommunications companies have failed Westchester's consumers. Year after year, many utility companies seek rate increases to make investments in infrastructure and storm resiliency, but almost a week after Tropical Storm Isaias, tens of thousands of my constituents are without power, many of whom are vulnerable. And incredibly, internet and phone company providers, providing essential services during this pandemic, failed to communicate with customers at all while thousands went without phone and internet service now essential for their lives and livelihoods. Local residents, and elected leaders charged with serving them, deserve to understand what went wrong and how things will be improved to ensure this pattern does not continue year after year. Sadly, the changes we fought for after Hurricane Sandy, and in subsequent storms have not resulted in meaningful improvement and we cannot undergo this again.

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The hearing must also focus on why the Public Service Commission- charged with regulating the public franchise that utilities enjoy- has been so toothless in regulating these services, and has failed the public. Restoring customer service should be the first priority in these storms, and it was not. I look forward to participating fully in this hearing in the next few weeks.”

State Senator Shelley Mayer represents the 37th Senate Districts which includes the Cities of Yonkers, White Plains, Rye and New Rochelle; the Towns of Bedford, Eastchester, Harrison, North Castle, Mamaroneck, and Rye; the Villages of Bronxville, Larchmont, Harrison, Mamaroneck, Port Chester, Rye Brook, and Tuckahoe; and the unincorporated hamlets of Katonah, Bedford Hills, and Armonk.