

NEW YORK
STATE
SENATE



ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247

August 5, 2020

The Honorable Letitia James
Attorney General
New York State
The Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Attorney General James,

We write to request the Office of the Attorney General (“OAG”) conduct an investigation into PSEG Long Island (“PSEG-LI”), Verizon Wireless, and the Long Island Power Authority’s (“LIPA”) handling and lack of preparedness for Tropical Storm Isaias on Long Island. While a powerful storm is beyond anyone’s control, the breakdown of these entities’ communications systems prohibiting Long Islanders from contacting customer service and reporting power outages is a deeply troubling failure that must be probed.

Over 368,000 Long Islanders lost power due to the storm, and our offices have been inundated with complaints from constituents who have been unable to report their outages to PSEG-LI — both via its text-in system, as well as its phone lines, which are serviced by Verizon. This colossal communications collapse is unacceptable to hardworking PSEG-LI ratepayers, many of whom were seeking to report dangerous situations created by downed power lines and live wires. In addition, this communications failure deprived Long Islanders of timely and clear information during a power outage, information that customers need to plan for a potentially long restoration period.

The communication breakdown also put critical care customers — those that rely on power for life support machines or to refrigerate medicine — at an even greater risk since they are particularly reliant on the ability to report outages and receive customer support during a storm. It is unconscionable our utilities’ communication services left Long Islanders without the ability to report dangerous situations or make informed medical and financial decisions around restoration times, especially during a pandemic when many residents are working from home and may face further economic hardships from an extended power outage. Long Islanders are understandably frustrated, not only from having lost power, but also as a result of PSEG-LI’s inability to effectively receive and disseminate information during the storm and to respond appropriately to outages across the Island.

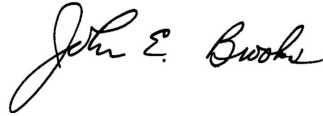
Accordingly, we urge the OAG to investigate this breakdown, including what transpired and how such problems can be ameliorated to ensure that the communications failures of

Tropical Storm Isaias never repeat themselves on Long Island. Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Todd Kaminsky
Senator, 9th District



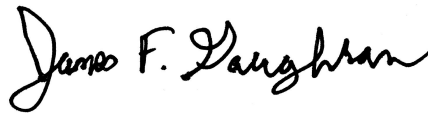
John Brooks
Senator, 8th District



Anna Kaplan
Senator, 7th District



Kevin Thomas
Senator, 6th District



James Gaughran
Senator, 5th District



Monica Martinez
Senator, 3rd District