

Town of Massena

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August 3, 2012

Hon. Dierdre Scozzafava, Deputy Secretary
New York Department of State
Division of Local Government Services
One Commerce Plaza
99 Washington Ave., 10th Floor
Albany, NY 12231-0001

Dede:
Dear Deputy Secretary Scozzafava:

I write to you out of utter and complete frustration. I would have called your office to speak with you directly, but I couldn't because our telephone service was unavailable. In fact, that problem is the subject of this letter.

Since I became Supervisor of the Town of Massena just over two and a half years ago, on at least three different occasions telecommunications in the entire North Country has been thrown into chaos because a Verizon fiber optic cable was cut 150 miles from here.

Many of us found our emergency services, business, residential, and cellular telephone service interrupted, not to mention disabled credit card machines, facsimile machines and internet service in some cases.

As a result, in rural communities all over the New York State's Northern Tier lives are jeopardized, property is at risk, businesses lose tens of thousands of dollars in lost commercial transactions and families cannot communicate with their loved ones and friends.

We know the source of the problem – lack of any kind of redundancy in the telecommunications network in rural areas like ours – but no one seems willing to address the problem or come up with a solution.

Last year, I asked the Senate and Assembly to convene hearings on this perennial problem. The result was a telephone call from an official at the Public Service Commission who assured me that Verizon's record of service and maintenance of its system met or exceeded industry standards.

As a result, the Public Service Commission (which perhaps should be given a different name if my experiences with them is typical), has done nothing to address this dangerous situation and, more incredibly, appears unwilling to acknowledge that the problem exists.

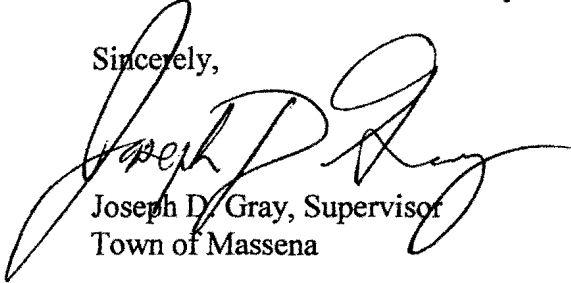
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EXECUTIVE
PUBLIC SERVICE
COMMISSION
ALBANY, NY

On behalf of the Town of Massena and thousands of other people across the North Country, I am imploring you and your staff to help us correct this serious shortcoming in our telecommunication system.

It is imperative that something be done to correct this perilous flaw before someone dies or is left with permanent disabilities because a call for emergency services did not get through our antiquated system.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph D. Gray". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "G".

Joseph D. Gray, Supervisor
Town of Massena

cc: Governor Andrew Cuomo
Senator Joseph Griffo
Assemblywoman Addie Russell
NYS Department of Public Service