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July 25, 2012

Hon. Jaclyn A. Brillling
Secretary
New York State Public Service Commission
3 Empire Plaza
Albany, NY 12223-1350

Dear Secretary Brillling:

I write in regards to the Public Service Commission's oversight during the Consolidated Edison (Con Ed) lockout. It has come to my attention that Con Ed is relying on supervisors to do the work of maintenance crews who are locked out; however, I am concerned about the company's ability to provide adequate service to New Yorkers with such a limited workforce.

Con Ed has assured the PSC that there has been no reduction in services as they have put together a set of management employees who are working 12-hour days, six days a week, in an effort to do the minimum necessary to avoid system collapse. Although they are keeping the system running, its functionality is tenuous and in no way reflects the service provided before the lockout.

When there is no workforce shortage, low-income communities throughout New York City experience blackouts and brownouts at an alarming rate during summer months. This summers unseasonably high temperatures coupled with a reduced work force has the potential to severely hamper the system that so many depend on, warranting oversight from the Commission. It is understood that Con Ed will often reduce voltage in neighborhoods throughout New York City and Westchester in order to prevent widespread power outages. Our power grid is strained by extreme weather conditions year round, particularly during the summer when over-use of air conditioning can be a severe drain on the system.

While I understand the necessity of scheduled reductions in power, it has been reported that most of these brownouts are scheduled to occur in lower-income areas where the residents are primarily Black and Latino. Brownouts cause serious long-term damage to electrical equipment and appliances, including necessities like refrigerators. Although brownouts do

2012 JUL 26 PM 2:57

Public Service Commission
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

not reduce service, they can put a strain on appliances reducing their life span for which limited budgets cannot obtain a quick replacement. Additionally these blackouts, albeit rare, have drastic impact on families of limited means. If this is truly the case, it justifies a serious response.

I have also learned that generators running 24 hours a day have been brought into these very same neighborhoods, spewing diesel smoke and other pollutants into the air. Low-income communities of color have been a dumping ground for too long and it is an unacceptable form of service delivery.

It is my sincere hope that the PSC closely monitor the situation with Con Ed, to ensure that customers whom least can afford it are not being adversely impacted as the company deals with its labor dispute.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karim Camara". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "K" and "C".

Karim Camara
Assemblyman, 43rd District
Chairman, Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus