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John B. Rhodes, Chair

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Statement from Public Service Commission Chair John B. Rhodes on Consolidated Edison's Decision to Stop Accepting New Gas Customers on a Temporary Basis in Westchester County

ALBANY — “The Public Service Commission is dedicated to ensuring that consumers have access to affordable, clean and reliable energy sources. The recent decision by Con Edison to stop accepting new customers raises a number of concerns that the Commission is committed to taking quick and diligent steps to address.

As a first step, Department of Public Service (DPS) staff will lead a comprehensive analysis and develop a report to review the changing market conditions that gave rise to Con Edison's decision and to develop recommendations to make certain that utilities across the state are able to meet customer needs in a manner consistent with the State's energy goals. As part of this analysis, the staff will focus on Westchester County and other areas of the state that may have issues related to natural gas supply and demand. To facilitate that process, DPS will arrange for and host public hearings in Westchester beginning the week of February 11, 2019 to ensure that the report's analysis and recommendations include robust feedback and input from all impacted stakeholders.

Specifically, staff will analyze short-term and long-term market conditions, along with the capacity of natural gas infrastructure and alternatives, and their role in aiding the transition to a clean energy economy. The report will consider all options available to utilities to respond to changing market conditions. The report and recommendations will be submitted by July 1, 2019 to the Public Service Commission and State Energy Planning Board for their review and assessment of policies, programs, and regulations that can ensure safe, reliable, affordable, and clean sources of energy, while also supporting economic development and the state's transition to clean energy sources.

At the same time, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority will prioritize its programs, including programs targeted at Westchester County, to help consumers reduce their energy needs by installing technology that will reduce heating and cooling costs with clean energy solutions.

These steps complement the State's broader efforts to promote strategies to help lower gas demand and save consumers money. The Commission will continue to use all available methods — including its rate-making authority — to push utilities to address changing market dynamics in a manner that promotes both the State's clean energy objectives and economic growth. Utilities, including Con

Edison, must also do their part to expand and enhance their programs to help consumers conserve energy and to solicit for natural gas supply alternatives.

We will be announcing details around the first public hearings in the coming days and look forward to working with all affected stakeholders to develop constructive solutions for New Yorkers.”