

Dear Secretary Burgess:

The undersigned are writing to request that a first round of public statement hearings for the 2019 Consolidated Edison rate case be held in April *after* the Company's update filing, but *before* the direct testimony is due from intervenors and Staff. Additionally, we request that a second round of public statement hearings be held prior to the evidentiary hearing. As public interest parties, we would like to have the opportunity to hear from the public about what is of most concern to them before filing our expert testimony. Furthermore, we believe that there is significant procedural value to all parties in hearing from the public prior to any potential joint settlement proposal, so that all parties have the benefit of this opportunity.

In the last two years, different practices have been followed in different cases. For instance, during the National Grid upstate case in 2017, public hearings were held before direct intervenor and Staff testimony was due. During the Orange & Rockland case in 2018, public statement hearings were held after the Joint Proposal was filed. We note that public participation was much higher in the National Grid public statement hearings, perhaps in part due to greater opportunity for the public testimony and comments to influence the case during that stage.

We understand that this request may create unforeseen travel demands for Judge Lecakes, and we appreciate his suggestion to appoint a surrogate to attend public statement hearings in his place. In the event that this case results in negotiations and a Joint Proposal – as many rate cases in New York do – it is important that the parties be allowed the opportunity to take into consideration public statements concerning the case before entering into negotiations, not after important agreements have been made among parties.

We are here to assist in finding easily accessible locations for these public statement hearings. At a minimum, we request that locations be wheelchair accessible and within a reasonable walking distance of public transportation. We also request that hearings be held in the evening, ideally at 7:00, so that people can participate after work. We would appreciate reasonable notification of these hearings, so that we have ample time to notify community members and so that our members can plan their schedules. Finally, we request that language translation service be provided for the predominant languages spoken in the neighborhood in which each hearing is held.

In order to ensure that the communities most affected by the rate case are able to participate in the process, we request that public statement hearings be held in multiple locations beyond Lower Manhattan and Westchester. Because Central Brooklyn is an energy cost burdened area of the city, and since Astoria is the location of much of the company's requested capital investments for gas infrastructure, we feel it is important to hold public statement hearings in these two areas. Potential venues in Central Brooklyn could include the Brooklyn Botanical Garden, Restoration Plaza, or the Bedford-Stuyvesant YMCA. Potential venues in Astoria could include the Church of the Redeemer, P.S. 234, or P.S. 70.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests in the interest of the public.

Respectfully,

Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris

Assemblymember Aravella Simotas, Member, Committee on Energy

Council Member Costa Constantinides, Chair, Environmental Protection Committee

Alliance for a Green Economy

Bob Wyman

Mothers Out Front NY

New York City Democratic Socialists of America, Ecosocialist Working Group

Radina Valova, Pace Energy and Climate Center

Sane Energy Project

Sunrise NYC

350 Brooklyn