

[wnypapers.com](https://www.wnypapers.com)

NYS Senate & Assembly to hold joint legislative hearing on utilities' 'failure' during recent storm

360 PSG

5-6 minutes

Sun, Aug 9th 2020 12:35 pm

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie announced a joint legislative hearing will be held to examine what their camps called “the response failures of various utility companies during the aftermath of Tropical Storm Isaias.” The storm caused power outages for hundreds of thousands of ratepayers. The legislative hearing will evaluate the utilities’ preparation and response to the storm outages and related issues.

“Across the state, we saw utilities fail and people lose power,” Stewart-Cousins said. “Today, we still have

thousands and thousands of people waiting for their power to be restored with no clear end in sight. This is unacceptable. The joint legislative hearing will get to the bottom of what went wrong, why the response was so slow, and what can be done to improve responses going forward.”

“Tropical Storm Isaias left hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers without power. Several days have passed and utility companies still have not fully restored power. This is unacceptable,” Heastie said. “We need to examine what happened and identify ways that we can be better prepared in the future.”

State Sen. Leroy Comrie, chair of the Senate Corporations, Authorities and Commissions Committee, said, “Utility companies have a responsibility to ensure New York ratepayers receive the vital services we deserve. The response to Tropical Storm Isaias has exposed major failures by multiple utility providers, and hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers are suffering as a result. This hearing will provide the State Legislature with the opportunity to get to the bottom of this situation, and identify ways to avoid it going forward.”

Assembly member Amy Paulin, chair of the Assembly Corporations, Authorities and Commissions Committee,

said, “Westchester was one of the hardest-hit areas when Tropical Storm Isaias pummeled New York last week. While thousands have seen power restored, for those who are still without power it is unacceptable. Storms like this are becoming more frequent. We must make sure the utility companies and the PSC do more to keep the lights on in our homes and businesses.”

State Sen. Kevin Parker, chair of the Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee, said, “New Yorkers expect that when they flip on a switch the lights will turn on. We knew a storm was coming and utility companies had time to prepare, but we still saw hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers lose power, and many ratepayers are still waiting for the lights to come back on days after the storm came and went. Together with my colleagues, I will investigate what the causes were for these response failures and ensure New Yorkers get better services and support from utility companies going forward.”

Assembly member Michael Cusick, chair of the Assembly Energy Committee, said, “With thousands of residents in New York without power for days due to Tropical Storm Isaias, it is imperative that we get answers from ConEd for the damage that has been done and gather information to help prevent such an outage in

the future,”

State Sen. Todd Kaminsky, chair of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, said, “After this week’s fiasco, Long Islanders are sure of one thing: Our utilities are not prepared for the next storm. PSEG-LI left hundreds of thousands in the dark, some of whom are still unable to get basic information about their status, and Altice (Optimum) and Verizon – who seem nowhere to be found – had their services completely tank, as well. This hearing represents an important opportunity to get to the bottom of why our utilities failed, and to ensure they put practices in place so that New Yorkers do not have to relive this nightmare again and again.”

Assembly member Steve Englebright, Chair of the Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee, said, “There has been a complete breakdown in the provision of utility service on Long Island. Our electricity, cable and telephone service providers have all failed the test of reliability. Long Islanders pay among the highest rates in the nation and expect to receive services in line with the price. I want to hear why this happened and what concrete steps will be taken to prevent anything like this from happening again.”

The joint legislative hearing will examine the emergency storm response for utilities following Tropical Storm

Isaias, with a focus on the Long Island, Westchester and New York City regions as the vast majority of outages in New York State occurred there. The hearing will stream live on the Senate and Assembly websites, and testimony will be by invitation only. No time or date was provided.

More than 1,000 locations were temporarily without power in Western New York during this storm period.