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Washington, DC 20515-3214

July 21, 2006

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Mr. Kevin Burke
Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer
Con Edison
4 Irving Place
New York, New York 10003

Dear Mr. Burke,

I am writing to follow up on my letter of July 20, 2006. We are now in the fifth day without power in Western Queens and there is no end in sight. The more we learn about Con Edison's approach to this crisis, the more appalled I become.

Western Queens has six power plants and supplies 60% of the power to New York City. This is the last place that we would expect to lack power. While the current crisis may be the result of the collapse of Con Edison's distribution system in the area, it still seems odd that when the entire Northeast went dark three years ago, Astoria had its power back within a day. By contrast, Con Edison's current estimates suggest that it will be a full week before Western Queens gets its power back.

Clearly Western Queens was low on Con Edison's priority list. When my staff called to find out what was happening they were told that only 1100 to 1600 people were without power in Queens, whereas 25,000 customers in Westchester lacked power. The clear implication was that Westchester deserved more attention than Western Queens. This morning Con Edison revealed that at least 5,000 customers in Queens still lack power. Later I learned that the current estimate has reached 25,000 and may reach as high as 100,000. Moreover, your staff helpfully pointed out that it was hot, and there are always problems in the heat. Although this was no ordinary problem, Con Edison closed its eyes to the magnitude of the crisis while residents of Western Queens suffered.

For days I heard from constituents who complained that when they called Con Edison to say they had no power, they were advised to conserve energy. It took Con Edison far too long to recognize that there was a problem, to determine the cause of the problem and to take action to fix it. Meanwhile, my constituents are living in the dark, suffering from heat and dealing with spoiled food and other perishables.

I want to know what happened, how it happened and why it happened. This issue is so serious that I am calling for federal hearings with the aim of making sure this never happens again.

Very truly yours,

Handwritten signature of Carolyn B. Maloney in black ink, followed by a horizontal line.
CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress

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