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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-3214

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Mr. Kevin Burke
Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer
Consolidated Edison Company of New York
4 Irving Place
New York, NY 10003

Dear Mr. Burke:

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the recent wave of energy blackouts occurring in Western Queens, located in the 14th Congressional District of New York, which I represent. My phones have been ringing off the hook with constituents complaining because they are without electricity and cannot get good information about when their power will be returned. I understand that Con Edison is working diligently to try to fix the problems, but many of my constituents complain that they have been without power for 72 hours.

While I understand that the combination of hot weather and the expanding demand for energy caused these losses of power, I think the community deserves some answers as to why the problem is so severe in their neighborhood. After all, it is hot every summer, and the expanding demand is completely predictable. Further, the biggest complaint relates to the lack of information. Accordingly, I would like to know 1) what precisely caused these power outages, 2) how many people in Western Queens lost power entirely, 3) what is being done to make sure that the problem will not reoccur, and 4) what is being done to ensure that people have better information when a power outage occurs in the future. I am told that the community has received no concrete information from Con Edison about the cause of the problem or the approximate time it will take to restore power. Instead, many people who were entirely without power were told that there was only an 8% reduction in their service. Con Edison representatives appeared not to know precisely how the problem was affecting their customers.

Additionally, I have been informed that an explosion recently occurred in Queens under a manhole on 30th Avenue between 43rd and 44th Streets, destroying two cars and creating much confusion and concern in the surrounding community. I have been told that subsequently there were other explosions in other areas. Accordingly, I would like to know what caused this sudden and dangerous explosion and what measures Con Edison is taking to ensure such explosions do not occur again.

The community relies on prompt, thorough information in times of trouble, and that seems to be surely lacking during this crisis. Con Edison has done better in the past and I hope will do better in the future. If you have any additional questions please do not hesitate to contact Leena Krishnaswamy in my district office at (212) 860-0606.

Sincerely,


CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress

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