

Honorable Members of the NYS Senate and NYS Assembly:

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to testify. My comments:

**CON ED NOT PREPARED—CON ED, ALTICE, VERIZON DON'T COORDINATE WITH EACH OTHER.** Con Ed is not appropriately staffed for the type of storm that hit two weeks ago. As trees must be trimmed for safety, they should have had out of state crews in the area earlier. I realize that they are reluctant to do that because anticipated storms don't always follow predictable paths.

The following is what I think must be done. Please keep in mind, the Town of Greenburgh continually sends complaints to the big three but they are very slow to respond.

Con Ed, Verizon, & Altice need to have a joint agreement or emergency arrangements for the removal and pruning of trees that have the potential to impact their lines.

The way it works now is Con Ed puts out contracts for tree work and it then cuts what impacts its infrastructure while branches that impact the same run of wires right below its wires remains untouched.

The big three need to work together during blue sky days to improve the condition of the existing infrastructure. (The Town has many examples if you need them).

Also, when Con Ed has their blue sky conference with our police dept. representatives from both Verizon and Altice should be required to be there.

The meeting now includes representatives from the Greenburgh Police & DPW, the local fire departments and Con Ed. Verizon and Altice never attend Why??

In Greenburgh, we have taken representatives from all three companies to view some of their worst case areas in need of repair otherwise in an effort to have tree work done.

It's time to form a countywide task force to deal with the issue so that the 3 entities do not just point fingers at each other.

All three should be responsible for working together to inspect their entire overhead wire system.

### **POLICE CONCERNS**

Our Police Headquarters was without power for approximately (7) days.

Multiple roads (35) throughout the Town were impassible and closed with many residents trapped with no egress for emergency vehicles. Con Ed was unable to provide ETA on cut and clear teams, making it difficult for police and EMS personnel to respond to emergencies.

Liaisons that were provided to our EOC were very helpful but communications directly with Con Ed was not effective. It was frustrating to ascertain accurate information even with the benefit of a liaison with respect to status updates on work to be done, work being performed and when work was completed.

It took several days before any restoration was commenced.

Lack of Con Ed response led to several days of multiple calls to the department regarding status of power, inaccessible roads etc.

\*\* Lack of coordination of effort / Communication shortcomings within Con Ed: Information provided to us showed areas still without power however, power had already been restored

During the height of the storm on August 4th and into the evening hours, more than 40 police department employees were involved in storm related response, handling more than 375 calls in the first 24 hours.

As a result, \$29,159.42 was spent on overtime, responding to, mitigating and recovering from the storm.

### **SUGGESTED COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

Areas for improvement are continuing with communications – internally between our “boots on the ground” and the utility “boots” can be improved so those of us in the EOC can make more informed decisions. I recommend a Con Ed field crew leader be part of the liaison program so our liaison and the Public Works Commissioner can have a more direct line to know where a Con Ed crew is, what capabilities the crew has and when they will be working (9 to 5 / overnight) The Town is fortunate that we have a large labor force and can staff work crews overnight as needed. We did this during the last event with success, enabling our road clearing to continue 24 hours per day. The best productivity occurs when a Con Ed work crew is attached to a Town crew so we can support each other’s efforts. Con Ed should work with the municipalities and match crews with municipal crews so they can work together.

Having a GPS ability to Con Ed and out of town work crews so we can all better see where crews are and what the work tasks are will help understanding the operations. Too many times we hear of municipalities “commandeering” a Con Ed crew. Not effective, but this shows how the need resides with a crew to be aligned with a municipal crew.

Education – Con Ed should offer to qualified municipalities, training to enable municipal crews to identify live wires and dead wires. We all treat any wire as live. The Town is again very fortunate that we have a worker trained and qualified to work around high voltage wires. This affords the Town of Greenburgh greater flexibility than most other municipalities. Con Ed should develop a program to offer training to qualified workers in municipalities with the proper equipment a level of safety to work near the wires in emergencies.

Reporting – Continue to improve the communication from field crews for cleared wires and cleared work sites.

**SUGGESTION; GIVE OUR GOVERNOR EMERGENCY POWERS TO ORDER CREWS FROM OUT OF STATE IN ADVANCE OF STORMS OR TO ORDER PROACTIVE MEASURES – Con Ed SHOULD PAY COSTS**

We have had prolonged outages... And, after every storm the same thing happens-- investigations, apologies, recommendations, promises. And then the next storm is followed by power outages and hearings. I think the Legislature should provide the Governor with emergency powers to order crews from out of state in advance of storms and to order proactive measures if Con Ed doesn't take them. The cost should be assumed by Con Ed for any action the Governor orders.

I'm sick and tired of the blame game. Everyone is. The Governor took control of COVID 19 and he should have the power to handle this. . Another alternative: create a task force that could override Con Ed if you don't want to give provide the Governor the ability to order appropriate staffing by these entities. .

**CON ED INTENTIONALLY TURNS POWER OFF IN SOME NEIGHBORHOODS TO HELP RESTORE POWER ELSEWHERE - RESIDENTS SHOULD BE NOTIFIED**

If Con Ed intentionally turns off power in some neighborhoods to help restore power elsewhere, it should provide residents with notification as to --what they are doing and an estimate when power will be restored.

**ELDERLY AND DISABLED**

Although Con Ed encourages people with significant medical problems to contact it in advance of a storm, it doesn't do anything to expedite service once there are power outages. During the recent storm, I was unsuccessful in persuading Con Ed to expedite service restoration for a resident with brain cancer. A woman called me - her husband is in a hospice bed at home and had no power for almost a week. Another resident depends on oxygen to live. Con Ed did nothing for any of these residents.

**SUGGESTION: CON ED SHOULD OFFER RESIDENTS WITH LIFE THREATENING MEDICAL ISSUES GENERATORS AT COST**

My suggestion: Con Ed should be required to offer residents with severe medical issues generators at cost- they could install and maintain them. There will always be power outages. This could save lives.

**CON ED MAPS OF OUTAGES WERE INACCURATE**

Speaking personally, my family had no power for almost a week. The Con Ed map of outages claimed there were only a few outages when more than 150 homes were out. It also sent incorrect text messages as to restoration dates.

**CON ED REFUND POLICY NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED**

After an extended outage, there should be automatic credits. Everyone who has no power for more than 48 hours lost food and/or medication.

PAUL FEINER

Greenburgh Town Supervisor