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THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



PETER B. HARCKHAM
SENATOR, 40TH DISTRICT

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March 5, 2025

Patricia Nilsen, President and CEO
NYSEG and RG & E
18 Link Drive, Binghamton, NY 13904

Timothy Cawley,
CEO Con Edison
4 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003

Michelle O'Connell, President & CEO
Orange & Rockland
1 Blue Hill Plaza, 4th Floor, Pearl River, NY 10965

Dear Presidents and CEOs:

Re: Help financially strapped customers; waive late fees and ease payment plan access

Ongoing economic challenges have made it difficult for many residents in my Senate District to manage all of their monthly expenses, and the added burden of paying high utility bills only exacerbates the issue.

Hundreds of constituents are contacting my office to say that they are having to make difficult choices about spending on essentials because of escalating utility bills. They should not have to choose between keeping the lights on and buying medicine.

Currently, Con Edison, O&R and NYSEG charge their customers in arrears up to 1.5 % a month in late payment fees. These compounding late fees can easily add hundreds of dollars a year. For a family on a tight budget, this is an unneeded hardship. With so many households struggling financially, waiving these fees would offer immediate relief for those customers behind on their payments. And we know that both utility companies can voluntarily waive the fees immediately, as NYSEG did in 2022 during a season of high utility bills.

Con Edison, O&R and NYSEG can also restructure their payment plans to make them more accessible and flexible for those who are facing financial difficulties. Currently, customers in arrears have to come up with a 15% down payment in order to qualify for a payment agreement plan, which is unaffordable to many.

I urge you to consider suspending late fees and creating affordable payment plans, both of which would benefit so many of our struggling neighbors. I believe you have an opportunity to show compassion and support for our community.

I appreciate your kind and prompt attention to this matter. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter B. Harckham'.

Peter B. Harckham, Senator 40th District