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Your Comment

2020 was a year where people were facing many struggles and uncertainty due to COVID-19. PSEG-LI's preparation and response to Tropical Storm Isaias added insult to injury. Long Islanders were experiencing power outages for days which exacerbated an already stressful situation. As a result, there were more than a third of Long Island electric customers who were without power days after the storm first hit. This caused many families to lose perishable food items and medication that were essential, especially during these times. It created more issues for those who were vulnerable like senior citizens, and those who worked from home.

Long Island ratepayers have a turbulent history with utility entities. There have been long standing questions regarding PSEG-LI's emergency preparedness. After Superstorm Sandy, PSEG-LI came to the region with commitments to upgrade communication systems, enhance consumer rapid response, and make necessary improvements to the outdated power infrastructure. Tropical Storm Isaias was PSEG-LI first big test and it was an overall disappointing recovery response. As detailed in the Phase II Report, the utility's deeply embedded mismanagement was the root cause of their poor response to the tropical storm. Consequently, I join my fellow Long Islanders in calling on LIPA to terminate their contract with PSEG LI.

The utility providing power to our region needs to be accountable to the ratepayers, not just their shareholders. To that end, we must fully commit to a new paradigm of energy management on Long Island and oppose any efforts to further privatize our energy services. Across the country, publicly owned utilities have proven more affordable and reliable for residential customers. They are more responsive to customer needs, yielding better customer satisfaction. Their shorter outage times safeguard households' food and medicine and improve the productivity of small businesses. And they can ensure that Long Island helps fulfill the legal and moral obligation we have to prevent climate catastrophe by moving off fossil fuels and transitioning to 100% clean, renewable energy.

On behalf of the ratepayers of the Twenty-second district, I want to extend my appreciation and encourage the LIPA Board of Trustees to continue to allow the community to have input throughout every step in the process. I also urge LIPA to choose the option that is centered around the ratepayers and prioritizes people over profits. The time for public power is now.