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COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

February 11, 2019
Start: 10:08 a.m.
Recess: 12:17 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: COSTA G. CONSTANTINIDES
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

RAFAEL L. ESPINAL, JR.
STEPHEN T. LEVIN
CARLOS MENCHACA
DONOVAN J. RICHARDS
ERIC A. ULRICH
KALMAN YEGER

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COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Milovan Blair
Senior Vice President for Central Operations For
Con Edison

Kyle Kimball
Vice President of Government, Regional and
Community Affairs

Susanne DesRoches
Deputy Director for Infrastructure and Energy of
Both the Mayor's Office of Resiliency, MOR and
The Mayor's Office of Sustainability, MOS

Rebecca Bratspies
Professor at CUNY School of Law, Center for
Urban Environmental Reform

Donald Chahbazpour
Director of Gas Utility of the Future at National
Grid

Brian Mccabe
Director of NRG Energy

Phil Vanaria
Representing Self, Victim and Survivor of Stray
Voltage

Eric Weltman
Brooklyn Based Senior Organizer for Food and
Water Watch in New York

Catherine Skopic
Representing Self, Educator, Parent, Member of
Sierra Club

Rachel Spector
Director of the Environmental Justice Program at
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest

Eva-Lee Baird
Member of 350 NYC.org

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COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

3

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Ke Wei
Assistant Director for Infrastructure at both the
New York City Mayor's Office of Resiliency, MOR
And New York City Mayor's Office of
Sustainability, MOS

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Alright,

good morning. Alright, appreciate the, the enthusiasm today. Alright, so I am Costa Constantinides, Chair of the Committee on Environmental Protection and today the Committee will hold oversight on the Astoria transformer explosion and the transition to a green grid. We'll also hear my legislation, Intro 1318 that will the city just to prepare and submit a report on the feasibility of replacing existing in city gas fired power plants with battery storage along with expedited replacement timeframes if possible. You know on December 27th, 2018, an equipment malfunction at a Con Edison substation in Astoria caused a sustained arc flash discharge that temporarily lit the sky a brilliant blue, dubbed the Astoria borealis and some other things as well. Yeah, this accident not only caused great confusion and fear among everyone who saw their night sky turn blue but caused a temporary power loss at Rikers Island, La Guardia Airport and along the seven line and also residential neighborhoods throughout Queens. Although power was mostly restored within 30 minutes, questions have been raised about whether grid scale

1 battery storage facilities would have been able to
2 mitigate these outages. You know there were a lot of
3 jokes about this from a gender reveal party gone
4 wrong to aliens but it was no laughing matter,
5 families across the street had their foundations
6 shook, families didn't know if they had to evacuate,
7 didn't know the status of their air quality until
8 hours later and there was a great fear in our
9 community that was unacceptable. You know studies
10 have also found that there are significant
11 correlation between rates of hospitalization for
12 respiratory diseases and individual proximity to, to
13 a fossil fuel power plant. This blue light was a
14 spotlight shining a light on the challenges that our
15 communities in Queens share every single day. You
16 know these pollutants are being breathed in every
17 single day and taken in concert with the
18 disproportionate likelihood that gas powered power
19 plants in New York City will be sited in economically
20 disadvantaged communities or majority minority
21 communities. The importance of transitioning towards
22 a system based on renewable energy with grid scale
23 battery storage is a matter of environmental justice
24 and there is... are sustainable alternative to grid
25

1 failures, battery storage. These power plants are not
2 the way that we should power a city in the 21st
3 century. It is now time for us to move away from gas
4 powered power plants and that infrastructure and
5 build a renewable future. We have gone way too long
6 to have these plants in... you know the power now plan
7 in 2001 where they sited plants based on telling
8 communities and all communities of color and, and,
9 and economically challenged communities they're only
10 going to be three years, well that was 2001 and we're
11 in the year 2019 I, I... a child born that year is now
12 legal of age to vote and to see that these plants are
13 still sited in those neighborhoods is unacceptable.
14 You know our Governor talked about a target to deploy
15 1,500 megawatts of energy storage by 2025 to help us
16 achieve a clean energy standard goal of 50 percent of
17 New Yorkers from renewable sources by 2030, we need
18 to meet, meet that commitment and do better. On, on
19 December 13th the public service commission issued an
20 order calling for a comprehensive strategy to enable
21 deployment of 1,500 megawatts of energy storage by
22 2025 and expanding battery storage to 3,000 megawatts
23 by 2030. New York isn't alone, you know this is not
24 science fiction, the blue light may have seemed like
25

1
2 it but this is not, this is real life, we can do
3 this, the technology exists whether in California
4 where they're putting out a plan to have battery
5 storage cover over a million homes, whether you see
6 power providers throughout the country putting out...
7 you know putting out plans for clean energy by 2030,
8 2040, 2050 these apparatus... these, these renewable
9 energy choices are there, they're real, we can do
10 this and Intro 1318 will help us get there by drawing
11 us that map. If we have a map we know how, how to get
12 where we're going and Intro 1318 would mandate a
13 report by the Mayor's Office of Sustainability or any
14 such office the Mayor may designate on the
15 feasibility of utilization of renewables with battery
16 storage to replace those in city gas powered power,
17 power plants. This report must include expedited time
18 frames for indicating when such replacements shall
19 take place, should the replacement of existing plants
20 and power plants with renewable battery storage be
21 found to be possible and we know it can. A renewable
22 future is not going to happen of its own accord, New
23 York City is planning on working with our state
24 partners, the public service commission, the Long
25 Island Power Authority, NYSEERDA, all of our... you know

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2 power authorities that are here today, you know we
3 are... we need to transition to renewable sources and
4 assure that our communities have renewable future so
5 I look forward to hearing from Con Edison and
6 National Grid.. National Grid today and I want to
7 recognize my colleague from Brooklyn Carlos Menchaca
8 who is here and a member of the Committee. So, with
9 that we're going to call the first panel. So, Kyle
10 Kimball from Con Edison, good to see you again and
11 Milovan Blair from Con Edison as well. Alright,
12 gentleman good morning.

13 MILOVAN BLAIR: Good morning. Thank you,
14 Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, for the
15 opportunity to provide comments today. my name is
16 Milovan Blair and I'm the Senior VP of Central
17 Operations at Con Edison responsible for the electric
18 transmission system and I'm joined by my colleague,
19 Kyle Kimball, Vice President of Government Affairs
20 and Government and Community Affairs. Our comments
21 today are focused both on the incident that occurred
22 at our, our, our Astoria East substation on the
23 evening of December 27th, 2018 and Intro 1318, which
24 would require the city to study the use of renewable
25 energy sources with battery storage to replace in

1 city gas fired power plants. So, first I would like
2 to provide some more detail on the incident that
3 caused the dramatic blue light in the sky that
4 understandably caused concern in Astoria and our
5 region. At approximately 9:12 p.m. on December 27th,
6 2018, an electrical fault, a malfunction as you said,
7 on a section of 138,000-volt equipment in one of our
8 Astoria substations caused a sustained electrical arc
9 flash, creating the blue light that was seen. The
10 intense of the light combined with the low cloud,
11 cloud cover that night increased the incident's
12 visibility across the city. The equipment that
13 malfunctioned is associated with voltage monitoring
14 within the substation and a relay system that did not
15 work properly. As a result of the malfunction, there
16 was a transmission disturbance that caused a brief
17 voltage dip. So far, we have replaced the faulty
18 equipment, we have installed a redundant system and
19 are working directly with the manufacture to minimize
20 the chance of this happening again. We sincerely
21 apologize and deeply regret the disruption to our
22 customers and the concern and confusion caused by
23 this visibility. Due to the transmission disturbance,
24 LaGuardia airport and other customers went to their
25

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 back up power systems. Some customers throughout
3 Queens served by substation might have experienced a
4 momentary voltage dip and would have seen their
5 lights flicker with no loss of power. Thankfully, the
6 incident did not cause any significant injuries or
7 result in damage to personal property. The arc flash
8 burned itself out and FDNY did not... did not need to
9 enter the premises, they were there but they did not
10 enter the premises. There were impacts to air
11 quality. A small amount of oil used as a coolant
12 tested substantially below any level of any concern
13 and was contained on the site and cleaned up. The
14 affected transmission equipment in our substation
15 transforms high voltage electricity to a lower
16 voltage, so that it can be used in your homes and
17 businesses, typically we use 120 volts in, in a
18 system and that's what trans... substation allows. The
19 substation is wholly, wholly owned by Con Edison and
20 sits within the same complex as the privately-owned
21 Astoria Generating plant. I just want to make clear
22 that Con Edison does not own any power generation
23 facility in Astoria. It is important to note that
24 this incident would have occurred regardless of how
25 electricity was generated. So, even if we had solar

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 and wind farms need substations to transmit power to
3 the customers. This incident would have occurred even
4 if the power supply was 100 percent renewable green
5 energy. On Intro 1318 we will now provide some
6 comments, which requires the city to study
7 transitioning power plants that use natural gas to
8 renewable and storage. Let me assure you, Con Edison
9 fully supports a transition of cleaner energies, a
10 transition that's already on the way at Con Edison.
11 We believe that careful planning, wise decision
12 making and the strategic use of new technologies we
13 can build an energy system that will be cleaner and
14 more efficient. We know that our customers want clean
15 and reliable electricity and affordable. We have to
16 work together to get to a cleaner and affordable
17 energy future. Con Edison asks this committee and the
18 Council at large for your strong support and
19 collaboration for the following prerequisite
20 strategies, programs and investment to get to our
21 energy clean future. Renewables; we would you're your
22 support for our recently launched shared solar
23 program that will install solar panels on our
24 facilities, including in Astoria and use the
25 resulting bill credits to give monthly discounts to

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 low income customers so that our clean energy future
3 is accessible to everyone. Utility ownership of
4 large-scale renewable generation take advantage of
5 low-cost capital and other business synergies. The
6 development of the necessary transmission
7 infrastructure to deliver that renewable energy to
8 New York City. Technologies to empower smart energy
9 choices and we can see the changes are happening.
10 Making energy efficiency programs and non-wire
11 solutions a growing and important part of our core
12 business. Smart meter technology and implementation.
13 Investments and programs to accelerate the adoption
14 of electric vehicles. Finally, we ask for your
15 support to ensure that, that battery storage, which
16 improves grid resiliency and reliability, is
17 permitted by the FDNY and DOB and becomes an integral
18 part of our energy structure. Another way we are
19 helping to support New York's 80 by 50 goals is our
20 jointly funded study called Energy Infrastructure,
21 Pathways to Achieve 80 by 50, with National Grid and
22 the city of New York through the Mayor's Office. The
23 scope of this study is to develop and assess at least
24 three paths to achieve the 80 by 50 goals and the
25 cost of these paths that could be borne by our

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 customers. Our expectation is that the study will
3 also identify key regulations, laws and policies that
4 could be modified or adopted to accelerate progress
5 towards this goal. For New York City to meet their
6 short- and long-term carbon reduction goals, we need
7 a major increase in large scale renewable energy. We
8 think it makes sense to let customers own and operate
9 these large-scale renewable sources through their
10 utilities. They can be constructed by private
11 developers, but the financing and operating costs
12 will be cheaper by... for our customers if utilities
13 won them as utility ownership means a guaranteed
14 source of renewable energy, lowering costs and
15 increasing union jobs. Through our clean energy
16 subsidiaries, Con Edison is the second largest solar,
17 solar energy producer in North America. With 2,600
18 megawatts of renewable assets in 17 states, Con
19 Edison's assets avoid 5.4 million tons of carbon
20 dioxide emission, the equivalent of taking 1.2
21 million cars off the road. I know it's a common
22 misconception that Con Edison generates all the power
23 that these customers use. Since deregulation occurred
24 in the 1990's, our regulated utility business serving
25 the New York region is currently not allowed to, to

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 generate power. We are primarily a distribution
3 business, with the exception of our steam generating
4 facilities, in which we co-generate steam and
5 electricity. Co-generation means we simultaneously
6 produce steam and electricity using the same amount
7 of fuel. This district steam system provides numerous
8 environmental benefits, including co-generation and
9 the avoidance of on-site boilers... on site boilers for
10 individual buildings. Our steam system generating
11 plants, which are considered a power plant, produces
12 steam for over 1,600 buildings, affecting three
13 million people throughout Manhattan. Steam provides a
14 unique environmental benefit to help transition New
15 York City to carbon reduction goals we all share.
16 Large property owners and policy makers alike widely
17 recognize steam as an important tool for carbon
18 reduction. Two examples are the recognition of LEED
19 points for buildings that use district steam and the
20 city of New York mandating the use of steam for new
21 buildings that take advantage of the recent East
22 Midtown rezoning. We believe steam is a part of the
23 solution for many of our customer's energy and
24 sustainability goals and the city itself and this
25 building being a Con Edison's largest... and this

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COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

building being Con Edison... one of Con Edison's largest customers. We hope the Council recognizes this and look forward to continuing our discussion about the benefits of our steam system. We certainly understand the urgency in reaching society's carbon reduction goals and it's important to engineer a smooth transition that is affordable to our customers. Con Edison has an obligation to provide New Yorkers with energy they need today to keep their homes and businesses energized. We look forward to working with you and other policy makers to ensure a smooth transition to our clean energy future. This is something... this is not something anyone of us can accomplish alone, we're all in this together. Thank you once again for the opportunity to join you here this morning. We would be happy to answer any questions if you have them.

CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Alright,

thank you for your testimony. So, dealing with the actual... so, let's... there's probably two buckets, right, lets talk about first the actual incident. What safeguards failed as part of this malfunction that this occurred?

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 MILOVAN BLAIR: So, what happened is we
3 had this malfunction what we call this monitoring
4 device and typically when you have a failure like
5 this you wouldn't... you wouldn't see it, it... in the
6 matter of milliseconds it would be off the system. In
7 this case the relay systems that's associated with
8 which is similar to your, your breaker in your house
9 which sensed there's a problem and tripped the
10 breaker, in this case the relay systems malfunctioned
11 and that's why you saw that sustained arc.

12 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: So, the... so,
13 the... it was overwhelming... the system was overwhelmed,
14 right... or it wasn't overwhelmed but there... the
15 breaker wasn't working to sort of stop the arc flash,
16 I mean that's, that's my understanding...

17 MILOVAN BLAIR: No, the system wasn't
18 overwhelmed, I say... as I said typically... this lasted
19 about four minutes... [cross-talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Right...
21 [cross-talk]

22 MILOVAN BLAIR: Typically, it would
23 happen in milliseconds, because the relay mis-
24 operated the... as we said the sensing device that

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1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 looked on and the communication device that's why you
3 saw four minutes before it came off the system.

4 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: And what was
5 Con Edison's response once this happened?

6 MILOVAN BLAIR: Once this response... we
7 had employees in the station, we mobilized to the
8 station as we said, it was extinguished in four
9 minutes, the fire department did not have to enter
10 the, the substation and then we put... folks was in
11 there we did a cleanup as we, we said and then we
12 proceeded to make repairs over the... on the few... the
13 days following.

14 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Were you
15 aware of the concerns in, in the outlying community,
16 I know that Marine Terrace there were reports of the
17 foundations of the buildings shaking, there were
18 residents concerned about air quality, I was getting
19 questions on social media do I have to evacuate, is
20 it safe for me to have my child, is it safe to my
21 grandmother, do I have to pack them up and leave,
22 were you aware of all of those concerns in the
23 community and what was Con Edison doing to get out
24 into the neighborhood once you had established that,
25 you know obviously that the fire department didn't

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 have to come, that you had this under control, what
3 were you doing outside of the plant to reach out to
4 residents?

5 MILOVAN BLAIR: Yes, we were aware that,
6 that the, the commotion in the... in the... in the
7 community folks were there, we had our corporate
8 affairs folks reaching out to elected officials
9 following that and reaching out to the community at
10 large. We, of course interfaced with the fire..
11 [cross-talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: How many
13 people... [cross-talk]

14 MILOVAN BLAIR: ...department and that..
15 [cross-talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: ...how many
17 people were out there speaking to residents in the
18 community?

19 MILOVAN BLAIR: I don't know the exact
20 number, as I said my corporate affairs folks were out
21 in the community, I'll get that number for you and
22 get back to you.

23 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: So, what
24 would you have done differently?

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1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 MILOVAN BLAIR: There are some inherent
3 risks with running the system as I said we... in this
4 case we have a redundant system that we have placed
5 in there from a different manufacturer to make sure
6 to minimize this from happening again.

7 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: But what,
8 what would you do differently in the community
9 outreach portion because there was some real deep
10 concern, right, this... you know Astoria and Queens
11 we've lived with Con Edison for a long time, you know
12 we're your neighbors...

13 MILOVAN BLAIR: That's correct.

14 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: You know
15 across the street from your facilities are people's
16 homes where their children play, where they are out
17 and about living their lives, they felt unsafe right
18 after this incident, there were reports of a burning
19 smell in the air, there were concerns about air
20 quality, you know we were able to get information out
21 for them but that was an hour, two hours later, you
22 know how do we get a better... one sense of, you know
23 how we can better respond in the neighborhood and do
24 better outreach and then secondly how do we make sure
25 something like this doesn't happen?

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 MILOVAN BLAIR: So, the customers are at
3 the center of what we do, we are... [cross-talk]

4 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: We're not
5 only customers... [cross-talk]

6 MILOVAN BLAIR: ...the, the, the... [cross-
7 talk]

8 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: ...we're your
9 neighbors right, I mean... [cross-talk]

10 MILOVAN BLAIR: ...community... the
11 community... [cross-talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: ...this is not
13 a financial component... [cross-talk]

14 MILOVAN BLAIR: ...the, the community is an
15 important part of what we do, we constantly
16 communicate, communicate with our... with the
17 community. As I said our corporate affairs was out
18 talking to elected officials and the community
19 because we are always concerned to be good corporate
20 citizens and work within the community.

21 KYLE KIMBALL: I'll, I'll just add that
22 there was a big social media component to it because
23 that's the way to get word out fairly quickly...
24 [cross-talk]

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1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Uh-huh...

3 [cross-talk]

4 KYLE KIMBALL: ...and again the specific
5 outreach but if there are ways you think we should be
6 reaching out or, or channels that we're not using to
7 reach out to the neighbors please let us know.

8 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: I mean we
9 were... you know we were using social media and... but
10 there are a lot of people like on the ground who
11 lived across the street who's buildings shook, right
12 and, and who, you know weren't necessarily looking at
13 their phones but were, you know elderly neighbors,
14 you know folks who don't have smart phones but were
15 in a position to not know what's happening in their
16 own... you know in their own neighborhood and live next
17 to Con Edison every day, right, there's already a
18 concern about living next to a power distribution
19 system, I know you guys... I don't want to use power
20 provider because that's not what you do but a power
21 distribution system there's that concern and unease
22 and then for something like this to happen and if you
23 knew pretty close that this was not a major event why
24 weren't there more people communicating that in the
25 neighborhood across the street saying hey, it's

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 alright, the, the air quality is safe, you can go
3 back in, you don't have to evacuate your child, you
4 don't have to... you don't have to leave your home, you
5 know people were asking me that question for others
6 not just for themselves.

7 MILOVAN BLAIR: We, we, we'd be happy to
8 work on a way to develop a specific communication
9 channel for the people... for the people who live right
10 next to the plant, distribution center.

11 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Because,
12 because this was... I, I know this was two days after
13 Christmas everyone was still, you know celebrating
14 with one another, that's where I was, I was
15 celebrating with my family and, and you know enjoying
16 a nice night and then all of a sudden, it's
17 unsettling, it's unsettling.

18 MILOVAN BLAIR: Certainly, understand
19 Councilman.

20 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: So, I want
21 to make sure that's communicated on the record but
22 let's talk a little bit about renewables and our
23 future. You know what conversations have you had with
24 the city about reliability and emissions and how Con
25 Edison can help us move to a renewable future?

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 KYLE KIMBALL: So, we speak to the city
3 just about every day, I would say there's a number of
4 ways we could answer this. One is... I think the, the
5 overarching idea is that we are very committed to a
6 clean energy future but and also want to make sure
7 that there is a smooth transition... [cross-talk]

8 MILOVAN BLAIR: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

9 KYLE KIMBALL: ...to a clean energy future
10 that people can afford so one we're doing with the
11 city right now is doing a study on what it actually
12 would cost to move to a renewable energy future in
13 terms of what people would pay, what it would require
14 to actually... to do the things that need to be done to
15 have a renewable energy future, which is not
16 something that has been studied at all and that's due
17 in about a year and a half or... a year and a half or
18 so... [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: So, a year
20 and a half that, that... [cross-talk]

21 KYLE KIMBALL: ...one is to... [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: ...that the
23 findings will come out in about a year and a half?

24 KYLE KIMBALL: Yeah, so I think that's...
25 is that about... it's about a year?

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 MILOVAN BLAIR: A year...

3 KYLE KIMBALL: About a year, we're going
4 to work... we're... in conjunction with National Grid and
5 the city to get a study on cost. I think the second
6 thing we're doing is we're doing a lot of things
7 right now because there's a... things... on the things
8 that we can control so, one is using our own
9 facilities to install renewable assets so the shared
10 solar program, Astoria is one of the sites and the
11 idea is we're using our facilities, we control that,
12 we're installing solar panels and we'll put bill
13 credits out to people who are currently in our low
14 income customer group. The third thing is we're do...
15 working with the city on batteries, batteries have
16 been tricky, but we are looking for both utility
17 scale sized batteries where we can install those on
18 our own facilities as well as looking at different
19 battery systems that can be used in a more
20 residential setting. So, we're doing that on the
21 battery side as well... [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Now what's
23 been the impediments to implementing those ideas?

24 KYLE KIMBALL: There have been concerns,
25 we're working very closely with the Mayor's Office,

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 there have been concerns and, and very valid concerns
3 by FDNY in terms of understanding if there... in, in
4 the rare case that there is a potential fire on a
5 battery how those fires would be fought in a
6 residential setting; two, working with the Department
7 of Buildings to help them understand the, the
8 building implications and the building safety
9 implications of having residential battery storage.

10 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: And that...
11 and those conversations are going well, do we see
12 implementation soon, what's the... [cross-talk]

13 KYLE KIMBALL: We are working very
14 closely... [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: ...timeline...
16 [cross-talk]

17 KYLE KIMBALL: ...with the Mayor's Office
18 to move with the agencies and address their concerns,
19 yep.

20 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Okay but
21 there's no time... there's no time line that... to work
22 this through and to kind of implement?

23 KYLE KIMBALL: I don't currently know of
24 a timeline other than we're trying to work as fast as

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1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 possible, we'd have to... we'd love to have your
3 support in the... moving those conversations forward.

4 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: So, what,
5 what currently percentage of your grid is renewable?

6 MILOVAN BLAIR: It's about 30 percent...

7 [cross-talk]

8 KYLE KIMBALL: Yeah, I was going to say
9 it's about... [cross-talk]

10 MILOVAN BLAIR: About 30 percent... [cross-
11 talk]

12 KYLE KIMBALL: ...30 percent, yeah...

13 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: About... so,
14 so 30... is that for New York City or that's total
15 nationwide?

16 MILOVAN BLAIR: That's for New York City.

17 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: For New York
18 City.

19 KYLE KIMBALL: Yeah, in our... [cross-talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: And... [cross-
21 talk]

22 KYLE KIMBALL: ...in Astoria territory...

23 [cross-talk]

24

25

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: And you're
3 the second largest solar producer in the United... in
4 America, right?

5 KYLE KIMBALL: Two separate things...
6 [cross-talk]

7 MILOVAN BLAIR: Yeah... [cross-talk]

8 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Okay...
9 [cross-talk]

10 KYLE KIMBALL: But... so there's the grid
11 that we distribute power to New York City in
12 Westchester, Orange and Rockland in the five boroughs
13 and that... anything that's renewable has to come from
14 other sources because we're not currently allowed to
15 generate power in New York State. We are the second
16 largest renewable energy developer in North America
17 with assets mostly in the west because we are able to
18 do that through one of our subsidiaries, but we're
19 not currently allowed to be that developer in New
20 York State.

21 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: And you're
22 asking the state to do that?

23 KYLE KIMBALL: We are asking the state to
24 do that... [cross-talk]

25

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 MILOVAN BLAIR: Asking the state to do
3 that... [cross-talk]

4 KYLE KIMBALL: Yeah.

5 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Now on the
6 shared solar what is the timeline for implementation
7 there?

8 KYLE KIMBALL: So, we are working... go
9 ahead. Yeah, I was going to say... [cross-talk]

10 MILOVAN BLAIR: Yeah, we're thinking of
11 course as we said the largest building is in Astoria,
12 you can get two megawatts of solar on the building,
13 we're looking to do it 2020.

14 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: 2020 so next
15 year?

16 KYLE KIMBALL: End of 2019, first quarter
17 of 2020.

18 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: And when do
19 you believe it will be up and running?

20 KYLE KIMBALL: That, that... around that
21 time.

22 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: To be up and
23 running, it's not just starting... [cross-talk]

24 KYLE KIMBALL: Up and running, yeah...
25 [cross-talk]

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES:

3 ...construction so you'll saying it'll be implemented
4 by 2020... [cross-talk]

5 KYLE KIMBALL: Yeah... [cross-talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: ...and that
7 residents in either public housing or, or section
8 eight housing will be seeing a bill credit?

9 KYLE KIMBALL: Its more the... it's not so
10 much about the housing it's more about if you are
11 currently a member of our low-income program... [cross-
12 talk]

13 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Okay..
14 [cross-talk]

15 KYLE KIMBALL: ...so you can... so it doesn't
16 matter where you're... where you're living.

17 MILOVAN BLAIR: We think it will provide
18 monthly credits for approximately 900 low income
19 customers and as we said the installation will be
20 completed by the end of 2019, the first quarter of
21 2020.

22 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Now I was
23 listening to your podcast from January 4th that
24 talked about the 12-megawatt battery storage facility
25 in, in Queens, tell me about how that's going? Yeah

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 and it was... it was January 4th and it was Mark Kriski
3 he talked about energy trends for 2019 how, you know
4 yellow should be like the, the color I, I just...

5 [cross-talk]

6 MILOVAN BLAIR: So, we have some customer
7 sited solution that we have done in Brooklyn and
8 Queens totaling 20... 34 megawatts, we have utility
9 side solutions, we have two megawatts of battery on
10 our site and then we see basically looking out we're
11 going to put roughly over 30 megawatts of batteries
12 in our substation site and we're looking... [cross-
13 talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: But you have
15 12 megawatts now, right?

16 KYLE KIMBALL: Just about... [cross-talk]

17 MILOVAN BLAIR: Just about.

18 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: And, and
19 that's going well, it's, it's working out as, as, as
20 anticipated, you're looking to expand to 30?

21 MILOVAN BLAIR: Yeah just as... just as
22 Kyle said it's working well, some of the concerns of
23 course working with the FDNY to make sure in terms of
24 fire how would it... as well as DOB in a residential
25 neighborhood.

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 KYLE KIMBALL: I mean it's... it... there
3 are... there's the classic issues of many people are
4 concerned about having these, these assets in their
5 neighborhoods similar to what you said about living
6 near, near, near Astoria and the concerns there and
7 so the idea is we're working a lot with the
8 communities to make them understand that these are
9 safe and that they actually benefit the resiliency of
10 the neighborhood but that they're also part of our,
11 our clean energy future, we're also looking to do
12 one... several in, in Brooklyn as well.

13 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: So, how do
14 you partner with customers to make, you know good
15 choices, right like and I'll make it akin to, you
16 know the... I can go to my refrigerator, I can take out
17 a bag of potato chips and you know a, a brownie and
18 all sorts of bad food or I can, you know take out
19 some carrots and like eat healthy food, right, so how
20 do we... how do we help our customers make good,
21 healthy choices, are there incentives, are there
22 conversations that are had to say, you know don't go
23 with fossil fuels if there are opportunities for you
24 to use renewable energy we want to help you do that,
25 how do those conversations work?

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 MILOVAN BLAIR: So, so you see we have a
3 pretty aggressive energy efficiency program, if you
4 look in Brooklyn and Queens we have replaced
5 lighting, of course we have also an aggressive smart
6 meter program where they.. a customer can control
7 exactly how they use electricity, we have visibility
8 to see how they do that, we constantly if you look on
9 our website, if you look under communications we have
10 the.. with customer energy efficiency is a part of
11 that discussion as well as how to use energy
12 efficiently. As a matter of fact, we have bill
13 inserts that tell you how much electricity you use
14 compared to your neighbors and this communication is
15 constantly happening with our customers.

16 KYLE KIMBALL: And the other thing I
17 would say is we have a program for some.. installing
18 smart meters throughout the city that will also give
19 us and customers a, a.. much more transparency into
20 one, how they're using, when they're using their
21 power and, and different they can use less power. I
22 would say though to your question our conversations
23 with customers are about using less energy, we don't
24 necessarily talk to our customers about, on the
25 electricity side about using fossil fuels, those,

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 those are conversations that, that ESCOs energy
3 service companies tend to have with their customers
4 as well but we usually... [cross-talk]

5 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: But do we
6 offer... [cross-talk]

7 KYLE KIMBALL: ...talk about... [cross-talk]

8 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: ...incentives
9 to use gas or fossil fuels over renewables. Is, is
10 Con Edison currently marketing gas to customers over
11 fossil... over renewables?

12 KYLE KIMBALL: The only marketing that
13 would be taking place... so on the electricity side, no
14 but on the... on the... there, there have been some
15 programs in the past to expand away from fuel oil to
16 natural gas which is something that's ending I think
17 at the end of this year so that's, that is one place
18 where there have been incentives until recently to
19 switch to natural gas but that's from switching from
20 oil to gas.

21 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: So, then
22 there's no incentives that would be made to go from,
23 from you know fuel oil to renew... you know to natural
24 gas in, in lieu of renewables, right, if someone said
25 I want to do renewables you're not saying... but do

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 you... there's two million dollars on the table that
3 you can take for natural gas, right, we're not... we're
4 not having those types of conversations, right?

5 MILOVAN BLAIR: So, there have been
6 discussions with the customers as I said if you look
7 on our Brooklyn, Queens demand management where we
8 went into the neighborhoods talking to customers how
9 can we put new technology in their... in that area to
10 push off the installation of a substation so I would
11 say those discussions are happening with the
12 customers and we're giving them some incentives to
13 make that transition from of fossil fuel as you say
14 to, to new energy.

15 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Listen it's
16 like, you know there's two I keep saying buckets but
17 there really are two, two conversations that have to
18 be had here, right, there's one about efficiency and
19 about smart meter and then there's... you know there's
20 the not using it at all, right, it's a... it's... how do
21 we make that step to making choices that are
22 renewable and not sort of hanging a carrot out there
23 and saying, you know don't do this because you can...
24 you can get a million dollars for doing natural gas
25 which is still a fossil fuel and still a challenge

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 and we need to be moving away from natural gas not
3 steering people towards that, right so I just want to
4 make sure that Con Edison is having those.. both of
5 those conversations, right?

6 MILOVAN BLAIR: Yes, we are.

7 KYLE KIMBALL: Yeah.

8 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: And so let's
9 talk a little bit about natural gas and, and, and
10 the, the rate case and rate hikes, you know on, on
11 January 31st Con Edison proposed new rate increases
12 for electric, you know 485 million and gas 210
13 million dollars for delivery systems in 2020 to fund
14 infrastructure investments, what infrastructure
15 investments would be proposed under this rate hike?

16 MILOVAN BLAIR: So, the rate review is a
17 yearlong public review process where stakeholders get
18 involved, our proposal as you said make major
19 investment to enhance the reliability of our system,
20 many of our investments that we're talking about
21 really encourage the development of new technology,
22 green energy the very things that we're discussing
23 here today. For example, as we said looking to put
24 batteries in our substations, our network, doing
25 projects soliciting projects that will help

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
2 transition us from fossil fuels to, to green energy.
3 Looking on to new technology, if you look on the
4 electric transmission system our environmental if we
5 get off the old... all cables and get into new
6 technology with... electric. So, it's one to enhance
7 the reliability of our system and serve our customer
8 and prepare the grid for this new technology in
9 moving power back between the customers and the grid.

10 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: So, the... so,
11 the, the, the crux of this rate hike is focused
12 around preparing our entire grid system for a
13 renewable future, what percentage of the proposed
14 increase would go to fund renewable energy
15 infrastructure?

16 MILOVAN BLAIR: So, I would say its
17 safety, reliability and enhancing the grid to prepare
18 for new technologies.

19 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: But there's
20 no percentage that... to, to get us at the stuff we're...
21 [cross-talk]

22 KYLE KIMBALL: We can... [cross-talk]

23 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: ...talking
24 about... [cross-talk]

25

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 KYLE KIMBALL: There, there are some
3 programs in the electric rate case and the... and we
4 can get you that, that number but there is a portion.
5 I would also say that a big portion of the... both on
6 the electric side... I... and I don't know the exact
7 percentage just answering your question you're
8 asking... [cross-talk]

9 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Uh-huh,
10 okay, no I'll, I'll, I'll take whatever you can give
11 me.

12 KYLE KIMBALL: ...is a big portion of our
13 natural gas and electric rate case is increased to
14 property taxes by the city.

15 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Increased
16 property taxes, okay, what about gas... methane gas
17 emissions from leaks?

18 MILOVAN BLAIR: That's, that's... as you
19 know we're replacing nine miles of LEED pipes per
20 year, that will of course minimize the amount of
21 leaks that we are seeing in our system and that's
22 targeted as part of the gas rate case.

23 KYLE KIMBALL: And we're also doing
24 methane detectors, in home methane detectors that
25 communicate with our smart meters so that we are able

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
2 to hear... detect methane leaks. In, in the... in the
3 past it's been about someone's... essentially the best
4 detector has been someone's nose... [cross-talk]

5 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Uh-huh...
6 [cross-talk]

7 KYLE KIMBALL: ...these methane detectors
8 work close with our smart meter so that a detection
9 can happen even if there's no one present.

10 MILOVAN BLAIR: That's new technology
11 that we at Con Edison developed, I think it's the
12 first in the world.

13 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Okay...
14 [cross-talk]

15 MILOVAN BLAIR: Is new methane detectors.

16 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Now how
17 much... how much methane gas is emitted in New York
18 City from gas leaking mains every year?

19 KYLE KIMBALL: I don't know.

20 MILOVAN BLAIR: We'll get back to you
21 with that number.

22 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Okay, can
23 you get that to me... [cross-talk]

24 KYLE KIMBALL: Yeah... [cross-talk]

25

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Not just a
3 phone call but like in a letter?

4 KYLE KIMBALL: Sure, we'll send you a
5 letter.

6 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: To this
7 committee, thank you. You know what, what percentage
8 increase would New York City customers see from this
9 rate case?

10 MILOVAN BLAIR: So, the monthly electric
11 bill for New, New York City residential customers
12 using 300 megawatts you'd see an increase of \$4.45,
13 that's an increase of roughly 5.8 percent.

14 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Okay and
15 this is currently before the PSC and taking public
16 comment?

17 MILOVAN BLAIR: Yes, as I said it's
18 roughly a one-year process where you really engage
19 the stakeholders on this issue.

20 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: The last bit
21 of questions that I have really go around your actual
22 power plants, I know you do have a steam plant, you
23 know in Manhattan, what, what sources of energy do
24 you use there to generate the steam?

25

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 MILOVAN BLAIR: So, we use natural gas
3 to, to... and as we said it's a co-generation that
4 means you produce very efficient, 60 percent
5 efficiency that you use both... producing both electric
6 and steam.

7 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: And what are
8 your plans to change that plant over time, so, so,
9 how, how do we... you know how do we... as... if New York
10 State allows you to be... to start... to allow solar do
11 you have any plans of turning that plant over to
12 renewables?

13 MILOVAN BLAIR: So, so we agree... it's a...
14 it's a transition process, steam as you know is very
15 efficient. As I said in the testimony it gets boilers
16 out of the home, it's a centralized system, you get
17 lead certified associated with it, just like anything
18 else it's a transition process and if the technology
19 is there that you can transition off steam even
20 though it's very... [cross-talk]

21 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Oh, no, I'm
22 not... [cross-talk]

23 MILOVAN BLAIR: ...efficient... [cross-talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: ...I'm not
25 talking about the customers I'm talking about, you

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 know the way you produce the power, right, like
3 you're... here you're not only the distributor but you
4 are the creator, right, you're, you're the actual
5 power plant in these... in this instance so how are you
6 looking to take that plant to make that plant
7 producing clean... you know that plant produce... you
8 know start from... right now you're using natural gas
9 to create the steam... [cross-talk]

10 MILOVAN BLAIR: That's, that's correct.

11 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: So, what are
12 you doing to make that a... more renewable based system
13 to create that steam and electricity?

14 MILOVAN BLAIR: So, right now the
15 technology is that we, we use natural gas to produce
16 the stream and as I said as we transition our new
17 technologies that can replace steam, we'll certainly
18 look to do that in, in the future.

19 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Alright,
20 because I... [cross-talk]

21 KYLE KIMBALL: And I'd like to... I think
22 that the, the technology doesn't I believe... [cross-
23 talk]

24 MILOVAN BLAIR: Exist for us right...
25 [cross-talk]

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 KYLE KIMBALL: ...currently exist right now
3 to... [cross-talk]

4 MILOVAN BLAIR: ...right now... [cross-talk]

5 KYLE KIMBALL: ...create the amount of
6 steam we need with electricity... [cross-talk]

7 MILOVAN BLAIR: So, you see we made a
8 transition from oil to gas, the plants as I said are
9 very efficient, co-generation allows you to do two...
10 produce both electric and steam so very efficient,
11 60 percent efficiency and sure as the technology
12 develops that we can transition off we certainly look
13 to do so but right now that's the technology that's
14 there.

15 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Because, you
16 know my big concern about power plants is they're
17 stationary sources of pollution, you know they don't
18 get up and stretch their legs, they're in
19 communities, they're in neighborhoods, there are
20 emissions that are associated from those plants and I
21 can't talk to you about that in, in many instances
22 because you're... I'm, I'm hoping that some of them are
23 here today, some of the power producers though I'm
24 not sure that they... they're here yet, well... energy is
25 here, okay so there's, there's a couple of them here,

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 I'm looking forward from hearing from them but
3 they're stationary sources of pollution and I want to
4 make sure that we are moving to a greener renewable
5 future by... that's what... about is replacing in city
6 gas powered power plant and replacing them with
7 renewable energy, that's the goal.

8 MILOVAN BLAIR: And as we say we
9 certainly support that, we want to move to the new
10 technology, we certainly want to make sure that it's
11 well thought out and that... and of course the cost to
12 the customer.

13 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Great, so
14 you're going to work with us, you're in support of
15 the legislation, you're going to work with the city
16 to help us draw up that map, correct?

17 MILOVAN BLAIR: That's correct.

18 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Alright,
19 I'm, I'm glad to hear that. I see we have been joined
20 by Council Member Donovan Richards also from Queens,
21 thank you for being here today; Carlos, Donovan you
22 guys have any questions for Con Edison? No, Donovan?
23 I guess not...

24 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay. Just one
25 question I guess, how do you... do you work with

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 NYSERDA so obviously I think you're offering some
3 programming, I don't know if this was touched on for
4 homeowners to transition as well, so can you tell me
5 about your work in relationship with NYSERDA and how
6 do you coordinate with local homeowners or local
7 building owners on transitioning to renewable energy?

8 KYLE KIMBALL: Good morning Council
9 Member, so we work a lot, we work very closely with
10 NYSERDA and help them design their programs, at the
11 end of the day their programs are a function of their
12 board, legislation and in Albany but we do work very
13 closely with them to develop the right types of
14 programs to address where we're going and then we
15 help market those potentially to our... to our
16 customers.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: And then at a
18 hearing a few weeks ago that the Chair held there was
19 conversation around this fund, is that, that... I think
20 it's in your offices, 15 million dollars to help
21 transition, building owners and others to solar and
22 other things, so I'm interested in hearing how... what
23 is the coordination like between Con Edison, other
24 utility companies, with the city on pushing these
25 programs that seem to me I think at that time Kyle

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 said they were 32 programs... 32 grants or programs
3 given out from 2011 to now so what does that
4 coordination look like between Con Edison and the
5 Mayor's Office or DEP in terms of that specific
6 programming as well?

7 KYLE KIMBALL: We work very, very closely
8 with the Mayor's Office on this and a, a number of
9 programs, we also work very closely in the
10 communities themselves so I have about 45 people or
11 so in my regional community affairs in all five
12 boroughs and throughout the service territory that
13 are constantly working with community partners to
14 identify the right type of program... the right type of
15 recipients for the programs that are in place whether
16 or not they are NYSERDA programs, Con Edison
17 programs, etcetera so there are pretty robust
18 conversations at the community level which we find
19 to be the most effective.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: And I know that
21 this specific area, I think I saw the Chair on New
22 York One this morning pointing out that this is a
23 high asthma area so what do you specifically... what
24 I'm trying to get at is how, how... is there a laser
25 focus on EJ communities like this, you know are you...

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 are you looking and strategically working with
3 building owners and home owners in specific... in the
4 specific areas around Astoria to help reduce carbon
5 emissions but secondly to address the EJ issues in
6 that community, so what does that look like?

7 KYLE KIMBALL: So, one of the things
8 we're doing we talked about earlier is in Astoria for
9 example we are working on installing... the Council
10 Member asked what are we doing sort of right now to
11 help with the transition to renewable future so
12 Astoria where we have a huge footprint that we share
13 with our... the private develop... the private generators
14 we are installing solar assets on that facility... on
15 the... that's land we control and own and we can
16 install that and Con Edison is essentially installing
17 solar panels in Astoria and it was approved by... we
18 filed with the public Service Commission and was... it
19 was an approved program where the solar that we
20 generate, the solar energy that we generate and we're
21 able to put back into the system the value of that is
22 transferred to low income customers on their bills so
23 if you are currently a low income customer at the end
24 of 2019, early 2020 when this is finished and in... and
25 in operation you will essentially be participating as

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 if you had a solar panel on the roof of your building
3 but it's just at the Astoria yards.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: And I know they
5 are... there's public housing over there, Astoria... I
6 think the Astoria Houses is over there... [cross-talk]

7 KYLE KIMBALL: That's right... [cross-talk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Tell me about
9 your coordination with NYCHA... [cross-talk]

10 KYLE KIMBALL: Okay... [cross-talk]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: ...have you
12 looked at using renewables specifically in that
13 development over there and I'm assuming if the asthma
14 rates are high in that area for residents in public
15 housing it's, it's probably double the rate so just
16 speak to what does that look like, the coordination
17 with NYCHA on the possibility of renewable energy?

18 KYLE KIMBALL: Yes, so we have worked
19 very closely with NYCHA Bomee Jung from NYCHA in
20 particular who's been very dogged about... and right
21 now we're in the phase of looking at, we would like
22 to do a similar program that we're talking about
23 with, with Astoria, we just don't necessarily
24 obviously control the, the real estate in same way
25 with NYCHA that we do in Astoria so there's an active

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 conversation now about installing renewable assets,
3 solar assets specifically on NYCHA developments and
4 that's something that's happening... [cross-talk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: In Astoria
6 Houses?

7 KYLE KIMBALL: Throughout the entire...
8 [cross-talk]

9 MILOVAN BLAIR: Throughout the entire... if
10 you look in the Brooklyn and Queens area as we said
11 in, in our demand and response we... energy efficiency,
12 fuel cells, batteries, working with Marcus Garvey
13 Houses for example to put in fuel cells so there's
14 constant discussion with the community, with NYCHA,
15 with NYSERDA, we have energy efficiency programs that
16 we have with NYCHA, NYSERDA has energy efficiency
17 programs so we... you can't simply have a discussion
18 between us, the community and NYCHA for example
19 NYSERDA.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Well I look
21 forward to hearing more concrete plans on that
22 eventually and I just wanted to ask you one last
23 question or two. How many... did you plant have any
24 violations prior to this incident?

25 KYLE KIMBALL: Repeat the question.

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: And violations
3 issued to this specific plant before the blast?

4 MILOVAN BLAIR: Yeah... no, no violations
5 on the substations.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay and the
7 state would obviously regulate and check that, right?

8 MILOVAN BLAIR: That's correct as well as
9 the city as well.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Alrighty, thank
11 you Mr. Chair, the only piece we're missing is the
12 NYPD, I wanted to know if they would be prepared in
13 the case of any extra-terrestrial activity happening
14 in our city but since I don't see them here, yeah, I
15 wish they were here to, to answer that question, I'm
16 really concerned about the state of our city when it
17 comes to aliens invading us so hope to see... [cross-
18 talk]

19 MILOVAN BLAIR: So, I won't... [cross-talk]

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: ...at the next
21 hearing... [cross-talk]

22 MILOVAN BLAIR: ...comment on the aliens
23 but we certainly... if you look on the event that night
24 NYPD was there, FDNY, we collaborated with them at,
25 at every level both the FDNY and NYPD so when there's

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 something that happens there's communications between
3 Con Ed and these entities.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Well as a
5 Queens resident and the Chair of the Public Safety
6 Committee I would just want the NYPD to know I'm
7 concerned about their preparation in alien invasions
8 so... thank you so much, thank you Chair for a great
9 hearing.

10 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Yeah, if
11 you're up for a joint hearing, you know we can do it
12 together.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: I am ready to
14 do it tomorrow if you wish.

15 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Council
16 Member Menchaca has some questions as well?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Thank you Chair
18 and thank you for coming to testify, you know the
19 work... the work with... that, that the Chair is doing in
20 Astoria with all of you is, is a good reminder for us
21 to look at other parts of the city. I'm thinking
22 about a place that I know well, Red Hook, and the
23 relationship that you have with that community really
24 specifically around the investment that's going into
25 the Red Hook NYCHA Houses, east and west and so can

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 you talk a little bit about that in relationship to
3 the issues that we're seeing in Astoria and how Con
4 Ed and the responsibility that you are having as you
5 connect to both the NYCHA campus, the non-NYCHA
6 campus, a waterfront community where we have been
7 grappling with resiliency, talking about off grid,
8 talking about renewable energy, electricity plans and
9 just give us a quick update on, on that if you have
10 that information.

11 KYLE KIMBALL: I don't have a number... I
12 haven't gotten a most recent update on what's going
13 on in Red Hook, I would say that stepping back from
14 that and happy to, to get back to you with more
15 details on that. I think that the resiliency piece
16 is, is a huge component of the renewable conversation
17 which is why we are very strong, strong, strong
18 believers in, in both solar generation sort of on
19 site as close to... as close as possible which is sort
20 of why you'd need substations like this even if you
21 have 100 percent renewable grid you have to have the
22 assets around the city so the conversation I think
23 you're right, it has to be a robust conversation
24 about resiliency, about renewables and making sure
25 that people have access that it's not just the

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
2 province of people who can afford these capital
3 projects but that, that it's something that's
4 available to all and I think Red Hook is a good
5 example of it, of what we're doing there but I don't
6 have the specifics of where that program stands right
7 now.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Great, well...
9 [cross-talk]

10 MILOVAN BLAIR: And I will say just, just
11 like you see after hurricane Sandy we have engaged
12 NYCHA on many fronts following... being on the
13 waterfront, resiliency and what we need to do if we
14 should have a similar event so that discussion
15 continues at every level of the company and, and... as
16 well as the NYCHA agency.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Well looking
18 forward to, to talking with you maybe at another
19 hearing but also in the community and I welcome that
20 conversation to happen sooner rather than later.

21 MILOVAN BLAIR: Okay...

22 KYLE KIMBALL: Absolutely.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you
25 Council Member Menchaca, I, I have two last questions

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 one about one of my colleagues who is not a member of
3 this Committee and couldn't be here today but they
4 had a question relating to power outages in Jamaica
5 caused by balloons that left about 1,500 residents in
6 the dark back in December, you know when you talk
7 about power and, and your distribution, you know how
8 many outages have been caused over the last two years
9 by incidental contact with overhead power lines in
10 southeast Queens?

11 MILOVAN BLAIR: So, we don't have that
12 information at hand but of course it's an overhead
13 system so you will have incidental contact at, at
14 some point, we'll research that information and get
15 back to you.

16 KYLE KIMBALL: I would... [cross-talk]

17 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: And... [cross-
18 talk]

19 KYLE KIMBALL: ...say we also... we do have I
20 would say in... we can get back to you with the number
21 of specific outages but Mylar balloons does tend to
22 be a problem for the overhead system specifically in
23 Coney Island for obvious reasons in that area but
24 that is something... I would say squirrels and Mylar
25 balloons are some of our biggest advisories.

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Yeah, I'm
3 going to leave... I'm going to leave that one right
4 there. I'm going to leave that one right there and
5 just know that... I mean I, I... you know I, I share my
6 colleagues concern, Donovan Richards, I share my
7 other colleagues' concerns, I mean you know racoons
8 as well, I mean we... yeah, yeah, just some... I'm not
9 going to touch that one but with that said another
10 issue... when we talk about the solar installation and,
11 and all the work that Con Edison does how are we...
12 what workforce are we doing that with when it comes
13 to PLAs and you know are, are we doing it union, are
14 we doing it non-union like are... you know this is... New
15 York City is a union town like how are we doing this
16 work to make sure that we're creating good jobs as
17 well?

18 MILOVAN BLAIR: So, our union... our
19 workforce is a union workforce at Con Ed.

20 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: So, they...
21 you're doing these installation... you know all of this
22 is being implemented with union labor?

23 MILOVAN BLAIR: So, we do put RFPs out to
24 solicit to do demonstration projects and I think both
25 of those are a mixture of union and non-union.

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Yeah and I
3 think the, the, the more that we can do, you know
4 this is about not only social... environmental justice
5 but also, you know making sure that we're creating
6 jobs for the 21st century and that those jobs, you
7 know should be with the benefits that they need.

8 KYLE KIMBALL: The legislation we've
9 designed for the, the ability for us to have
10 renewable, renewable assets on the utility scale
11 because I think whether or not you want it to be in
12 50 years... or in, in 30 years, 20 years or 10 years
13 this transition to renewable energy it has to..
14 [cross-talk]

15 MILOVAN BLAIR: Five but... [cross-talk]

16 KYLE KIMBALL: Or five...

17 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Or sooner.

18 KYLE KIMBALL: It has to... it has to be..
19 we have to have all the tools in the tool kit to get
20 the renewable assets built and the transmission lines
21 to get the power to where it needs to go and so we
22 feel like with the utility scale solar the ability to
23 do that, one of the things we have... we have promised
24 is that all those projects would be dealt... would be

25

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 built with union labor, which is not necessarily the
3 case as it stands now.

4 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: So, it will
5 be the case moving forward, I'm glad to hear that.
6 Any other questions from my colleagues? Alright,
7 appreciate you coming here to testify today, thank
8 you very much, I'm looking... [cross-talk]

9 KYLE KIMBALL: Thank you... [cross-talk]

10 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: ...forward to
11 working with you.

12 KYLE KIMBALL: Thanks, okay, we'll get
13 back to you on those specific things.

14 MILOVAN BLAIR: Thank you, I look forward
15 to it.

16 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Alright, so
17 next up we have Susanne DesRoches, Deputy Director of
18 the Mayor's Office of sustainability, I see you guys
19 are up second this time usually you're, you're,
20 you're heading lead off. Alright and since you are of
21 a mayoral agency, I need to have Samara swear you in.

22 COMMITTEE CLERK SWANSTON: Can you please
23 raise your right hands? Do you swear or affirm to
24 tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
25 truth today?

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 SUSANNE DESROCHES: Yes.

3 KE: Yes.

4 SUSANNE DESROCHES: Okay...

5 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Good
6 morning.

7 SUSANNE DESROCHES: Morning.

8 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Go ahead.

9 SUSANNE DESROCHES: Okay, I wasn't sure
10 if you were making a statement as well.

11 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: No, no, no,
12 I, I do it once.

13 SUSANNE DESROCHES: Great, well had we
14 not... [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: I know like
16 our... [cross-talk]

17 SUSANNE DESROCHES: ...gone second, yeah.

18 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Yeah, it's a
19 whole new routine, we got to get into... [cross-talk]

20 SUSANNE DESROCHES: Whole new routine.
21 Good morning, my name is Susanne DesRoches and I am
22 the Deputy Director for Infrastructure and Energy at
23 both the Mayor's Office of Resiliency and the Mayor's
24 Office of Sustainability. I am joined today by Ke
25 Wei, Assistant Director for Infrastructure also with

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 MOR and MOS. I want to thank Chairperson
3 Constantinides and the members of the Committee for
4 Environmental Protection for this opportunity to
5 testify on behalf of the De Blasio Administration on
6 Introduction 1318. Our electric grid is one of the
7 most critical lifeline systems in our city. It serves
8 over eight million people and 250,000 businesses. It
9 supports our lives and livelihoods, including
10 economic and governance activities of global
11 importance. When it fails, the cascading impacts
12 affect critical services from transportation to
13 telecommunications, as well as our economy and our
14 access to healthcare. The grid, however, needs to be
15 cleaner. New York State's existing transmission
16 system does not enable enough renewable energy
17 produced in the northern and western portions of the
18 state to flow to the city. To clean up our grid, the
19 city must reduce its reliance on old, inefficient
20 fossil fuel-based power plants located in New York
21 City while simultaneously increasing electricity
22 transmission, allowing us to bring more renewable
23 energy into the five boroughs. Our electric
24 distribution system is controlled by two primary
25 entities; one, Con Edison, which serves nearly the

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 entire city, with the exception of the Rockaway
3 peninsula and two, Long Island Power Authority, or
4 LIPA, which serves the Rockaway peninsula through an
5 operating agreement with PSE and G. Con Edison is
6 regulated by the state's Public Service Commission,
7 the PSC. Roughly half of the city's annual
8 electricity consumption comes from 21 in city power
9 plants, which have a combined capacity of over 9,000
10 megawatts. Because of the lack of transmission
11 capacity to access power generated in other parts of
12 the state, the New York State Reliability Council
13 mandates that about 80 percent of the city's peak
14 electricity demand must be located within city limits
15 to ensure the lights stay on. All of the electric
16 generating units in New York City rely on natural gas
17 as their primary fuel and fuel oil as backup. Being
18 able to burn two types of fuel, in one... in case one
19 is not available, is also a reliability requirement.
20 While maintaining reliability is always a priority,
21 the city deserves an electric system that is clean
22 and efficient. A majority of the city's power plants
23 are old, inefficient, and dirty. By 2021 when Indian
24 Point Energy Center retires, over 70 percent of the
25 plants in New York City will be over 50 years old,

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 exacerbating their contribution to air pollution. The
3 city's 80 by 50 road map lays out several steps to
4 transitioning our electricity from fossil fuels to a
5 clean energy future. Important elements of that
6 transition are a significant increase in one, local
7 and large-scale renewable power, two, new
8 transmission that connects New York City to renewable
9 power generated elsewhere and three, energy storage
10 to balance the intermittency of wind and solar. The
11 administration strongly supports transitioning the
12 in-city power plants to cleaner sources of
13 electricity. In fact, the city and state's climate
14 goals and our energy future depends on it. Due to new
15 emissions, emissions rules we expect from the New
16 York State Department of Environmental Conservation
17 later this year, we anticipate that New York City's
18 oldest Peaker plants will retire and be replaced in
19 part by energy storage. To encourage the
20 proliferation of storage across the state, the PSC
21 recently set a statewide energy storage goal of 3,000
22 megawatts by 2030. Within the city, PSC is requiring
23 Con Edison to procure 300 megawatts of energy storage
24 by the end of 2022. This is a great short-term goal
25 and will allow... will lay the foundation for broader

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 storage deployment across the city; however, bringing
3 large scale renewable power directly in the city is
4 more challenging and will require a long-term
5 strategy and substantial investments in transmission
6 and renewable generation. For these reasons, the
7 administration supports the renewable path... the
8 renewable energy and battery storage feasibility
9 study as envisioned in Intro 1318. We suggest
10 however, that this study be carried out as a
11 component of the long-term energy plan required by
12 Local Law 248 of 2017. By doing so, the city will be
13 able to comprehensively assess measures to achieve
14 deep decarbonization. The administration's climate
15 agenda includes the goal to secure as much clean
16 energy as possible for the city. While our solar
17 goals are aggressive, solar in the city alone will
18 not provide enough renewable power to meet the city's
19 electricity needs. To meet our 80 by 50 goal,
20 including efforts to electrify our buildings and
21 transportation it is clear that New York City will
22 require significant amounts of renewable energy
23 flowing from upstate to downstate as well as a
24 substantial portion of the state's recently announced
25 9,000 megawatts of offshore wind directly connecting

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 into the city. The reason that increasing the city's
3 access to upstate renewables is so important is
4 underscored by the following facts: Today, in upstate
5 New York about 70 percent of the electricity
6 generated is already carbon free. In downstate, with
7 Indian Point currently operating, about 30 percent of
8 the electricity is carbon free. However, without more
9 transmission, the electric... the energy generated by
10 upstate renewables cannot flow into New York City.
11 New York City accounts for over 30 percent of the
12 state's electricity consumption and 40 percent of the
13 state's greenhouse gas emissions. To meet the state's
14 100 percent clean energy... clean electricity goal by
15 2040 and dramatically reduce our reliance on
16 polluting in city power plants, the state must invest
17 in both new transmission for upstate to downstate and
18 offshore wind. I thank you for the opportunity to
19 testify. We share your goals to protect, improve and
20 decarbonize, decarbonize New York City's electricity
21 supply. We're happy to answer any questions you may
22 have at this time.

23 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Alright,
24 great, thank you that, that was pretty great, pretty
25 quick. Alright, so I don't want to play he said she

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 said with you, but I know Con Edison kind of put the
3 crux of their great hikes on the administration's
4 shoulders, what is your response to that?

5 SUSANNE DESROCHES: So, we are taking a
6 very careful look at the filing that was, you know
7 issued on the 31st. The city has traditionally been a
8 very active participant in the rate cases and we
9 anticipate doing that again this year, we'll be
10 looking at all of the details of the capital
11 expenditures against our 80 by 50 goals including our
12 renewable energy goals and ensuring that the monies
13 that are spent we feel are aligned with the city's
14 goals and what's best for the residents.

15 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Alright and
16 then also, you know thinking about utility battery
17 storage and how we can make it easier for entities to
18 implement those, how are those conversations going on
19 the city's end, what we can... what can we do, you know
20 I'm not here advocating for us to be less safe,
21 right, I'm not here to say we should bypass any
22 safety concerns that anyone has but how do we sort of
23 cut through the red tape to have them... to have
24 entities install utility battery storage on a quicker
25 pace?

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 SUSANNE DESROCHES: Yeah, so we're really
3 excited about the state's recent announcements around
4 storage, we see this as a great opportunity to
5 replace the Peakers that we expect to go offline at
6 least in part so we understand that the permitting
7 process can be lengthy and we've been working quiet
8 hard with all the stakeholders and the city agencies,
9 we've convened... CUNY has convened a working group and
10 we've issued one set of guidelines for outdoor
11 installation of lithium ion and we've kicked off a
12 second working group to do indoor installations, that
13 just recently kicked off, that will... effort will be
14 happening this year. So, you know again we are also
15 trying to balance the safety concerns of first
16 responders with... [cross-talk]

17 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Right...
18 [cross-talk]

19 SUSANNE DESROCHES: ...you know over the
20 proliferation of storage throughout the city.

21 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: And, and
22 what is... as we're looking to implement these battery
23 storage technologies to replace power plants like
24 what are our thoughts in, in supporting environmental
25 justice communities as, as my colleague talked about...

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 you know what we talked about earlier, you know many
3 of these plants especially from the power now plants
4 in, in 2001, you know we're on year 18 of what was
5 supposed to be year three... [cross-talk]

6 SUSANNE DESROCHES: Uh... [cross-talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: ...how do... how
8 do we work to see those plants close down and, and
9 work with those communities?

10 SUSANNE DESROCHES: So, again we are very
11 concerned about the environmental justice issues,
12 we've been quite strongly advocating for an
13 environmental justice adder at the state level within
14 their Veeder proceedings working together quiet
15 closely with NYU on a methodology for actually, you
16 know incentivizing and giving benefits to renewable
17 power... renewable installations for their EJ
18 contributions, you know for... as well as air quality
19 improvements. In terms of how do we look at storage
20 and the, the 21 plants, we have to balance across...
21 and, and Con Edison will be releasing a study over
22 the summer so now I'm going to do a he said she said
23 back to Con Edison where... they show where that 300
24 megawatts will, will best suit the system, right, so
25 we have to balance the needs of the local

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 distribution network with where these installations
3 make the most sense.

4 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: And we're
5 going to be advocating, I mean the ISO now says we
6 have this certain number of productions was 80
7 percent in the city limits. In, in the long term we
8 need to advocate for them to, to take away that rule,
9 right, because we need to be able to pull renewable
10 energy from other parts of the state.

11 SUSANNE DESROCHES: So, the New York
12 State Reliability Council is the entity that sets
13 that rough... it's roughly 80 percent, this year I
14 think it's a little bit higher and they do that
15 through some pretty extensive study, that's a... it's a
16 state entity so again their goal is for reliability
17 of the system, right, that's how they set that, that
18 number. So, again they, they do that on a yearly
19 basis.

20 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Right but
21 every time, every time a Peaker plant goes on those...
22 that's probably the most inefficient way for us to
23 power a city in the 21... in the... in the 21st century,
24 right, like they... these are stationary sources of...
25 sources of pollution mostly in environmental justice

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 communities where those pollutions... you know you're
3 more likely to have respiratory illness than not and
4 be higher than the city average if you're living next
5 to these plants...

6 SUSANNE DESROCHES: So, again we're,
7 we're also quite concerned about the air quality
8 issues related to all, all of the plants; the
9 dirtiest most inefficient ones, you know as I
10 mentioned in my testimony some of which will be over
11 50 years old, 70 percent of the city's will be over
12 50 years old. So, again, you know as... one of our main
13 concerns here is that we should be studying the role
14 of transmission in order to reduce our reliance on in
15 city generation and I think that that's something
16 that, you know we should all be pushing the state to
17 consider a priority.

18 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Because I
19 mean as we talked about before, I mean I have... I have
20 talked about this many times but you know Ravens Wood
21 generating, Astoria generating, R.. NRG all these
22 plants in western Queens are in close proximity to
23 the Queensbridge Houses, the Ravens Wood Houses, the
24 Astoria Houses and Woodside Houses is a stones throw
25 away, so you're talking about a, a rather large

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 grouping of public housing all surrounded by these
3 power plants, all you know in... out... in zones that
4 have asthma rates that are higher than the borough
5 average, ER admission... or ER admissions and
6 hospitalizations are higher so there's, there's a
7 correlation there, right, I mean there's a lot of
8 things going on in western Queens beyond just these
9 plants... [cross-talk]

10 SUSANNE DESROCHES: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: ...but these
12 are temporary sources of pollution that we
13 significantly deal with every day.

14 SUSANNE DESROCHES: And we share your
15 concern.

16 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: I mean what
17 conversations are we talking about having about
18 reliability and thinking about, you know what a 21st
19 century grid looks like and how do we get there?

20 SUSANNE DESROCHES: So, again we're
21 really excited about the... both doing the long-term
22 energy plan and folding in this, this new bill around
23 storage, what the role of storage can play. Again,
24 we're going to need all the tools that we have, we're
25 going to need large scale renewables coming in from

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 transmission, we're going to need offshore wind, we
3 need to maximize distributed generation within the
4 city limits in order to really have the 70 to 80
5 percent renewable grid that we envision.

6 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Have we
7 talked about implementation of large-scale renewables
8 in New York City, you know as... you know I was working
9 with, with CUNY, you know CUNY Law, we have a great
10 professor here, Rebecca Bratspies and, and... at CUNY
11 Law School and we have a report that if we utilized
12 just a fourth of the land on Rikers Island we could
13 have enough power generated from solar that could
14 replace many of those plants that were put in by the
15 power now, you know foisted upon these neighborhoods
16 for years, what are your thoughts on that?

17 SUSANNE DESROCHES: So, look forward to
18 seeing that report, I don't know if that's been, been
19 made public but look forward to seeing that so, you
20 know again I, I think it... [cross-talk]

21 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: But... they're
22 going to be publishing it soon.

23 SUSANNE DESROCHES: Great... [cross-talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: But, but
25 it's something... [cross-talk]

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 SUSANNE DESROCHES: Great... [cross-talk]

3 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: ...that I've
4 talked about and, you know I think that we need to
5 think about opportunities and, and with Rikers lying...
6 Island being... closing rightfully so as a social
7 justice, it's been tearing apart communities but
8 these plants have been in those same neighborhoods,
9 we should be looking as an... as that... for... to be an
10 opportunity, right?

11 SUSANNE DESROCHES: So, we're going to
12 look at all available space in the city, right, the
13 reason that we have challenges siting large scale
14 renewables is that we have a lack of space and the
15 space tends to be quite valuable within New York City
16 so as we move forward with the long term energy plan
17 we're going to be looking at all available feasible
18 locations.

19 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: I'm going to
20 be fighting hard to make sure we utilize that land to
21 the benefit of everyone so. Any questions my
22 colleagues have? Alright, great and you know I'm
23 looking forward to... so, I'm going to take yes for an
24 answer, right, so you're, you're coming here in
25 support of 1318 today and we're looking forward to

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
2 working with you to implement not just this, but all
3 of the renewable projects and I appreciate your
4 partnership.

5 SUSANNE DESROCHES: Great, thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you.
7 Next up... alright, so the, the aforementioned Rebecca
8 Bratspies from CUNY Law School, Brian McCabe from NRG
9 Energy and Don, oh, I...

10 [off mic dialogue]

11 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Huh?

12 [off mic dialogue]

13 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Chahbazpour,
14 National... with a name like Constantinides like I
15 always try to like not butcher anyone's name because
16 I live that every single day of my life. Professor
17 Bratspies I think I'm going to start with you, let's
18 hear some good news first.

19 REBECCA BRATSPIES: Well I'm not sure
20 what I have to say is entirely good news. My name is
21 Rebecca Bratspies, I'm a Professor at CUNY School of
22 Law where I run the center for Urban Environmental
23 Reform and I'm joined today here by my colleague
24 Professor Sarah Lamdan, a lot of what I'm going to
25 share is work that we've done jointly. So, I want to

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 thank you for the opportunity to present my views
3 about both the events of December 27th in Astoria and
4 about Introductory bill 1318. So, when the skies in
5 New York City turned blue it was eerie, it was
6 confusing and for many residents who vividly remember
7 9/11 it was beyond frightening. I live roughly a mile
8 from the effected facility along with thousands of my
9 neighbors I watched the sky glow and saw the smoke
10 billow. I joined those neighbors on social media
11 asking does anyone know what's going on, many
12 reported that the most terrifying part was not
13 knowing what was happening or what to do. I'm an
14 expert on environmental policy and even I couldn't
15 answer a basic question. If there's a disaster at a
16 power plant in Astoria should we evacuate or shelter
17 in place? Astoria is home to roughly 60 percent of
18 New York City's generating capacity, the power plants
19 are located in the small, densely populated Queens
20 neighborhood. EPA estimates say... suggest that a
21 disaster at one of those plants could impact up to a
22 million people, Astorians are not prepared for such a
23 disaster neither is the city. Decades ago, congress
24 enacted the emergency planning and community right to
25 know act, EPCRA to give citizens a right to access

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 information about possible hazards in their community
3 and to plan for how to respond should an emergency
4 occur. EPCRA embraces the proposition that the more
5 we know about the hazards in our community the better
6 equipped we are to protect ourselves from
7 unacceptable risk. EPCRA requires localized emergency
8 planning, each community must have a local emergency
9 planning committee, each such committee must have
10 public members, public meetings and its plans must be
11 public. New York State directs that LEPC plans be
12 available at public libraries. My colleague Sarah
13 Lamdan and I discovered that New York City is failing
14 to meet these obligations, it is next to impossible
15 to find the information that EPCRA requires be made
16 public and even the most basic information about the
17 city's LEPC is hard to find. New York obviously has
18 emergency planning that's the EP part of EPCRA, but
19 federal law also requires the CRA part of EPCRA, the
20 community's right to know. The generalized emergency
21 planning and preparedness education from New York's
22 Office of Emergency Management falls far short of
23 what federal law requires. A community like Astoria
24 has no way to actualize localized... to access
25 localized information about the specific hazards it

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 faces or what the plan should be if the sky turns
3 blue, the city is not providing the community focus
4 transparency that federal law mandates, this leaves
5 communities like Astoria at risk and in ignorance,
6 exactly the situation EPCRA was enacted to prevent.

7 Professor Lamdan and I urge the City Council to

8 investigate and to ensure that the city fully

9 complies with these EPCRA obligations. I also want to

10 speak to the importance of 1318, which will require

11 the city to study the feasibility of replacing in

12 city gas fired power plants. I wholeheartedly support

13 this plan and in particular I'd like to share a

14 little bit of my research, it's ongoing research just

15 to be clear, it's still in progress about how Rikers

16 Island could be repurposed for solar generation and

17 storage making it possible to remove gas fired power

18 plants that were forced on the city two decades ago.

19 You may remember that in 2000 California was having

20 rolling blackouts, the New York Power Authority used

21 California's situation as a pretext to build 11 new

22 fired gas power... new gas fired power plants in the

23 city on an emergency basis, all of them were placed

24 in environmental justice communities, poor

25 communities and communities of color. These plants

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 were sited with virtually no process and over
3 vehement community objections. NYPA promised the
4 power plants were a temporary emergency measure and
5 would be removed after three years, now nearly 20
6 years later the power plants are still there. At the
7 time NYPA claimed these power plants were necessary
8 to keep the lights on yet the Public Service
9 Commission found the city could have met its peak
10 power needs without these plants. Indeed the New York
11 State Comptroller expressed concern that the plan
12 risked generating more power than the city required.
13 Although NYPA claimed the turbines would be in
14 industrial areas they were all placed in communities,
15 one was sited a block away from Queensbridge Houses,
16 the largest public housing complex in the United
17 States. One in Brooklyn was next to a playground and
18 around the corner from a school, a third in Staten
19 Island was across the street from homes, four were
20 placed in the part of the south Bronx known as asthma
21 alley because it has some of the highest asthma rates
22 in this country. All of these communities were
23 already overburdened, this has to end. All of Riker's
24 416 acres are within LaGuardia Airport's flight
25 obstruction area, height restrictions and noise limit

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 the possible uses. If just 100 acres of Rikers were
3 devoted to solar panels and energy storage the island
4 could generate enough electricity to replace these
5 temporary power plants that were foisted on
6 environmental justice communities two decades ago.
7 Moreover, these communities, the ones where the
8 plants are located are among those the Lippman report
9 identified as the most affected by Rikers, this plan
10 would offer restorative justice, it would remove the
11 power plants placed in these communities without
12 their input or consent and bring improved air quality
13 to those most impacted by Rikers. Once shuttered the
14 plants could be decommissioned and the land converted
15 to much needed green space. Thank you for your
16 attention, I... and urge you to, to enact Intro 1318
17 and to end the city's dependency on these dirty gas
18 burning power plants.

19 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: And before I
20 go to the next panelist I just want to reiterate
21 this, I know these weren't the right folks here but I
22 share Council Member Richard's concern on the public
23 safety end because this wasn't deemed by the Office
24 of Emergency Management a life threatening incident
25 notify NYC did not send out results, did not send out

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 information to the public and that we found that to
3 be woefully inadequate even though entities like Con
4 Edison may have known after four minutes this wasn't
5 life threatening we had no way of knowing that on the
6 ground and New York... and, and Notify NYC should have
7 been pumping this information out in a different way,
8 we should have been getting those, those, those
9 messages to our phones because that... part of this as
10 you stated was that not knowing and that not knowing
11 was, was excruciating for... you know whether... is it
12 the air quality, do we have to evacuate so I will
13 definitely follow up and we talk about evacuation
14 plans and the plans for safety.

15 REBECCA BRATSPIES: Thank you.

16 DONALD CHAHBAZPOUR: Good morning Mr.
17 Chairman and Committee members. My name is Donald
18 Chahbazpour, I'm the Director of the Gas Utility of
19 Future at National Grid. Thank you for the
20 opportunity for us to present our perspective on how
21 we transition to a low carbon green energy system. We
22 at National Grid view climate change as the greatest
23 challenge that humanity is facing and at the same
24 time it is the greatest challenge that we are facing
25 in the energy industry. We believe in the science of

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 climate change and we have a blueprint for
3 drastically reducing greenhouse gas emissions, we
4 call that our northeast 80/50 pathways, we fully
5 support the 80/50 targets of every state that we
6 operate in which is New York, Massachusetts and Rhode
7 Island. At the federal level we have supported the
8 Paris Agreement, we have publicly urged the
9 administration to remain in the Paris Agreement and
10 our approach aligns with New York City and New York
11 State and the northeast clean energy transition
12 policies to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by
13 2050. We are a strong advocate for policy and
14 regulatory approaches that provide reasonable methods
15 to help achieve emission targets in a reliable and
16 affordable way to achieve those emission reduction
17 targets. For National Grid climate change is not a
18 political question but a scientific fact and we
19 believe that innovation and that a diverse set of
20 stakeholders at the table will enable us to reach the
21 clean energy future that we all want. We are happy to
22 join with New York City Council in its pursuit to
23 help combat climate change and as Con Ed and the
24 Mayor's Office just mentioned we are co-sponsoring a
25 study with the Mayor's Office to develop those

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 pathways to achieve the city's 80/50 targets. So,
3 these align... these... the alignment of these efforts
4 will help us achieve the green house gas reductions
5 we're all hoping to achieve and while we pursue this
6 goal, we will be looking for ways to reduce carbon
7 emissions in a cost-effective way for our customers.
8 At National Grid we have already taken concrete steps
9 to move towards a clean energy future modernizing our
10 energy infrastructure to meet 21st century demand in
11 connecting customers to renewable energy we will,
12 will help us towards the future of an integrated
13 decarbonized energy system. We show our commitment to
14 that future through innovative projects such as REV
15 that's the Reforming Energy Vision incorporating co-
16 generation gas demand response, smart homes and geo
17 thermal and the New Town Creek renewable natural gas
18 demonstration project which is a partnership with the
19 city of New York and that project is under
20 construction as we speak and it will be operational
21 later this year that will be taking two... wastewater
22 and food waste to produce renewable energy. Over the
23 years we have also partnered with New York City and
24 have phased out the use of number six and number four
25 heating oils in approximately 800 buildings and we

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 are looking at opportunities in the transportation
3 sector as well. We have also developed new aggregate
4 data to upload process leveraging the EPA portfolio
5 manager site to make it easier for our customers to
6 obtain their annual aggregate usage data that is to
7 comply with Local Law 84 and Local Law 87. We also
8 continue to play an important role in transforming
9 the heating sector through energy efficiency and oil
10 to gas conversions. Those who convert to natural gas
11 enjoy convenience, a price discount compared to
12 competing fuel oils and a green benefit that reduces
13 emissions. Each year in New York City on Long Island
14 we add about 8,000 residential and commercial
15 customers who shift from oil to natural gas, that's
16 the equivalent of pulling 500,000 cars off the road
17 for one year and we bring... as we bring additional
18 renewable natural gas projects like New Town Creek
19 and other customer driven projects we will begin to
20 decarbonize the gas network through which we deliver...
21 which we will deliver energy to our customers. We
22 believe a decarbonized gas network plays a critical
23 role in delivering a low carbon future and that
24 renewable natural gas is an overlooked yet effective
25 option to help decarbonize the heat and

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 transportation sectors. And I want to hang on this
3 for a minute, as I mentioned we done a deep dive into
4 the 80/50 pathways and what the data is telling us we
5 need to start decarbonizing the other sectors and
6 I'll give you some data. In New York State, power
7 generation that presents only about 20 percent of the
8 emissions so the other 80 percent of the emissions in
9 the state come from the other sectors and we are
10 looking at the gas network as a potential way to
11 decarbonize the other sectors and I can come back to
12 this in a bit but... so I just want you... if there's one
13 thing that you remember from my testimony is that the
14 carbon footprint of the gas network is not static and
15 it is declining and it can help again achieve the
16 decarbonization of the other sectors of the economy.
17 Shifting to energy efficiency for nearly a decade,
18 National Grid has provided customers with award
19 winning energy efficiency programs that have helped
20 save tens of thousands of therms annually reducing
21 energy use and the carbon footprint. In 2017, we
22 provided more than 20 million dollars in energy
23 efficiency services and incentives to save our
24 customers more than four million therms per year. We
25 also offer a variety of rebates and incentives on

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
2 energy efficient products to help customers save
3 energy and money and we process more than 9,000
4 customer energy efficiency rebates each year. We are
5 in the process of launching an e-commerce site which
6 will provide customers instant rebates on eligible
7 energy efficiency measures. We are committed to doing
8 more to help our customers make more informed energy
9 choices and develop new energy products and services.
10 We look forward to working with New York City to
11 develop a roadmap to achieve its aggressive green
12 house gas emission targets.

13 BRIAN MCCABE: Alright, let me get
14 started. Alright Committee Chair Constantinides and
15 all members and staff of the Committee for this
16 opportunity to provide comments on Intro 1318. My
17 name is Brian McCabe with NRG Energy. NRG currently
18 owns a diverse mix of large steam and quick start
19 peaking units totaling approximately 2,900 megawatts
20 of generation from the state of New York. To put it
21 in perspective this is enough generation to power
22 more than 2.3 million homes. NRG also serves over
23 180,000 retail customers in New York through four of
24 our retail energy brands. We've been a part of the
25 greater New York City community for almost two

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 decades now with our Astoria and Arthur Kill
3 generating units located in Queens and Staten Island.
4 These assets were acquired from Con Edison in 1999.
5 As the Chairman is aware NRG has been actively
6 working to modernize these facilities with new clean
7 technology. NRG's corporate carbon goals are focused
8 on a commitment to real and meaningful carbon
9 reductions. NRG's carbon goals directly align with
10 the ambition of the Paris climate agreement and
11 support New York's commitment to the U.S. climate
12 alliance. We're pleased that we're already two thirds
13 of our way to the 2030 goal. At NRG we're not about
14 putting up roadblocks and preserving the status quo,
15 we're taking action on our own and we want to work
16 with New York City on a path to decarbonization. NRG
17 supports Intro 1318, it's important to analyze the
18 feasibility of deploying renewable resources and
19 energy storage as a substitute for gas fired
20 generation. As owners and operators of existing in
21 city gas fired facilities, we believe we can
22 contribute valuable, valuable information to the
23 study. In fact, we view the addition of energy
24 storage devices paired with a renewable supply backed
25 with flexible gas crucially important to the future

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 of our integrated energy company. In our view
3 reliable and affordable decarbonization requires a
4 for product future. Energy storage in combination
5 with controllable demand will enable energy consumers
6 to proactively manage their load based on real time
7 energy prices. Finally, the bulk power system
8 continues to need modern, quick start peaking units
9 to ensure the lights always stay on. NRG remains a
10 strong advocate for achieving decarbonization through
11 market-based solutions. Market based solutions
12 transfer the risk of performance from rate payers to
13 companies like NRG, we're willing to invest private
14 capital in New York's future. We believe in
15 minimizing rate payer subsidies and allowing
16 competitive forces to drive innovation, efficiency
17 and cost reductions to the benefit of rate payers.
18 It's imperative if we're going to achieve advances...
19 advancements in battery storage systems it's
20 necessary to support deployment on a larger scale.
21 Let's review the primary supply site services needed
22 to run the grid. The first is ensuring supply meets
23 demand, renewable energy sources play a key role in
24 the service today. Whenever the sun shines and the
25 wind blow due to... due to their zero-marginal cost of

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 production the grid operator prioritizes the use of
3 renewable energy and the supply stack, meeting needs
4 with carbon free energy. The second is meeting peak
5 demand on the hottest and coldest days of the year,
6 depending on the duration and size of the peak
7 renewable resources coupled with energy storage can
8 meet this need as well. The third is responding to
9 short duration system contingencies. The electric
10 grid must always be ready for an unexpected equipment
11 failure, during the system contingency quick start
12 units pick up the slack caused by the sudden loss of
13 grid resources whether it's a failed Con Ed
14 electrical feeder or a generating facility that
15 abruptly had to come offline, battery storage systems
16 can play a, a role in bridging gaps and resources.
17 However, batteries can only discharge for a limited
18 time before they need to be recharged, typically four
19 hours at their maximum rated load. Therefore, while
20 batteries are great for quickly responding to short
21 duration events, today's battery technologies have
22 their limitations. The fourth is responding to a long
23 duration event, you know fortunately these types of
24 events do not occur often but when they do back up
25 power may be required for an extended period of time.

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 Slide seven in what you're looking at shows the
3 operating history of our Astoria peaking plant over
4 the past couple of years. As you can see there were
5 quite a number of events that required the Astoria
6 units to operate for greater than four hours. Slide
7 eight also shows the operating profile of NRG's
8 Astoria plant following the recent transformer
9 failure and the nearby electrical substation. The
10 graph shows that a little over one month ago our
11 Astoria plant was needed to run for 23 continuous
12 hours. There are no battery technologies on the
13 market today that can operate for 23 continuous
14 hours. We conclude that duration is a key
15 consideration when evaluating the use of battery
16 storage as a replacement for quick start peaking
17 units. Battery storage may be the ideal resource to
18 shift renewable energy to meet load however, battery
19 storage may not be the ideal resource to address
20 reliability needs that arise unexpectedly and last
21 for many hours or even days such as in these that
22 arose during hurricane Sandy and Irene or recent
23 major cold snaps. Clearly the longer the duration and
24 need the more expensive a battery solution would be.
25 On slide nine we talk about NRG's recommendations.

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 The feasibility of deploying renewable resources and
3 battery storage systems as a replacement for in city
4 gas fired power plants must be carefully evaluated.
5 NRG supports Intro 1318 that would result in a report
6 that takes into account a full review of battery
7 storage technologies that are time lined for
8 deployment and the affect on consumer cost including
9 low income customers. We further recommend the
10 analysis include an evaluation of the essential
11 elements of the bulk power system such as highly
12 efficient flexible gas generating resources that both
13 prevent contingencies and aid in the restoration of
14 the electrical grid following extreme weather events.
15 We believe that batteries can play an increasingly
16 important role in meeting electric system needs but
17 that for the foreseeable future due to cost and our
18 technical limitations they will need to be paired
19 with some combination of state-of-the-art quick start
20 peaking units in order to address the full range of
21 reliability needs that New York City will face.
22 Respectfully we offer an amended version of Intro
23 1318 for the Committee's consideration. I want to
24 thank the Chairman and members of the Committee for
25 this opportunity to share our views.

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Alright, so
3 I'm going to start, I'm just going to ask you some
4 questions and, and folks can sort of jump in here. I
5 guess to the National Grid, how much of your... you
6 know how much power do you transmit is produced by
7 National Grid in the city limits? I know Con Edison
8 has, you know their plant that they have that
9 generates steam, do you have any such plants?

10 DONALD CHAHBAZPOUR: National Grid does
11 not own any power plants.

12 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: You don't
13 own any plants at all?

14 DONALD CHAHBAZPOUR: No except on Long
15 Island.

16 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Okay, except
17 on Long Island so you don't... you don't... so, let's
18 just talk about transmission then. What sort of
19 conversation... I'll ask just pretty much the same
20 questions I asked Con Edison of you, I don't want
21 them to, to feel like I'm only picking on them. What
22 conversations are we having with NYSERDA, what
23 conversations are we having with customers to make
24 those healthy choices, right, it's not just about
25 reliability it's about saying I'm interested in a

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 geothermal technology but if we're hanging this, this
3 carrot to go to natural gas out in front of them, you
4 know or you can save a million dollars by doing this
5 even though if they come to the table saying we want
6 to do renewable energy how are we encouraging and
7 finding those pathways forward without sort of
8 offering this carrot to go to a fossil fuel?

9 DONALD CHAHBAZPOUR: Great, so on the
10 power side... [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Right...
12 [cross-talk]

13 DONALD CHAHBAZPOUR: ...I'm not an expert
14 and we can come back but I know that my colleagues
15 are deeply engaged with NYPA and, and the Governor's
16 Office about transmission on the electric so let me
17 just talk about, you know sort of the perspective I
18 have on the gas to address the products that you just
19 mentioned. So, we're thinking really hard about the
20 big picture of 80/50 and as I mentioned we're doing
21 these new products that you just talked about, so
22 I'll give you an example. So, let me just rephrase
23 it, right, the way we think about tackling 80/50 and
24 if... the way we view it is, is the future of the
25 energy world technology driven or policy driven. So,

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 the way we view it is that its technology driven but
3 policies that sort of provide a support to that
4 framework and to offer the products to the customers
5 as you mentioned. I'll give you an example of a new
6 product that we're thinking about introducing in our
7 rate case downstate in New York City later this year
8 will be like a green gas tariff that is a product
9 that our customers voluntarily willing to be... pay,
10 pay a premium to decarbonize heat and the reason
11 we're offering it, it's sort of having listened to
12 our customers, right, our customers are saying we
13 have very aggressive... this is mostly universities and
14 large companies saying we have very aggressive
15 targets to reduce our emissions, we know how to do it
16 on the power side, we go by solar wind, we don't know
17 how to do it on heat. So, that was listening to our
18 customers and we've also found that there is supply
19 out there so the way the utility would play a role in
20 that and, and this will begin in an... in the upcoming
21 rate cases to be the matchmaker between supply and
22 demand and doing demonstration projects so New Town
23 Creek was one of them we started ten years ago..

24 [cross-talk]

25

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Uh-huh...

3 [cross-talk]

4 DONALD CHAHBAZPOUR: ...but there are other
5 ones in the pipeline that we're looking at to further
6 decarbonize the gas network.

7 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: But, but if
8 I'm following you correctly, you're going to have
9 your customers pay a premium to do that so it's,
10 it's... you can have this but it's going to cost you
11 more?

12 DONALD CHAHBAZPOUR: So, on the green gas
13 tariff we are offering to a voluntary so this will be
14 a... customers will be voluntarily to pay weigh a
15 premium but I think the broader conversation is to
16 look at all of the options to decarbonize every
17 sector so... and that's a conversation that's ongoing
18 with all of the stakeholders so we're not making that
19 decision saying this is... you know we, we look at the
20 rate cases but there isn't... there's obviously
21 stakeholder process so what I'm... and I... and I was
22 talking about this product but my point is we're
23 looking at the technologies that will help us to
24 decarbonize heat and other sectors and we're bringing
25 those to the tables and, and engaging stakeholders

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 saying hey, there is other solutions you ought to be
3 thinking about and, and we're also thinking about
4 that we can use the gas network as a very large
5 battery over time if there's more offshore wind and a
6 lot of generation capacity. So, in a nutshell is we
7 are bringing to the table and we're using our ability
8 as a company to do demonstration projects that bring
9 really innovative projects and at the same time
10 engaging the policy makers at the state level,
11 NYSERDA, the Mayor's Office to think about the larger
12 picture of how we address climate change.

13 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: So, you're
14 saying that the gas network can be utilized to bring
15 power from wind upstate, from Long Island that that's
16 something that can be utilized in the future and..
17 [cross-talk]

18 DONALD CHAHBAZPOUR: Correct, the concept
19 is known as power to gas and, and this is already
20 happening in Germany, it's actually happening in
21 California where they are curtailing renewable
22 energy, it's happening in Colorado, they're
23 curtailing off shore wind so again we're thinking
24 ahead and we're seeing a future that there will be
25 times and as the Mayor's Office just mentioned in

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 their testimony which referred to the Governor's
3 goal, if New York City has nine gigawatts of offshore
4 wind by 2035 there will be times that that power will
5 have nowhere to go so we're thinking about how do you
6 take that extra single of electricity and again
7 concept known as power to gas and convert that to gas
8 and then use the gas as sort of like a giant battery
9 essentially to provide that solution to decarbonize
10 other segments.

11 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Okay, what
12 is that... [cross-talk]

13 DONALD CHAHBAZPOUR: And we'll come back
14 and talk about it in more detail, I know this..
15 [cross-talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Yeah, I'm,
17 I'm... because I mean I have some real trouble with gas
18 infrastructure because I mean fracked gas is, is..
19 and, and natural gas is still a fossil fuel, right,
20 so I, I have any... I have challenges with the... [cross-
21 talk]

22 DONALD CHAHBAZPOUR: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

23 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES:
24 ...proliferation of this type of infrastructure and
25 what are we... what investments are we making in

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 renewables, in battery storage on the NRG... on, on the
3 National Grid side, I mean...

4 DONALD CHAHBAZPOUR: So, downstate we're
5 a gas utility...

6 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Right, so
7 you're only gas, yeah... [cross-talk]

8 DONALD CHAHBAZPOUR: So, you know we
9 don't have that ability to do on the power side, but
10 I do know that my, my colleagues in the other
11 jurisdictions in Massachusetts they are doing things
12 on battery and I... I'm not fully aware of them and we
13 can come back to you and talk about that so again I
14 wear my hat downstate focusing on the gas network and
15 to your earlier point, we're looking at decarbonizing
16 the product itself so what I'm referring to is
17 whether it's New Town Creek, a landfill, a food
18 waste, we're looking at upstate potential, you know...
19 a dairy project using a life stock manure to actually
20 produce gas so we're looking at a future where the
21 commodity that's flowing through the gas network is
22 actually not a fossil fuel. So, we begin to
23 decarbonize the gas network.

24 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: I mean look
25 I think we need to use our organic waste in a

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 different way and, and, and I think that makes a lot
3 sense to turn it... you know to turn that that's going
4 in the landfill and turn that into something that can
5 be potentially beneficial to everyone. I, I, I
6 applaud you guys for looking and I think we need to
7 do more of that but I do have trouble with... you know
8 like I said before more fracked gas coming into New
9 York City, I hear about the Williams pipeline, I hear
10 about other gas infrastructure being put into place
11 and that's not where I am, you know we need to be
12 coming up with reliable solutions in the long term
13 that are not fossil fuel based that are bringing in...
14 that are creating renewable energy and moving that
15 renewable energy to the places it needs to go and not
16 building that type of technology. So, thinking about
17 power plants, you know NRG you talked about your
18 solutions and what you're looking at what are your...
19 what... how many... how much emissions are... does your
20 plant in Astoria currently have?

21 BRIAN MCCABE: I don't have the answer to
22 that question handy, sorry.

23 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Okay, I
24 don't know if you're going to be able to answer many
25 of my questions then...

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 BRIAN MCCABE: Okay... [cross-talk]

3 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: ...you know I
4 think you're here... so, I'm going to ask... you know
5 looking at Professor Bratspies and, and sort of your
6 thoughts about these, these plants that were sited,
7 these foisted upon our communities over time, you
8 know every time they click on they're a source of
9 pollution in those communities, sort of all the
10 testimony you've heard today so if you want to sort
11 of expand your thoughts on, on some of the things
12 you're thinking about?

13 REBECCA BRATSPIES: Well I think the
14 question you just asked about, what are the emissions
15 from the plant is really... gets to the core of what
16 the communities are experiencing. I've had some
17 trouble getting data on some of these plants in part
18 because it goes back a... you know in time before
19 everything was routinely computerized but we know for
20 certain that there were violations in Staten Island
21 so whatever the, the emissions are supposed to be at
22 least at one set of installations we know they were
23 significantly more so much so that there was a... an
24 enforcement and we're talking about places where
25 people live and we have... we in the city have

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 historically consistently shunted these uses to poor
3 communities and communities of color and those
4 communities bear the burden of the power generation
5 that all of us need and all of us use and that's
6 wrong. We're all in this together and looking..
7 somebody said earlier that we need to look at what
8 makes sense in the system in terms of where we're
9 going to locate new facilities and that is guaranteed
10 to just drive more polluting activity into the
11 already overburdened vulnerable communities, we have
12 to rethink the whole thing, we have to start from
13 what kind of a system do we want to have and then
14 make that happen.

15 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: That makes a
16 lot of sense, a lot of sense, I mean we need to
17 start... we need to sort of not take everything and
18 throw it out the window but think about it in a
19 completely new way and you know we've thought about
20 things... the, the most frustrating thing I hear in
21 government is that we've always done it this way and
22 this is the way we always should do it, right and I
23 think it's time for us to start thinking about
24 things differently and saying we don't ever... we don't
25 need to site... let's think about... think about how

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
2 systems work now and how we can fit in those systems,
3 think... we need to start thinking about it
4 differently. So, you know with that I, I want to... I
5 could go all day but I, I won't because I know we
6 have to vacate this room by one o'clock, so I think
7 there are more panels as well, but I want to thank
8 you all for your testimonies today. Thank you.

9 DONALD CHAHBAZPOUR: Thank you.

10 [off mic dialogue]

11 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Oh, one
12 panel is left... okay. Alright, so we actually only
13 have one panel left, I could have gone longer. So,
14 Eric Wolfman, Food and Water Watch; Rachel Spector,
15 New York Lawyers for the Public Interest; Catherine
16 Skopic, representing the... herself and also the Sierra
17 Club; Eva-Lee Baird, sorry if I'm saying your last
18 name wrong, 350 NYC.org and Phil Vanaria, Phil says
19 he's representing himself. Well since we started on
20 this side in the last panel, we'll start on... sir?

21 ERIC WELTMAN: You sure?

22 PHIL VANARIA: I'm... I, I have a written
23 statement, so I think I'm just going to submit that.

24 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Okay, that's
25 fine... [cross-talk]

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 PHIL VANARIA: For the transcript of the
3 record but I also just want to say my... the... this is a
4 lot of technical talk and it alludes me, I definitely
5 appreciate it though. I, myself came because I have a
6 personal connection to Con Edison hazards, I'm the
7 first victim and survivor of stray voltage from... I
8 had an incident in August of 1997 and my concern of
9 course is probably a little more visceral than, than
10 every... the things that I've heard beforehand and so I
11 think this is almost kind of global in that regard.
12 I'm looking at not just this incident of the arc...
13 [cross-talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Uh-huh...
15 [cross-talk]

16 PHIL VANARIA: ...in December but the
17 decades of problems and it's an ongoing thing we seem
18 to keep... something happens and then it stops and the
19 cycle begins again and we're never getting anywhere
20 with really getting to the root of the problem which
21 is the troubled infrastructure and I think that's the
22 jest of really what... and, and I have personal
23 reflections having dealt with Con Edison and having
24 legal victories against them and I just know that
25 there's... you know you can put on a happy face or, or

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 have all kinds of public relations confections but
3 you really... but the public really wants to see
4 something good happen, something correct happen to
5 protect them, I understand your point of view. What
6 more did... went on than what we heard in the papers
7 about no damages and no injuries and now you're
8 saying the building shook and stuff like that, that
9 wasn't a wide spread information, were there any... was
10 there any other aftermath and how will this really be
11 followed up. This is really important because if... you
12 know if this is the down to earth reaction and that
13 means most people will share it because most people
14 just aren't coming at this from the technical point
15 of view. I really think that it's time for the city
16 and the state to step up and take some sort of
17 control of the situation with Con Edison and make
18 them really make a timely... concrete plan to improve
19 the infrastructure, modernize it so everything that
20 everyone has said about decarbonization and cleaner
21 energy really does apply, I would appreciate that. I
22 think this could be helpful too in just understanding
23 the workings of Con Edison from a personal level so
24 I, I... I'll appreciate seeing this in transcript...

25 [cross-talk]

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Right,
3 definitely, no give it to the Sergeant at Arms.

4 PHIL VANARIA: Thank you very much.

5 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Oh, you can
6 stay there, he's going to come get it.

7 PHIL VANARIA: Oh... [cross-talk]

8 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: We're a full
9 service here.

10 PHIL VANARIA: Oh, great, thank you.
11 Could I get a haircut...

12 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: We're full
13 service here, thank you, thank you for your
14 testimony, thank you.

15 PHIL VANARIA: I'm sorry?

16 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: I will read
17 it...

18 PHIL VANARIA: Thanks a lot... [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Great, thank
20 you. Thank you very much, thank you for being here
21 today. Alright, go ahead.

22 ERIC WELTMAN: Good afternoon, my name is
23 Eric Weltman and I'm a Brooklyn Based Senior
24 Organizer for Food and Water Watch. I would like to
25 express our strong support for Intro Number 1318.

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 Five years ago, New York banned fracking yet we
3 continue to bear the burden of fossil fuel
4 infrastructure including pipelines and power plants
5 that transport and burn fracked gas. In fact, even as
6 we join Chairman Constantinides in trying to shutter
7 the city's gas fired plants, we are fending off a
8 proposed new project as you mentioned, the Williams
9 pipeline that would ship fracked gas off Staten
10 Island, Coney Island and the Rockaways and we're also
11 trying to stop a frack gas power plant in New
12 Jersey's meadowlands that would send all its power to
13 the city. We are hearing a lot these days about green
14 new deals and it's a nice sounding slogan, but this
15 is a bill that would make a real substantive impact
16 in moving us off fossil fuels to 100 percent
17 renewable energy. The science is already clear and
18 it's becoming even more clear, we must make a rapid
19 transition off fossil fuels or risk climate
20 catastrophe including more tragedies like super storm
21 Sandy. It's also clear that natural gas is not a
22 bridge fuel, it's a gang plank to climate chaos and
23 when produced by fracking it poisons our water and
24 communities. We need to move fast and this bill with
25 its 2030 timeline is a tremendous credit to the bold

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 vision of its chief sponsor. We need to move fast,
3 and we can move fast, renewable energy technologies
4 along with battery storage systems are advancing at a
5 rapid pace. We can accelerate these developments by
6 establishing ambitious goals like this one. Food and
7 Water Watch urges the Council to pass this bill.
8 Thank you for your consideration.

9 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you.

10 CATHERINE SKOPIC: My name is Catherine..
11 [cross-talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Make sure
13 your button is on Catherine.

14 CATHERINE SKOPIC: My name is Catherine
15 Skopic, I am speaking as an individual, educator,
16 parent and am... and am a member of several
17 environmental organizations including Sierra Club and
18 Interfaith Moral Action on Climate, IMAC. Thank you
19 Chair Constantinides for presenting this amendment
20 regarding a feasibility study to transition our gas
21 fired power plants to renewable energy with battery
22 storage. As most of us are aware, transition to
23 renewable energy is needed immediately, as soon as
24 possible. And by the way I might make a suggestion
25 here that of our 21 power plants that the data from

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 each one be compiled and we begin with the worst
3 offender, the power plant that has the most green
4 house gas emissions, correct that one and then go to
5 the next and the next and the next as the plan for
6 getting to where we need to be ASAP. Our planet earth
7 is about four and a half billion years old. A record
8 reflecting almost one million years' worth of
9 100,000-year cycles of climate reveal changes in ice
10 volume that indicate periods of rapid, several
11 thousand years, melting of ice sheets that end a
12 glacial cycle and begin an interglacial, this is from
13 the Ice Chronicles, a book by Paul Mayerewski and
14 Frank White. At no point did the level of carbon
15 dioxide, CO₂, go above 300 parts per million or PPM.
16 In mid-2018, we were at 410 PPM. The present
17 concentration is the highest in the last 800,000 and
18 possibly the last 20 million years. Methane gas is
19 about 80 times more greenhouse gas producing than is
20 CO₂. We are in the Anthropocene Epoch, these are
21 manmade, or person made changes. So, although our
22 moment is but a blip in earth's time, this unique
23 blip could make or break life as we know it on our
24 planet. The IPCC, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate
25 Change report shows we have a rapidly closing window

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
2 of a little over ten years to drastically reduce our
3 burning of fossil fuels, if we are to survive. As we
4 have already caused this crisis, we can halt and un-
5 cause it. Thank you Chair Constantinides and New York
6 City Council for moving this crisis toward a
7 solution, stopping the burning of fossil... gas, fossil
8 fuel. Let us know how and what we can do to help you
9 in this transition to renewable energy. Never has so
10 much depended on so few.

11 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you
12 Catherine, thank you. Next up.

13 RACHEL SPECTOR: Thank you Chair
14 Constantinides and members of the Committee. My name
15 is Rachel Spector, I'm the Director of the
16 Environmental Justice Program at New York Lawyers for
17 the Public Interest. For nearly three decades our
18 program has worked to address disproportionate
19 environmental harm in New York City's low-income
20 communities and communities of color. In fact, in the
21 early 2000s we represented the Sunset Park community
22 group, UPROSE in a challenge to the siting of new gas
23 fired peaker plants that folks have talked about
24 today, the power now plan. As you also may have
25 guessed that was unfortunately an unsuccessful legal

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 challenge, but we do believe that there is now an
3 opportunity to right the wrong that happened. If we
4 want to avoid catastrophic climate change and meet
5 the city's 80 by 50 goal, the governor's goal to make
6 New York City... New York State electricity generation
7 greenhouse gas neutral by 2040, we must start
8 thinking about how to transition away from power
9 plants that burn fossil fuels. So, it is smart to
10 start now with this study of how we can replace the
11 city's power plants with renewable energy sources and
12 storage as Intro 1318 requires and come up with a
13 plan to do so. But power plants emit not just carbon
14 dioxide but a host of co-pollutants that are harmful
15 to the health of residents that live in their
16 shadows. Most of New York City's fossil fuel power
17 plants are located in communities of color and
18 historically working class particularly waterfront
19 neighborhoods. Many are located adjacent to large
20 public housing developments as has been discussed.
21 These power plants emit nitrogen oxides, a potent
22 precursor to ozone and smog and particulate matter,
23 which leads to asthma, respiratory conditions and
24 heart disease. The study mandated by Intro 1318
25 should also examine public health benefits from

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 replacing, replacing power plants and to pay
3 particular attention to taking peaker plants offline
4 on a faster time line. There are 16 peaker plants in
5 New York City located in environmental justice
6 communities. These plants fire up when electricity
7 demand is higher than what baseload power plants can
8 supply. Often this is in the midst of the hottest
9 summer days, when air conditioners get... air
10 conditioners are blasting around the city and when
11 air quality is already extremely poor particularly in
12 the neighborhoods where these plants are located. Due
13 to their intermittent nature, under regulation,
14 technology that allows them to fire up quickly, New
15 York City's peaker plants are far more polluting than
16 baseload power plants. In a recent study, the New
17 York Public Service Commission estimated that New
18 York City area peakers emit, emit twice as much
19 carbon dioxide per unit of electricity generated than
20 regular power plants and up to 20 times as many
21 nitrogen oxides. The good news is that battery
22 storage can eliminate the need for peaker plants,
23 since stored energy can be deployed when electric...
24 when electricity demand peaks. Using storage to take
25 downstate peaker plants offline is already

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 contemplated by NYSERDA's energy storage roadmap and
3 studies... multiple studies have shown that energy
4 storage is now an affordable and feasible alternative
5 to peaker plants. It can also have additional
6 benefits like job creation and community resiliency.
7 Intro 1318 is an important step forward in planning
8 for a transition to a renewable energy economy here
9 in New York City. We urge that the bill specify
10 additional measures to be studied, including public
11 health, equity, economic development and resiliency
12 benefits of a transition to renewables and storage
13 and include a focus on replacing peaker plants on a
14 faster time line. We look forward to working with the
15 Council further on this effort.

16 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Next up.

17 EVA-LEE BAIRD: My name is Eva-Lee Baird
18 and I'm testifying for Intro 1318 on behalf of the
19 local climate group, 350 NYC.org, we're a grass roots
20 organization that depends on volunteers to advocate
21 for political and social solutions to drastically
22 reduce greenhouse gas emissions caused by burning
23 fossil fuels. We're very pleased that Council Member
24 Constantinides has the vision to introduce this bill
25 before the City Council. Phasing out local gas fired

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 power plants is critical to achieving the rapid
3 reduction in New York City's greenhouse gas emissions
4 necessary to reach Mayor De Blasio's target of 40
5 percent reduction by 2030. The NYC local plants or
6 peaker plants and although they are online for only a
7 few hours a day they are expensive and dirty. The
8 total greenhouse gas emissions for N, NYC was 52
9 million tons of carbon dioxide in 2016 of which 13
10 million tons of carbon dioxide was from electricity
11 generation. Current emissions per kilowatt hour from
12 the local gas power plants are disproportionately
13 high and account for approximately 50 percent of the
14 emissions from all electricity sources that's in the
15 roadmap. For example, the Raven Wood's generating
16 station burns 3,264,000 gallons of oil per year and
17 was ranked as the state's largest carbon polluter in
18 2014. For the last three years there's been no
19 significant drop in greenhouse gas emissions in the
20 city. We're not even halfway to our 2030 target and
21 most of the reductions since 2005 has been due to
22 cleaner electricity entering the grid from generation
23 upstate. Progress on improving energy efficiency has
24 been slow although this is expected to accelerate
25 with the enactment of the building energy efficiency

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 bill, Intro 1253. Intro 1318 requests a study of the
3 feasibility of storing electricity generated from
4 renewable sources using batteries to replace local
5 gas fired power plants. The New York State Department
6 of Public Service and NYSERDA have recently published
7 the New York State Energy Storage roadmap which will
8 be a valuable resource in the planned study for New
9 York. That report found that those units in New York
10 City that operated for the shortest periods of time
11 were the dirtiest and most expensive to operate and
12 would begin... and would become candidates for
13 replacement by batteries as early as 2022 based on
14 market pricing alone excluding externalities. In
15 addition to the significant greenhouse gas emissions,
16 the city power plants emit Sulphur dioxide, nitrogen
17 oxides, particulate matter that contributes to ozone
18 formation, New York City air is not clean, we're
19 ranked number 11 and number 14 dirtiest for high
20 ozone levels, high... and high particulate matter
21 respectively in the nation. Western Queens is known
22 as asthma alley and air pollutions levels are higher
23 in Astoria and Long Island City than the rest of the
24 borough. Avoidable, emergency room visits for adults
25 in Astoria are 30 percent higher than in the rest of

1 COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

2 Queens. The financial benefits of reducing health
3 impacts must be taken into account by the Commission.
4 In conclusion, we applaud the Council for considering
5 this study and when the prudent path is established
6 urge them to begin to phase out the dirty power
7 plants as quickly as possible. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you
9 and, and I... you know I'm going to date myself here
10 but I'm... you know this... I feel like this is
11 Gilligan's Island, right, we're on these, these
12 plants are on a three hour tour, we were... we were
13 promised three years and we're now 18 years in so
14 it's time for those peakers to close and, and close
15 quickly and, and the last thing I'll say is I
16 appreciate all of your time, you know someone handed
17 me a button about three months ago that we are the
18 asteroid and I thought that was probably one of the
19 more poignant things I had seen is that... you know
20 the... that, you know we're... this time around we're the
21 ones doing the... making the major impact so I
22 appreciate you speaking truth today and all the
23 advocacy that you do individually and amongst the
24 other groups that you have. So, I look forward to
25 partnering with you, thank you for the good ideas on

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COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

how we can amend the bill. I appreciate your time and we'll definitely take that into consideration as we move forward so I appreciate you guys being here today. So, seeing no one else I want to thank all those who testified today, I just want to make sure that I thank our staff, you know Samara Swanston, our great Legislative Attorney; Nadia Johnson, our Senior Policy Analyst; Ricky Chawla, am I getting that right... saying it right, as our new Policy Analyst; Jonathan Seltzer, our Senior Finance Analyst; Nicholas Widzowski, my Legislative Counsel and Terence Cullen, my Communications Director. I want to thank of course our Speaker Corey Johnson for working with us on this legislation and allowing us to have this hearing. We'll be back in two weeks to talk about waste water treatment so thank you all for being here today and testifying and we look forward to moving forward Intro 1318 as part of a greener renewable New York City. Thank you.

[gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date

March 11, 2019