



OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

### National Grid Rate Hike Statement

Good evening Commissioner Burman and Administrative Law Judge Costello, as well as to National Grid, all customers, advocates and community groups here tonight. My name is Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams and I represent the borough of Brooklyn. I am here tonight on behalf of the 2.6 million residents of Brooklyn.

We are all here because National Grid is seeking a rate increase totaling \$196 million on a delivery charge hike of 13.9 percent. For Brooklyn residents, this would mean an average increase of at least \$13 per month in their gas bills. National Grid's rates are already among the highest in New York State. Many of the people I represent struggle to pay their utility bills every month. Approximately 22 percent of Brooklyn's seniors live below the poverty line and this proposed increase would be particularly hard on them. If the Public Service Commission (the Commission) approves this rate hike, many Brooklyn residents would find it even more difficult than they already do to make ends meet. No one should ever have to confront the painful decision of whether to pay rent, buy food or medicine, or pay their gas bill.

I would like to see National Grid and Con Edison do more to help people afford their utility bills by making them aware of the available rebates and incentives they offer. At Brooklyn Borough Hall we started a renewable and sustainable energy task force called ReSET made up of energy providers, community organizations and green energy groups. Together we have worked hard to help make the public aware of available incentive programs and information on how to lead a more sustainable lifestyle. We have set some very ambitious energy goals in New York and I would like to see National Grid and Con Edison make greater investments in clean energy, as well as live up to their stated goals of "operational excellence and enhancing the customer experience."

Additionally, I have concerns about previous decisions that have allowed National Grid to recoup Superfund cleanup costs at the expense of rate payers. The Gowanus Canal and Newtown Creek are both Superfund sites located in Brooklyn, and are among the most polluted in the country. In the 2016 rate case decision, National Grid was permitted to shift all of its Superfund costs onto ratepayers, rather than pay a share of the cleanup that it and its predecessor companies

created the need for in the first place. The Commission must see that a fair and fiscally reasonable decision gets made on how these considerable cleanup costs get paid for.

There is also talk that Con Edison is looking to pass on to ratepayers close to \$240 million in electrical repairs, done for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA). This is a bad precedent to set and suggests that we need to revisit the way we do business with our utilities. These companies must pay for their own repairs and upgrades.

If the Commission approves these proposed rate hikes, Brooklyn residents will be on the hook not only for fare increases at the MTA but for electricity and gas rate increases from Con Edison and National Grid to pay for work done for the MTA and cleanup done at Superfund sites. The buck gets passed to consumers making New Yorkers pay the price at both ends. New York City residents already pay among the highest energy rates in the nation, they should not be additionally burdened with making up for a shortfall at the MTA or a Superfund site cleanup. Small businesses would also be subjected to further financial strain under this proposal.

Our city is difficult enough to afford, especially for senior citizens and people who live below the poverty line, without significant rate hikes across the board for necessities like gas and electricity. I urge the Commission to reject this rate hike and give the people of New York a break.

Thank you.