

### **Regulators Lay Blame For Blackout On Power Utility**

New York State regulators say Consolidated Edison is to blame for a nine-day blackout which hit western Queens in July 2006. In a 185-page draft report the New York State Public Service Commission concludes the company “failed to fulfil its responsibilities” under State law by not adequately maintaining, operating or overseeing its electrical network. It has recommended a formal proceeding that could result in large financial penalties against Consolidated Edison. The regulator’s assessment is at odds with Consolidated Edison’s own 600-page report released in October, which attributed the blackout to a series of events beyond its control, including an underground fire, malfunctions in an electric breaker and a power surge. The regulator’s report concludes instead that the primary cause of the blackout was “the company’s failure to address a multitude of pre-existing problems and issues associated with the operations, maintenance and oversight of the Long Island City network”, which supplies power to about 460,000 people in western Queens. The regulator suggests the blackout lasted as long as it did because of Consolidated Edison’s “failure to shut the network down in light of glaring evidence that the secondary system was experiencing severe damage” in the early part of the blackout. Its report found that the blackout affected 65,000 customers, or about 174,000 people.

[Source esaa news]