

OFFICE OF THE SUPERVISOR

**Town of Somers**

WESTCHESTER COUNTY, N.Y.

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RICK MORRISSEY  
SUPERVISOR



August 21, 2020

Mr. John B. Rhodes  
Chair & Chief Executive Officer  
New York State Public Service Commission  
Empire State Plaza, Agency Building 3  
Albany, New York 12223-1350  
Email: [web.questions@dps.ny.gov](mailto:web.questions@dps.ny.gov)

RE: Formal Complaint  
Town of Somers  
Loss of Cable and Internet Services

Mr. Rhodes:

This letter serves as a formal complaint against Altice, the provider of cable, internet, voice, and data services on behalf of 4,889 households in Somers, New York following tropical storm Isaias on Tuesday, August 4, 2020.

It is our experience that the Altice emergency response to tropical storm Isaias has demonstrated the providers failure in safety, and emergency planning, as the response to the event was chaotic at best. In this capacity, their response has exposed insufficient sustainable service performance throughout their network design.

The uncoordinated customer service practices infuriated customers as Altice could not communicate, nor execute repairs in a way that managed customer expectations, even at the most basic level. This was exacerbated by long hold times, an automated system that is difficult to navigate, dropped calls, and uncommunicated extended repair timelines. Manpower deployed to make repairs appeared woefully insufficient.

Because the inadequacies in Altice's response to this storm event are so extensive, the Town of Somers, New York is requesting a full review of storm damage

and remediation to be performed by the New York State Public Service Commission. The Town of Somers will provide documented customer complaints to support these assertions.

**The Town of Somers, New York contends:**

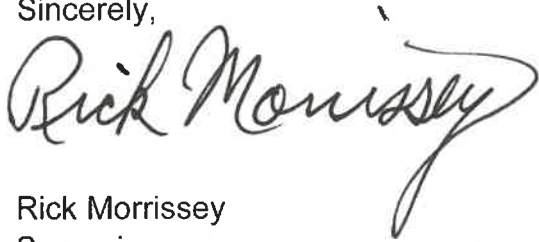
- Altice is the sole provider of cable, internet, voice and data services for more than half the households in Somers, New York. Because credible alternatives do not exist, Altice operates as a monopoly. It is in the public interest that the responsiveness to emergency events, sustainable service to residents, businesses, schools, police and fire, as well as other municipal government agencies is reliable.
- Customer service, communication, outage and restoration reporting, dispatching of repairs teams, and follow up with government as provided by Altice, requires extensive scrutiny by the Public Service Commission.
- Emergency readiness and planning, including manpower, equipment, and supplies for repairs, should be transparent and shared with the municipality in order to coordinate relief efforts during emergency events.
- Network sustainability, particularly regarding power supply at their nodes, appeared to be largely nonexistent, resulting in large outages in portions of their service geography. In this regard, storm damage assessment, and the execution of repairs was slow and fragmented.
- The response to this event highlighted deficiencies in communication between Altice and carriers such as NYSEG, which Altice relies on for service. The interaction and coordination between these two providers must be reviewed as there should be clear service level agreements that speak to the interoperability and emergency preparedness, they provide in conjunction with each other.
- Altice should be proactive in providing service credits to customers experiencing outages, especially those who have experienced immeasurable difficulties in communication with Altice regarding repairs and restoration. In this regard, service credits should be proactive, comprehensive, relevant, and simply understood.

The Town of Somers, New York contends that tropical storm Isais (August 4, 2020) amplified the deficiencies in customer service, network sustainability, and repair practices as provided by Altice. As of the writing of this letter Altice reports no interruption of services in the Town of Somers while 18 days later there are still customers without Altice services. In this regard we are requesting a full review of these practices and a commitment to investment, manpower, and a defined level of service with the public on the part of the provider, Altice.

The Fall season, during which we see an increase in storms and in storm strength, combined with the COVID-19 quarantine that mandates both work and schooling from

home, requires reliable network sustainability. For these reasons, it is in the public interest that the emergency preparedness and protocols of the provider, Altice, be thoroughly reviewed by the Public Service Commission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rick Morrissey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter "y".

Rick Morrissey  
Supervisor

cc: Governor Andrew Cuomo  
County Executive George Latimer  
NYS Senator Peter Harckham  
Assemblyman Kevin Byrne  
County Legislature Board Chairman Benjamin Boykin  
County Legislator Kitley Covill  
County Legislator Vedat Gashi  
Somers Town Board

RM:kd

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