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July 21, 2006

Chairman Tom Davis and Ranking Member Henry Waxman
Committee on Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Davis and Ranking Member Waxman:

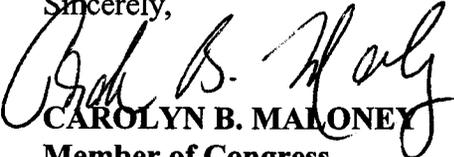
As a result of a recent heat wave affecting much of the northeastern United States, thousands of residents of New York's 14th Congressional District have been subject to a power outage on some of the hottest days of the year. This intolerable situation continues to fester unresolved in several Queens neighborhoods in New York City, while for days the local utility company, Con Edison, denied any significant problem.

Estimates of the number of citizens affected have risen steadily throughout the week, jumping from 1,100 to 25,000 or perhaps even as many as 100,000, with no clear timeline for a resolution in sight. Con Edison and local government officials assure the public that the power outage does not stem from a power shortage, but rather a failure of the local distribution networks. Con Edison's officials seem to have little clear idea as to the magnitude or the real cause of the blackout. We have yet to learn what happened, how it happened, or why it happened. When the mayor of our nation's largest city says he cannot obtain a straight answer from the local utility, as was noted in today's *New York Times* ("Blackout in Queens Affects Many More Than Anticipated"), it seems clear that Congress has a duty to investigate solutions to prevent future crises like this one from spinning out of control.

I write to request that the House Committee on Government Reform convene hearings on this crisis with the aim of preventing and preparing for future power outages of this scope and duration. This incident vividly demonstrates the vulnerability of our power grid in the nation's most prominent terrorist target. I believe that such hearings would help shine a spotlight on this and other similar power outages around the nation, and help generate an impetus for more forceful and effective responses than have been evident in New York City this week.

I thank you in advance for your reasoned consideration of this request. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,


CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress