April 4, 2014

Audrey Zibelman

Chair

New York State Public Service Commission

Empire State Plaza

Agency Building 3

Albany, NY 12223-1350

Dear Chair Zibelman:

Several of my constituents have called to express their anger and confusion over a recent spike in their heat and electricity bills.

On their behalf, I respectfully request the Public Service Commission investigate – or aid in investigating – if suppliers exploited demand for natural gas and gouged utilities, which then, in turn, passed those exorbitant costs to consumers.

It is my understanding that your body has already requested that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission review the markets for competitiveness and also ensure that our pipeline capacity is being used to its fullest extent.

In Albany, I’ll be advocating for public hearings on the hedging practices of utilities and what, if any, legislative action could be undertaken to inoculate consumers from future, unexpected fluctuations in costs. I also think it’s time to reconsider establishing a consumer advocate in either the Department of Public Service or the Attorney General’s Office to represent taxpayers’

 interests in these matters.

I will be recommending to all my constituents that they research different electric and gas suppliers and take advantage of the open, competitive market where possible.

I welcome additional recommendations on what, together, we can do to help my constituents.

In closing, I’d like to formally invite you and your fellow commissioners to my district for the purposes of a town hall meeting. I think it’s important that you hear directly from consumers about their concerns. And I’d like for them to hear from you what you’re doing to prevent additional shocks to the system.

Please contact my office at (315) 793-9072 so that we may arrange a time that is best for you or your commissioners to visit my district.

Sincerely,

Senator Joseph A. Griffo
47th Senate District