



**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**  
Hon. Stephanie A. Miner, Mayor

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
DATE: August 6, 2015

CONTACT: Alexander Marion  
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**MINER JOINS COMMUNITY LEADERS, ACTIVISTS,  
ELECTED OFFICIALS URGING NYS PUBLIC SERVICE  
COMMISSION TO STAND UP FOR CONSUMERS AND  
EXPAND OPTIONS FOR AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE  
HIGH SPEED INTERNET ACCESS**

*In June, NYS Public Service Commission Issued an Assessment of  
Telecom Service in NYS But Failed to Address Substantive Questions  
Raised by Connect New York Coalition*

*City of Syracuse Is A Virtual Monopoly for Time Warner Cable, Verizon  
Has Refused to Build Out FiOS Service in the City; Many Surrounding  
Rural Areas Are Not Served By Any Reliable Internet Provider*

SYRACUSE, N.Y. – Mayor Stephanie A. Miner was joined by community activists, elected officials, industry experts, organized labor, and consumer advocates to call on the New York State Public Service Commission (PSC) to fight back against twenty years of telecommunications industry deregulation and stand up for New York’s consumers. The PSC conducted a hearing at Syracuse City Hall today to solicit public input on their recently released [“Study on the State of Telecommunications in New York State.”](#)

“Affordable, reliable, high speed internet access is critical to the future of our community and our country and we need to make sure all New Yorkers are given access to this vital commodity,” said **Syracuse Mayor Stephanie A. Miner**. “Quality telecom infrastructure is critical to ending the digital divide in our community, helping to grow jobs, and improve educational opportunity. The PSC needs to embrace their core mission, to help consumers have affordable access to these services.”

Telecommunications issues throughout New York State are wide-ranging. The PSC is the single entity charged by the State constitution with regulating this industry, along with electricity,

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steam, water, and natural gas. The Commission has long-adopted a policy of deregulation in the telecommunications field, hoping it would lead to increased competition and innovation. Instead, deregulation has allowed cable companies to have unregulated monopolies, decreased service quality, increased cost, and a failure to compel companies with new products, like Verizon FiOS, to build out their networks and properly maintain existing infrastructure.

"We need good jobs at Verizon, and building FiOS while maintaining the still-vital copper-based telephone network creates and protects good jobs." **said Chris Ryan, President, CWA Local 1123.** "It's time for the Public Service Commission to protect good jobs as well as consumers by ensuring Verizon builds FiOS and properly maintains the telephone network."

In July 2014, Mayor Miner, joined by other members of the Connect New York Coalition, filed a formal petition with the PSC seeking a complete public review of New York's telecommunications systems, including phone and internet service. This petition sought to answer several critical questions including: how much do telecom providers invest in legacy systems, fiber optic systems, and wireless systems? What are the costs and revenues for each system and what are their rates of return? What is the current level of service quality? Where does competition exist and on what platforms? What services could be included in "basic service"? And what are the public's expectations for service quality?

The Public Service Commission issued in June of 2015 their "Study on the State of Telecommunications in the State of New York." This assessment completed by PSC staff failed to address the Connect New York coalition's questions, did not include a public airing of evidence and facts, and it did not include a public participation component before the document was released. Following the study's release and under continued pressure from Connect NY Coalition members, the PSC scheduled a series of public hearings to take public comment and address these issues.

In the City of Syracuse, only some areas of the East Side and Eastwood have access to the high-speed Verizon FiOS service. The majority of the City's residential customers are limited to only Time Warner Cable. In many outlying areas surrounding Syracuse, no company has built the technological infrastructure needed to provide affordable, reliable, high-speed internet service. Verizon has refused to build out the FiOS network in major cities across Upstate New York, including Buffalo, Rome, Binghamton, Utica, Albany, Kingston, and Beacon.



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Mayor Miner has made improving access to affordable, reliable, high-speed internet service an important initiative of her administration. On the local level, she has tasked her administration with studying options for a municipal broadband network in the City of Syracuse. She has also been a vocal advocate before state and federal regulators, urging them to stand up for the needs of consumers.

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