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The New York Times

June 13, 2002, Thursday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section B; Page 8; Column 3; Metropolitan Desk

LENGTH: 500 words

HEADLINE: State's Delegation to Request More Federal Aid for 2 Utilities

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**BODY:**

Several members of the New York delegation in Congress say they are planning to ask the Bush administration for an extra \$150 million for Verizon Communications and Consolidated Edison to pay the cost of repairs related to the World Trade Center attack.

Verizon and Con Edison officials have been careful not to ask explicitly for the extra money, which would raise the total amount of federal aid they are expected to receive to \$900 million. But company officials told Congressional delegation members of their request in recent weeks. In March, the Office of Management and Budget promised \$750 million in Housing and Urban Development block grants to "to reimburse costs for repairing damaged facilities." Members of the delegation said at the time that that money was earmarked for public utilities.

At the same time, delegation members are concerned that some in the Bush administration might renege on giving the \$750 million just to the utilities and may attempt to split the money among Verizon, Con Edison and two universities that have asked for assistance.

Representative Carolyn B. Maloney, a Democrat who represents parts of Manhattan and Queens, recently cited a study suggesting that New York's total costs from the attack Sept. 11 would be about \$62 billion more than the \$21 billion that President Bush has promised New York.

"The president is not going to want New Yorkers to have their electric bills go up because of the terrorist attacks, and I'm sure the administration will amend its budget request to help," Ms. Maloney said. "That we are going to need additional help above the current levels shouldn't surprise anyone, given all the economic studies to date."

James A. Harris, a spokesman for Representative Edolphus Towns, a Democrat from Brooklyn, said, "It appears that these costs will exceed the \$750 million level" and that the delegation would work "to secure additional funding necessary to avoid passing these costs along."

Verizon and Con Ed said earlier this year that \$750 million in costs not covered by insurance would have to be passed on to ratepayers.

In March President Bush announced a package that included money for them.

Utility officials said some of the additional costs involve unexpected damage to phone lines and damage near 7 World Trade Center, which housed a Con Ed substation. Verizon's costs not covered by insurance are now estimated at \$528 million and Con Ed's are estimated at \$408 million.

John J. Bonomo, a Verizon spokesman, said this week that the company's estimated costs had remained steady, but that "we are still in the process of working out insurance" and "there are still many variables that have to be dealt with."

John H. Banks, vice president for government relations at Con Ed, said, "The \$750 million that is included in the supplemental appropriation is an excellent start on a process to ensure that the ratepayers don't bear the burden of the terrorist attack." <http://www.nytimes.com>

**LOAD-DATE: June 13, 2002**