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GOVERNOR KATHY HOCHUL

**GOVERNOR HOCHUL DIRECTS STATE AGENCIES TO INVESTIGATE OLD LEAD-COVERED CABLES LEFT IN COMMUNITIES BY TELECOMMUNICATION COMPANIES**

***Departments of Environmental Conservation, Health, and Public Service Immediately Respond to Investigate Potential Exposure and Health Risks Due to Old Lead-Covered Cables Left by Telecommunication Companies***

Governor Kathy Hochul today directed the Department of Public Service, Department of Health, and Department of Environmental Conservation to immediately investigate a recent report of old lead-covered cables left by telecommunication companies and the potential public health risks associated with exposure to those cables.

"The health and safety of New Yorkers is the top priority of my administration, and we are using all of the tools at our disposal to ensure communities are out of harm's way," **Governor Hochul said.** "Lead-covered cables pose a serious threat to communities across New York, and I am directing State agencies to immediately launch a full investigation. We will hold the telecommunication companies responsible and take swift action to remediate any problems."

Today's action follows a media report of lead-containing cable in large and small communities across the U.S., including the State of New York. The report included the example of an aerial lead cable located in a local park in the village of Wappingers Falls, Dutchess County, and stated soil at the park perimeter had elevated lead levels above what the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency considers safe in soil in areas where children play. At the Governor's direction, state experts from the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) have initiated sampling in the area to evaluate any potential for lead exposure.

Governor Hochul directed the Department of Public Service (DPS), the regulator of telecommunication companies in New York, and DEC to investigate the scope of this potential concern based on past use of lead cables. As part of that effort, the agencies sent a [letter](#) to the State's 246 facilities-based telecommunication providers to begin compiling an inventory of the presence of aerial and buried cables, both on land and below water, containing lead across New York. The letter directs telecommunication companies to provide DPS and DEC with a full inventory of lead-containing aerial and buried cable owned by the company for both cable still in use to provide service and cable that is no longer being used but has yet to be removed.

The purpose of the investigation is to better understand the inventory and ownership of such cables in New York. This information will be used to evaluate the need for additional steps. The inventory would include the type of cable (copper or fiber) and whether it is aerial or buried, as well as the city, town, or village the cable is located in, street name where the cable is located, the length of the cable, the closest intersecting landmarks at the beginning and end of the cable, and any other information that would be useful to physically locate and inspect the cable.

In addition, Governor Hochul immediately directed DOH and DEC to conduct sampling for lead once the reported details about the Wappingers Falls park were released. Work is already underway and out of an abundance of caution, the park is temporarily closed. The results from this sampling will be made public as soon as they are available.

Studies show that no amount of lead exposure is safe for children. Lead is a metal that can harm children when it gets into their bodies. Lead can harm a young child's growth, behavior, and ability to learn. It can also cause anemia, kidney damage, and hearing loss. There are many [sources of lead](#). Lead can be found in dust, air, water, soil, and in some products used in and around our homes.

**New York State Department of Public Service CEO Rory M. Christian,** said, "Governor Hochul has made it clear that our number one responsibility is to protect the health and safety of our communities, and we take those instructions seriously. As a result, we will waste no time in digging deep to find out whether there is a problem, and how best we can fix the problem if one exists."

**New York State Health Commissioner Dr. James McDonald** said, "The New York State Department of Health takes reports of lead-containing cabling very seriously and has quickly mobilized in coordinating with the Department of Environmental Conservation, the Village of Wappingers Falls and the Dutchess County Department of Health to determine if the cables pose any health concerns and identify any necessary additional actions. We stand with the Governor in ensuring that the health and safety of all New Yorkers is protected, and will update the public on our next steps."

**New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Basil Seggos** said, "DEC's experts work closely with DOH, DPS, and our many other state and federal partners to use the best science available to investigate and clean up contaminated sites. We continue to hold polluters responsible for the potential environmental and health risks they create and will expedite the ongoing assessment of the extent of any lead-related impacts these cables could have on our children and communities."

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