



Assemblymember  
**Robert C. Carroll**  
Assembly District 44



## Free Shipping Isn't Free, Con-Edison Rate Increase, Support the Arts

December 19, 2019

Greetings –

This morning the New York Daily News [published my op-ed](#), “Free shipping isn’t actually free,” which calls for the state to impose a \$3 dollar per package fee on all online deliveries. [Read my prescription for how New York can break the online delivery addiction that is clogging our streets, polluting our air, creating waste, burdening workers and killing small businesses below:](#)

DAILY NEWS NYDailyNews.com

### Free shipping isn't actually free

**BE OUR GUEST**  
BY ROBERT CARROLL

**J**ust hear those horns honking and beep-beeping too. Instead of silver bells, the new sound of the holidays in the city are the honking horns of delivery trucks. On an average day in New York City, there are over 1.5 million packages delivered to homes and apartments. We will smash that daily record every single day from now until Christmas. The ubiquity of one-click shopping and free two-day delivery has turbocharged the number of deliveries city residents receive daily. It is unsustainable, and we need to fix our policies to reflect that fact.

I don't want to be a grinch, but there is no such thing as free delivery. Delivery has a cost – especially the highly inefficient and wasteful same-day and two-day delivery choices that are now commonplace. Same-day and two-day delivery eliminate the previous efficiencies that more standard delivery choices created. That is because same-day and two-day delivery require many more truck trips and many more deliveries, with each pack of tube socks getting individually wrapped in a cardboard box.

This extra congestion, air pollution, cardboard and plastic wrapping have real costs for all New Yorkers, not to mention the added stress it puts on the already dangerous conditions for underpaid non-union workers at Amazon distribution centers. The laudable goals of reducing plastic waste and traffic congestion in New York, that spurred the state into action last year to pass a plastic bag ban and congestion pricing will be severely blunted if we don't get our online delivery addiction under control.

The reason same-day and two-day delivery are commonplace is because online retailers like Amazon either bake the shipping costs into memberships like Amazon Prime, or make a third-party merchant, who is using Amazon or Etsy as a platform, eat the cost themselves.

These companies have become so ruthless about free delivery, it's hard to find merchants on their platforms who do not provide it. This has bankrupted many small online retailers. But as convenience-blinded consumers we don't see this. All we see is free shipping, and to us that means shipping has no cost.

That makes us think it is appropriate, as we do our holiday shopping, to have Buzz Lightyear delivered on Monday, AirPods delivered on Tuesday, a replica Millennium Falcon delivered on Wednesday, a PlayStation 5 delivered on Thursday, Elsa's Ice Castle delivered on Friday, a Baby Shark delivered on Saturday, and now, even on Sunday, you can get Dad an 80-inch flat-screen. After all it's all free, for two days or less, every day of the week, and each item comes in its own plastic pillow-padded cardboard box.

Each one of those truck trips adds to traffic congestion. Each one might wind up blocking a bike lane. Each one carries with it significant carbon emissions. Santa and his reindeer can tell you it is more efficient to deliver all the toys on the same day.

So how do we rebalance the scales and properly account for the cost of shipping? Better curb and freight management policy is needed, but that alone can't solve the congestion issue if we don't reduce overall demand and volume of packages.

The state should implement a \$3 per package delivery fee, at the point of sale, on all online deliveries excluding medicine and food. This would properly recalibrate our online delivery addiction by incentivizing retailers and shoppers to combine shipments into the same box and to deliver to an individual house or apartment less frequently. It will also incentivize online shoppers to no longer click-purchase low-dollar items or items that can be easily bought within walking distance of their homes.

This nominal fee will not stop shoppers from reaping the savings and convenience found through online delivery. But it will make them think before they click, give our city and state much-needed revenue, reduce the number of truck trips and the amount packaging waste, and nudge all of us to shop local a little more often. Now that would be a Miracle on 34th St!

*Carroll represents parts of Park Slope, Windsor Terrace and other neighborhoods in the Assembly.*

## Con Edison Rate Increase

This week I submitted comment in opposition to the Joint Proposal from Consolidated Edison (Con Ed) and the Department of Public Service to increase electricity and gas rates by \$1.2 Billion over the next three years. New York City already pays the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest municipal energy rates in the country and this rate hike would increase those rates 13% over the next three years for electricity and 22% for gas. After a disastrous summer of blackouts, brownouts and shut-offs, the last thing that Con Ed deserves is more money from ratepayers. Taken together with the chaos that National Grid caused this year with their self-imposed gas moratorium and their own proposed double-digit rate increase, it's quite a bitter bill for ratepayers to swallow. Ratepayers should not be given short shrift over shareholders, which is why I am introducing legislation to make our utilities public. Look for updates on this as we head into the legislative session in January. See my full comment regarding the Con Ed rate hike below:



ROBERT CARROLL  
Assemblymember 44<sup>th</sup> District

THE ASSEMBLY  
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Museums & Cultural  
Institution

December 18, 2019

Hon. Michelle Phillips  
Acting Secretary to the Commission  
3 Empire State Plaza  
Albany, New York 12223

Dear Secretary Phillips,

I write to oppose the Joint Proposal of Consolidated Edison (Con Ed) and the Department of Public Service to increase energy rates by approximately \$810 million for electric delivery and by approximately \$393.8 million for gas delivery over the next three years. This proposed hike would increase the cost of gas by 22% and of electricity by 13% for the average ratepayer. New York City already pays the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest municipal rates in the country and I question whether we are receiving value for the huge sums of money Con Ed regularly receives through settlements, rather than through fully litigated rate cases.

Not surprisingly, while the Joint Proposal pays lip service to the landmark Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) by authorizing a study on the decapitalization of the gas system and climate change, it simultaneously includes \$200 million for new fossil fuel infrastructure. If New York is going to meet the ambitious renewable energy goals set forth in the CLCPA and in New York City's climate goals, more must be done. This "business as usual" approach to Con Ed's obligations to serve New York and its citizens cannot continue.

Additionally, this proposed rate increase comes as Con Ed is coming off a disastrous year for everyday New Yorkers. Hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers experienced blackouts, brownouts, and shutoffs - many happening on the hottest days of the year. These mostly happened because Con Ed demonstrably had not done the routine work of grid maintenance and upkeep necessary and is further evidence that this is not a well-earned rate increase, but rather a money grab for shareholders. At the same time New York City's other energy utility, National Grid (f/k/a Brooklyn Union Gas), is proposing double-digit increases in gas costs despite having created chaos by failing at its core duty of meeting its customers' needs.

If New York is serious about these utilities serving the public then we should take the incentive for profit out of the equation and bring public power to New York City.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Robert C. Carroll'.

Assemblymember Robert C. Carroll

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## Hearing to Support the Arts

As the Chair of the Subcommittee on Museums and Cultural Institutions, I was in Albany last Thursday to co-chair a hearing about capital funding for arts organizations. There are a lot of important issues that we must address in Albany, but it's critical that we remember that arts and culture are a big part of what makes New York great. Arts and Culture institutions are a significant economic force for our State, they have significant infrastructure needs and the state must do more to invest in these institutions. We heard testimony from artist leaders from across the State and you can view all the [videos from the hearing here](#).



**Advocating for the Independence of the Disabled**

I met this week with the Brooklyn Center for the Independence of the Disabled to talk about an incredibly important budgetary issue related to the MTA’s e-hail pilot program. This terrific pilot program brings the efficiency and nimbleness of taxis to the users of the highly costly and inefficient access-a-ride system. Under funding this pilot program will only cost New York in the long run. In the coming weeks I’ll be fighting to restore the e-hail pilot program’s budget in Albany. I hope you will join me in advocating for sensible expansion of this critical program that helps thousands of disabled New Yorkers.




**Citizens Committee for New York City Grant Program**

The Citizens Committee for New York City is promoting a funding opportunity for grassroots organizations working to improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods.

Citizens Committee's Neighborhood Grants program offers up to \$3,000 for community-improvement projects led by volunteer groups such as block and tenant associations, PTAs, community gardens, groups working with youth or seniors, cultural organizations and more. Unlike most grant programs, groups do not have to be incorporated or have 501(c)(3) status to be eligible for a grant!

I am co-sponsoring a grant information session on January 6, 2020 if you would like to learn more about this opportunity. See the flyer below for details:

**WHAT COULD YOUR  
COMMUNITY GROUP  
DO WITH \$3,000?**



**Join Assemblymember Robert C. Carroll and  
Citizens Committee for New York City for a  
GRANT INFORMATION SESSION!**  
Citizens Committee awards grants of up to \$3,000 for  
community and school improvement projects carried  
out by resident-led volunteer groups. Come to learn  
about the application!

**Monday, January 6th, 2020 | 6:00 PM**  
**Cortelyou Road Library, 1305 Cortelyou Rd, Brooklyn**

**To RSVP, contact: (718) 788-7221**  
Learn more about the grant: [www.citizensnyc.org](http://www.citizensnyc.org)

**CITIZENS  
COMMITTEE  
FOR NEW  
YORK CITY**

You can find out more about the grant and application at [citizensnyc.org/grants](http://citizensnyc.org/grants).

I hope you have a wonderful holiday season,

Bobby

P.S. Join me **today** at my district office (416 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue) for my holiday open house. We are collecting hats, scarves and gloves for CHIPS or an unwrapped toy. 3:30pm – 7:00pm.

**Holiday Open House**  
at  
**Assemblymember Robert Carroll's  
District Office**

**Thursday, December 19th | 3:30 pm to 7:00 pm**  
**416 Seventh Avenue (between 13th & 14th Streets) Park Slope**

Donate new gloves, hats & scarves to CHIPS for distribution at their soup kitchen (all sizes okay, babies to adults) — or — Drop off a "Toys for Tots" gift!

Enjoy apple cider & holiday treats! Bring the kids and make pipecleaner snowflakes! Get a list of local volunteer opportunities for your family!

**CHIPS**  
FOOD, FRIENDSHIP AND HOPE SINCE 1971

**Assemblymember Robert Carroll**

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