Rockaways Get Train Service, Could Use Some More Help

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Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced that a new free shuttle service dubbed the H train will begin providing service to residents of the hard-hit Rockaway Penninsula at 4 a.m. tomorrow.

â€śThe A train tracks from Howard Beach to the Rockaways were almost completely destroyed by the storm, and replacing them is a tremendous undertaking,â€ť Cuomo said in a statement. â€śWhile that work continues, this new shuttle service will help improve travel for people in the Rockaways who are still recovering from Sandyâ€™s effects.â€ť

According to Cuomo's office, the cars that make up the new service were trucked to the Rockaways after the A train tracks were destroyed by Hurricane Sandy.

â€śMTA New York City Transit has responded with unprecedented creativity to restore subway service to Rockaway customers,â€ť said MTA Chairman and CEO Joseph J. Lhota. â€śThis partial restoration of service is an important step for the Rockaways, but our work wonâ€™t be done until the A train is fully restored.â€ť

The Rockaways are still in need of basic relief aid like shelter, food and heat.

Naomi Rothwell of Greater NYC for Change recently launched a pettition on Change.org demanding more help from FEMA for the Rockaways.

â€śUnless FEMA steps in right away, children, the elderly and the sick could be in danger of hypothermia as they are exposed to freezing nighttime temperatures this week," Rothwell wrote. "Rockaway residents with no access to heat or electricity urgently need FEMA to set up emergency stations that will provide heat, warm meals, medical care, and a warm place to sleep.â€ť

A sampling of comments from pettion signees seems to show a growing dissastisfaction with relief efforts in the area:

"I have been volunteering out there in the last week and have seen the conditions close up. We are carrying boxes and distributing supplies while 10 FEMA reps sit staring at their computers. Some concrete help sure would be appreciated!" -- Ingerid H.

"I am a medaled US Army Veteran, and it is EXACTLY for relief in this type of emergency situation for which I fought. PLEASE FEMA, GET IT TOGETHER, and GET IT TOGETHER NOW!" -- Brian P.

"Given the scope of damage, and the freezing temperatures, the residents of the Rockaways need priority assistance. Do the right thing and do it now!!!" -- Ruth G.

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Joe Lhota

Queens

rockaways