Chapter 21: Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

A. INTRODUCTION

Irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources refers to both the built and natural resources that would be expended in the construction and operation of a proposed project.

B. POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

There are a number of resources, both natural and built, that would be expended in the construction and operation of the Proposed Action. These resources include the materials used in construction (e.g. glass, wood, metal, plastics, etc.); energy in the form of gas and electricity consumed during construction and operation of the Proposed Action; and the human effort (time and labor) required to develop, construct, and operate various components of the Proposed Action. They are considered irretrievably committed because their reuse for some purpose other than the Proposed Action would be highly unlikely.

The proposed project would not require a significant commitment of natural resources in the form of vegetative cover or plant and animal habitat. As discussed in Chapter 9, "Natural Resources," installation of the transmission line, whether overhead or underground, would be limited to a narrow corridor alongside already developed land and roads. Thus, the area of disturbance would be small. The areas along the roads were found not to contain sensitive habitats or valuable natural resources and no significant adverse impacts to natural resources are expected. Similarly, the permanent loss of the small acreage for the expanded substation is not expected to have a significant adverse impact. The expansion of the Bridgehampton Substation would involve the clearing of about 3.5 acres for the substation and about 1/3 of an acre for a 14-foot wide access road from the Bridgehampton Sag Harbor Turnpike. Of the total 10-acre parcel, slightly more than half would remain wooded with the remainder as road or gravel and concrete pads for the substation equipment. This land is owned by LIPA and has been intended for future use by the utility.

Construction materials would include wood and steel for the poles to support the overhead transmission lines. The installation of the new transmission line would require replacement of wood poles with new wood poles or steel poles and in some cases installation of new wood and/or steel poles. The number of poles installed along the new route would depend on the overhead and underground configurations as well as the route selected for installation, primarily due to the length of the route. In addition, construction of the substation would include approximately 200,000 pounds of steel for equipment supports and approximately 350 cubic yards of concrete for equipment pads, in addition to other built and natural resources.

These commitments of land and human resources and materials should be weighed against the public purpose and need for the Proposed Action to provide the necessary energy infrastructure to meet projected local development growth and address system reliability within the eastern portion of the Town of Southampton, the South Fork, and the East End. ✷