



## **To bury or not to bury**

To the Editor:

I've lived on Long Island my entire life and previously served in local government. I understand the importance of transparency and fairness, especially when it comes to my hard-earned money. Recently, there have been calls by some to bury an overhead line from Eastport to Riverhead along a route that has had a similar overhead line for more than 50 years. The advocates propose the additional \$70 to \$100 million be charged to all Long Island residents through their electric bills.

PSEG, on behalf of LIPA, goes through an extensive analysis to decide whether to build lines overhead or underground. The process weighs visual and technical considerations, including costs and benefits. There is a statewide standard for these decisions that seems to work well in the rest of New York.

The LIPA Board of Trustees, of which I am a member, plans to consider this statewide standard at our September meeting. I personally support this proposal. The Board welcomes comments on whether this standard is fair to all Long Island residents. Using this state-wide standard, the Eastport to Riverhead line would remain overhead, as it has been for the last 50 years. Underground lines simply do not provide enough benefit for their cost, in most cases. Nevertheless, some communities want LIPA to put the lines underground anyway. It's an understandable response.

That's why LIPA offers a program to allow local residents who prefer underground lines to bury the lines at their own expense. LIPA will even finance the additional cost through a charge on local electric bills. Over the last 20 years only one community has elected this option. Long Island is 110 miles long. If residents in a community are unhappy with the results produced by a fair statewide standard, they are invited to work with LIPA to bury the lines in their neighborhood at their expense. That is the only way to provide fairness to all the residents of Long Island.

TOM McATEER  
Vice chairman, LIPA Board of Trustees