

State Environmental Quality Review  
**NEGATIVE DECLARATION**  
Notice of Determination of Non-Significance

Project: Two-Way Radio System Replacement Project

Date: September 7, 2018

This Notice is issued in accordance with Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review Act) of the Environmental Conservation Law and its implementing regulations at 6 NYCRR Part 617 and 21 NYCRR Part 10052.

The Long Island Power Authority (“LIPA”) has determined, based on information provided by PSEG Long Island (“PSEG LI”) and the Environmental Assessment (“EA”) prepared by PSEG LI in conjunction with GEI Consultants, Inc., P. C. that the Proposed Action described below will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment and the preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement will not be required.

**Name of Action:** Two-Way Radio System Replacement Project (the “Proposed Action”)

**Location:** Multiple Locations in Suffolk County, Nassau County and Far Rockaway, New York

**SEQR Status:** Type 1

**Conditioned Negative Declaration:** No

**Proposed Action Description:**

PSEG Long Island (PSEG LI), as Service Provider to LIPA, manages and operates LIPA’s two-way voice radio system. The two-way radio system enables real-time communications between field crews and operation centers dispatchers even when other means of communication, such as commercial cellular service, may be unavailable. The system consists of VHF-band antennas on various structures across LIPA’s service territory and the associated portable and dispatch communication equipment. The existing analog system is being completely replaced with a digital system because the analog system is antiquated and cannot be efficiently serviced.

The Proposed Action will improve system availability and reliability to support both daily mission-critical and emergency operations. LIPA cannot rely on commercial radio service or cellular providers because these may be unavailable, insufficiently reliable or ineffective during emergencies, which would interfere with efficient restoration of electric service and result in longer restoration times for utility customers.

The Proposed Action is critical to maintain T&D electric service operations and will provide digital radios for the core PSEG LI T&D functions, including Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP), Electric Service, Overhead/Underground, Substation Operations and Maintenance. Major Operations Centers in all operating regions will gain enhanced dispatch capabilities with new consoles that allow seamless inter-regional communication and improved safety for T&D operations, PSEG LI crews, and external assistance crews operating within the service territory. The system will be more storm resilient and radio coverage will be improved with new antennas at a total of 21 locations throughout the service territory as identified in the table below. The 21

two-way radio antenna locations were selected to provide the best technical solution for coverage across the service area.

At fourteen (14) locations new antennas will be installed on existing structures, including lattice towers, steel poles, roof tops and a water tank. At six (6) other locations wood poles will be replaced with steel poles to meet storm hardening standards. The new poles will be within 35 feet of the existing poles, with the exception of Far Rockaway where the replacement pole will be located 135 feet from the existing pole and outside the State's tidal wetland adjacent area. At five (5) of the replacement pole locations the top of the proposed pole and antenna structure will be no more than 10 feet taller than the top of the structure it replaces. At the Port Jefferson location, the replacement pole will be 40 feet taller than the existing pole to enhance coverage. At one (1) location, the Bridgehampton Substation, a new 110-foot steel pole is proposed.

As indicated below, a prefabricated equipment shelter, a 35-kW emergency backup generator, and a 500-gallon aboveground propane tank will also be installed if the location lacks emergency backup power equipment. Fifteen (15) locations will require the installation of a new generator, of which eight (8) locations will also require a new equipment shelter with two HVAC units. At the Far Rockaway location, these ancillary structures will be placed on an elevated platform to protect against flooding.

PROPOSED ACTION LOCATIONS			
Site Name	Owner	Street Address	Scope of Work
Far Rockaway	LIPA	13-99 Dickens Street Far Rockaway	Pole Replacement and Antenna Installation*
Elwood	LIPA	136 Elwood Road, East Northport	Pole Replacement and Antenna Installation*
Tiana	LIPA	20 Springville Road, Hampton Bays	Pole Replacement and Antenna Installation *
East Hampton	LIPA	10 Fresno Place, East Hampton	Pole Replacement and Antenna Installation *
Ruland Road	LIPA	49 Ruland Road, Melville	Pole Replacement and Antenna Installation *
Port Jefferson	LIPA	798 Beach Street, Port Jefferson	Pole Replacement and Antenna Installation*
Bridgehampton	LIPA	1651 Bridgehampton-Sag Harbor Turnpike, Sag Harbor	New Pole and Antenna Installation*
Shoreham	LIPA	199 North Country Road, Wading River	Antenna Installation*
Sills Road	LIPA	50 Zorn Boulevard, Yaphank	Antenna Installation*
Hauppauge	LIPA	1180 Veteran's Memorial Highway, Hauppauge	Antenna Installation*
Syosset	LIPA	51 S Woods Road, Syosset	Antenna Installation*
Manhasset	LIPA	223 Searingtown Road, Manhasset	Antenna Installation*
Manorville	SBA	County Road 111 & Eastport Manor Road, Manorville	Antenna Installation**
Montauk	Crown	375 Montauk Highway, Montauk	Antenna Installation*
Noyack	ATC	507 Middle Line Highway, Noyack	Antenna Installation*
So. Riverhead	ATC	120 Moriches-Riverhead Road	Antenna Installation**
Melville	ATC	Round Swamp Road, Melville	Antenna Installation**
Locust Valley	Water Authority	14 Wellington Road, Locust Valley	Antenna Installation*
Stony Brook	New York State	101 Nicolls Road, Stony Brook	Antenna Installation**
Brentwood	National Grid	1650 Islip Avenue, Brentwood	Antenna Installation**
Barrett	National Grid	1 McCarthy Road, Island Park	Antenna Installation **

\*Includes installation of a prefabricated equipment shelter, 35kW backup generator and/or 500-gallon aboveground propane tank

\*\* Using existing backup power source on site

## **Reasons Supporting This Determination:**

PSEG LI, in conjunction with GEI Consultants, Inc., P.C., reviewed the Proposed Action's scope of work and undertook a SEQRA assessment to evaluate whether the Proposed Action has the potential to result in significant adverse environmental impacts. The Proposed Action is classified as a Type I. A full Environmental Assessment (EA) form was prepared for the Proposed Action, including site-specific information for each of the 21 sites. The EA evaluated the effect of the Proposed Action upon land use, natural resources, visual resources and character of the area, energy use, environmental hazards, and human health resources. SEQRA Type I notification requirements for Environmental Notice Board (ENB) publication and local agency filing will be satisfied if the proposed Negative Declaration is issued.

### **Visual**

Since the Proposed Action involves the installation of one new pole within an existing electrical substation, replacement of six utility poles, and installation of antennas on fourteen existing structures, there will not be any change to land uses. Specifically, the new pole installation at the Bridgehampton Substation is similar in height to the existing 97-foot T-Mobile wood pole and similar in material to the adjacent steel substation structures and equipment. Due to the surrounding topography and wooded buffer around the substation, the new pole is expected to be partially visible from certain locations along Sag Harbor-Bridgehampton Turnpike and recreation trails east of the Turnpike. For the remaining replacement poles, the material change from wood to steel and increase in overall structure height of approximately 10 feet at most locations will result in minor viewshed changes. Specifically, the Port Jefferson replacement pole will be approximately 40 feet taller than the nearby 60-foot meteorology pole that will be removed as part of the Proposed Action. However, a lattice tower similar in height (approx. 105 feet) is located less than 50 feet from the proposed replacement pole within a transmission line corridor. Based on the visual simulations, the proposed replacement poles and installation of one new pole are consistent with the surrounding areas, resulting in a minor viewshed changes, and the antenna-only additions will result in negligible viewshed changes. The Proposed Action will not have a significant adverse impact on the character of the surrounding communities or significantly impair the visual landscape from scenic or aesthetic resources. Similarly, the public's enjoyment and/or appreciation of the appearance of scenic resources will not be interfered with nor reduced.

### **Historic**

Based upon review of NYS Cultural Resource Information System database, some of the Proposed Action locations are within designated "archaeological sensitive areas". However, construction will occur within previously disturbed areas and is unlikely to result in any adverse impacts to archaeological resources. While not expected, in the event identifiable archaeological resources are found during construction, consultation would be necessary with the NYS Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) and other authorities as applicable, and additional studies may be required prior to the continuation of construction.

### **Land**

For locations involving pole replacement, the new pole installation, and/or accessory structures installation, construction activities are expected to disturb areas ranging from approximately 40 square feet to 1,225-square feet (0.028 acres), depending on location. The final ground cover will be between 40 square feet and 300 square feet of concrete, plus up to approximately 925 square feet of compacted blue stone. Excess soil will either remain onsite stabilized with vegetative cover or will be removed and disposed of in compliance with applicable federal and state regulations. The existing groundcover varies by proposed location, including asphalt, blue stone,

bare earth, herbaceous vegetation and/or small shrubs. Any temporary disturbances to surrounding groundcovers due to staging/laydown activities will be restored to pre-construction conditions. Since the Proposed Action involves locations with existing utility structures, many sites already have active vegetation management programs in place to maintain required safety and operational clearances, which may include tree trimming, weeding, herbicide treatment and/or mowing. The construction and operation of the Proposed Action will not result in any significant loss of flora or fauna, nor any significant adverse impacts to threatened, endangered, or special concern species or to critical habitats.

#### Floodplain

Project locations at Far Rockaway, Shoreham, Montauk, and Barrett are within the New York State Coastal Area. Far Rockaway is the only location where ground disturbance is proposed within the 100-yr floodplain. Construction adjacent to or within designated floodplain and coastal areas and/or adjacent to surface waters will not cause any significant adverse impacts to these resources (see site specific State Coastal Assessment Forms). Associated ground disturbances and structure footprints will be minimal, and best management practices (BMPs) for sediment and erosion control will be followed. Replacement poles in or adjacent to floodplain and coastal areas will meet storm hardening standards, and support structures will be elevated to meet applicable state floodplain regulations.

#### Groundwater

The Proposed Action is located in or adjacent to Critical Environmental Areas (CEA) including protected ecosystems and multiple Special Groundwater Protection Areas (SPGA), which are listed to protect groundwater and drinking water. The Proposed Action is located over the Nassau-Suffolk Sole Source Aquifer and the Brooklyn-Queens Sole Source Aquifer. The new poles will be installed into drilled holes to a maximum depth of 30-feet, which will be backfilled with concrete. Encounters with groundwater are not anticipated during construction at any locations, except the Far Rockaway Substation where depth to groundwater is approximately nine (9) feet and will require de-watering and water disposal. No impacts to groundwater are expected during construction pursuant to BMPs. At all other locations where ground disturbance is proposed, the estimated depth to groundwater is more than 30 feet (USGS 2013). In addition, unanticipated and/or accidental releases of gases from the aboveground propane tanks, underground gas lines, or their connections to the backup generators are not expected to result in any adverse impacts to groundwater, due to the high volatility of propane. Best management practices will be employed to prevent any accidental releases during fueling and equipment inspection and maintenance. Based on the Proposed Action scope of work and locations in previously disturbed and/or developed areas, no impacts to any CEAs, including the SPGAs, are anticipated.

#### Energy

The power supply to each of the proposed action sites will be provided by existing electric equipment through a newly installed service connection from an existing distribution line. The Proposed Action is not expected to consume significantly more power than the system it replaces. A minor increase in consumption is expected due to addition of three antenna sites and from system storm hardening and redundancy requirements (e.g. dedicated HVAC and UPS units). The radio and console power consumption is not expected to change between the Proposed Action and existing system.

In the event of an electrical outage, backup power will be supplied at each location by one of fifteen proposed 35kW generator fueled from an aboveground propane tank or from existing backup power source. Due to the flammable nature of propane, the proposed tanks will have a 10-

foot spark clearance, which will be routinely checked and maintained after installation. PSEG LI will fuel the propane tanks and service the generators according to their Standard Operating Procedures. The generators will be tested weekly by starting and running until the output is at the correct level per the instrumentation reading. The generator test is approximately 20 minutes. Generator fuel runtimes vary by tank size and load but average 3 days without refueling. Each Substations' Health and Safety Plan will be updated to address the physical hazard(s) associated with fuel storage and proper safety protocols for site maintenance. Based on the low power level required, and instituted safety procedures, operation of the radio system is not expected to result in a significant adverse energy demand.

#### Construction – Temporary Air, Noise & Traffic

Antenna-related construction activities may result in temporary minor increases in air emissions, vibrations, and ambient noise levels depending on the type of construction equipment used. Noise reduction measures will be implemented, which may include using low noise generating construction equipment and minimizing vehicle idle times, to ensure compliance with relevant federal and state regulations. Since all construction activities including parking, staging, and laydown areas will occur on the Proposed Action properties, no significant construction related traffic impacts are anticipated.

#### Noise

Potential operation of the proposed 35kW emergency backup generator during electrical power outages and equipment test events will produce a noise level of approximately 59 – 61 A-weighted decibels (“dBA”) in exercise mode and 73 dBA (level associated with a vacuum cleaner) when operating in emergency conditions at a distance of 23 feet. At one location, the Locust Valley Water Tank, a replacement generator will be installed on the same foundation of the existing generator located approximately 10 feet from the adjacent residential property line and approximately 270 feet from the associated home. At two (2) locations, Far Rockaway and Montauk, the new generator will be located approximately 40 feet from the adjacent residential property lines and at least 100 feet from the associated homes. At three (3) of the project locations generators will be installed between 60 feet and 80 feet from the nearest residential property lines. At the remaining nine (9) locations with proposed new generators, the units will be installed at least 100 feet from the nearest residential property lines. At 100 feet from the generator, the maximum noise level under emergency conditions will be approximately 50 dBA, which is comparable to normal daytime noise levels (50 – 60 dBA) in a typical suburban community. As such, the proposed generators are not expected to have a significant adverse noise impact.

At each new communications shelter, two HVAC systems will be installed on the exterior to heat and cool the interior of the structure. Similar HVAC systems have noise levels of up to 50 - 60 dBA (level associated with a normal conversation) at a distance of 3.3 feet from the HVAC system. Sound levels decrease by roughly 6 dBA with every doubling of distance from the source; i.e., if a noise level is 50 dBA at 50 feet, it will be roughly 44 dBA at 100 feet. Given the distance from the HVAC systems to the closest residential neighborhoods at each project location, the HVAC equipment does not have any potential for causing a significant adverse noise impact.

If the emergency generator and HVAC equipment run concurrently, the maximum sound levels will be an increment of only several decibels above the generator's sound level, which is expected to be within the range of typical suburban communities.

#### Air

Antenna related construction activities may result in temporary minor increases in air emissions. Minimization measures such as reducing idle time of vehicles will reduce any potential impacts.

The back-up emergency generators will only operate in the event of a power outage and for weekly testing. Based on the size and anticipated usage of the proposed generators, no state or federal air permits are required for the Proposed Action. The new generators and fuel tanks will be regularly inspected and maintained by PSEG LI. Project locations which will utilize existing generators and fuel tanks will be inspected and maintained by the respective owners. Due to the distance between two-way radio installation locations, localized impacts are minimized.

#### EMF

Two-way radio antennas operate by emitting and absorbing radiofrequency (RF) radiation. RF radiation is a form of non-ionizing radiation similar to visible light. RF antenna radiation from the proposed two-way radio antennas results in exposure levels that are well below the limits adopted by the Federal Communication Commission (“FCC”). Antennas operate at one or more wavelengths at a specific Effective Radiated Power (“ERP”). The FCC guidelines require that an electromagnetic fields (“EMF”) study be undertake for facilities that operate at a 70-centimeter (“cm”) wavelength if they have 70 watts or greater ERP, and at a 33-cm wavelength if they have a 150 watts or greater ERP. The two-way radio antennas will operate at wavelengths below 33-cm and have an ERP of 90 watts. The existing poles at Tiana, Ruland Road, Far Rockaway, and East Hampton locations have a mounted DA antenna, which operates below 33-cm and has an ERP of 50 watts. The existing pole at the Elwood location has mounted AMI antennas, which operate below 33-cm and have an ERP of 1 watt. For pole replacement locations with an existing DA antenna or AMI antenna, the addition of the two-way radio antennas will have a combined ERP of up to 140 watts, which is lower than the guideline criterion. The Proposed Action antenna wattage at all Project Locations is below the level that requires an EMF study.

#### Human Health/Spill & Remediation Sites

A review of the NYSDEC Remedial Sites and Spill Incidents Database Search was completed to identify remediation sites and/or past spill reports in the vicinity of the project locations. Three (3) project locations, Brentwood, Port Jefferson, and Ruland Road, are identified as having past spills incidents on or in the immediate vicinity of the site, all of which have been reported closed by NYSDEC. Two (2) of the project locations, Barrett and South Riverhead, are listed within the NYSDEC remediation database. No ground disturbance is proposed at these locations. East Hampton is identified as having undergone remediation, including the excavation of lead contaminated soil to a depth of 6 inches and off-site disposal in April of 2013, which was approved by NYSDEC. Additionally, Far Rockaway and Tiana project locations are not within or immediately adjacent to NYSDEC spill or remediation site but are located within 2,000 feet of a listed site. Due to the absence of ground disturbance, closed incident statuses, completed remediation, and distance, the Proposed Action is not expected to cause adverse human health impacts from exposure to any solid or hazardous substances or contaminants.

#### Cumulative

The Proposed Action will not result in any significant cumulative adverse environmental impact. The Proposed Action will be located on existing utility properties and/or structures. The locations are physically separated from each other and significant adverse environmental impacts do not result to any resources at any of the individual sites.

**For Further Information:**

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