

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

**Project:** Distribution Automation Radio Repeater Installation Project, Phase 1

**Date:** July 10, 2019

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 and the Environmental Assessment (“EA”) prepared by PSEG Long Island in conjunction with TRC Consultants, Inc. that Phase 1 of 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:** Distribution Automation Radio Repeater Installation Project  
 (“Proposed Action”), Phase 1

**Location:** Fifteen (15) Project Sites in Nassau and Suffolk Counties, NY

**SEQR Status:** Type 1

**Conditioned Negative Declaration:** No

**Proposed Action Description:**

PSEG Long Island manages and operates LIPA’s DA radio communications system. The system allows operators to quickly reroute the flow of electricity around a problem to minimize the size of outages, particularly during storms and severe weather events, by remotely operating distribution circuit switches from a central location. From a central location, a radio frequency (“RF”) signal is transmitted to the appropriate DA radio antenna that re-transmits the signal to the appropriate switch(es) which operate as directed. The existing LIPA DA radio communications system consists of approximately 1,200 radio-controlled distribution switches that are operated through approximately 135 existing DA radio antennas that are installed on a variety of existing structures, such as distribution poles, free-standing monopoles, free-standing towers and guyed towers.

As part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (“FEMA’s”) storm hardening initiatives, approximately 900 additional distribution switches have been and will continue to be installed over the next several months. Storm hardening initiatives include strengthening the overall system, upgrading equipment and increasing resilience to future storm damage thereby reducing the number of customers impacted by service interruptions when storm

damage occurs. The existing DA radio communication system does not have the capacity to operate these new switches nor provide the geographic coverage to adequately serve customers across Long Island. A comprehensive engineering review of the existing DA radio communications system determined that additional DA radio transmitters are needed in certain areas of Long Island to provide complete RF coverage necessary to extend digital automation benefits throughout LIPA's service area and to integrate the additional switches. The Proposed Action will install the additional necessary DA radio transmitters at locations that will achieve full DA radio coverage throughout Long Island.

Phase 1 of the Proposed Action will provide the additional necessary DA radio coverage for most of Long Island. Phase 1 covers 15 Project Sites and will include the installation of monopoles and DA antennas at 12 Project Sites; the installation of DA antennas on "existing structures" at 2 Project Sites (one in an existing LIPA electrical substation and another on an existing lattice tower located in a parking lot behind an office building) and the installation of ground-based equipment Syosset Project Site. The specific sites and installation details are described below.

Phase 2 of the Proposed Action will install DA radio transmitters at other locations to provide DA radio coverage for the remaining areas of Long Island which will require additional DA radio coverage after Phase 1. The Phase 2 installations will utilize the same structures, equipment and technologies that are being utilized for Phase 1. The specific sites for Phase 2 installations have not yet been determined. Because of the anticipated distances among the potential Phase 2 Project Sites and the Phase 1 Project Sites, in addition to the limited nature of potential impacts identified in Phase 1, no cumulative impacts are anticipated between Phase 1 and Phase 2. The Phase 2 SEQRA review will include an evaluation of potential cumulative impacts of Phases 1 and 2. Therefore, the SEQRA review of Phase 2 will be no less protective of human health and the environment.

Phase 1 of the Proposed Action includes the installation of new radio equipment at 15 properties owned by LIPA in Nassau and Suffolk Counties, New York. Specifically,

- Twelve (12) of the Project Sites involve the installation of new monopoles in three (3) standard heights – 100 ft. (6 sites), 150 ft. (4 sites) and 180 ft. (2 sites), and the installation of new antennas (20 ft. in length, 2.75 in. in diameter (at the base)) on these monopoles, resulting in an overall height at these sites to 120, 170 and 195 ft., respectively. The Patchogue Project Site will have two (2) DA antennas.
- Two (2) Project Sites involve the installation of antennas on existing structures (monopole at Manhasset and lattice tower at Hauppauge). The existing structures range in height from 148 ft. – 192 ft. (including existing antennas); the proposed antennas will not increase the overall heights of these existing structures.
- One (1) Project Site, Syosset, will require only the installation of ground-based equipment.
- Fourteen (14) of the 15 Project Sites involve the installation of ground-based equipment to support the DA radio communications system – a communications shelter building (with heating, ventilation and air conditioning ("HVAC") equipment),

emergency generator and a propane tank (500 gallon) to fuel the generator in case of power loss. The Hauppauge site has an existing shelter but will require a new generator and propane tank.

Table 1 identifies each of the Project Sites by name, address, and DA equipment to be installed.

**Table 1 Proposed Action Project Sites – Phase 1**

Project Site Name	Project Site Address	Scope of Work	Structure - Total Height in Feet - Monopole / Tower and Antenna
Babylon	20 Cedar Street Babylon, NY	New steel monopole, antenna and ground-based equipment	120
Baldwin *	2285 Harrison Avenue Baldwin, NY	New steel monopole to replace an existing wooden monopole; antenna and ground-based equipment	120 *
Canal	Sunrise Hwy West of Peconic Road Hampton Bays, NY	New steel monopole, antenna and ground-based equipment	195
Great River	133 Connetquot Avenue East Islip, NY	New steel monopole, antenna and ground-based equipment	120
Greenlawn	288 Pulaski Road Greenlawn, NY	New steel monopole, antenna and ground-based equipment	120
Hauppauge **	1178 Veterans Memorial Highway (NY-454) Islandia, NY	Antenna and ground-based equipment (shelter already exists)	192 **
Lake Success	1201 Union Turnpike North New Hyde Park, NY	New steel monopole, antenna and ground-based equipment	120
Manhasset **	223 Seasingtown Road Manhasset, NY	Antenna and ground-based equipment	148 **
Patchogue ***	Next to 9 Electric Street Patchogue, NY	New steel monopole, 2 antennas and ground-based equipment	170 ***
Port Jefferson	798 Beach Street Port Jefferson, NY	New steel monopole, antenna and ground-based equipment	120
Pulaski	1301 Pulaski Road, Fort Salonga, NY	New steel monopole, antenna and ground-based equipment	170
Riverhead	1131 West Main Street Riverhead, NY	New steel monopole, antenna and ground-based equipment	170
Sills Road	50 Zorn Boulevard Yaphank, NY	New steel monopole, antenna and ground-based equipment	170
Syosset **	51 South Woods Road Woodbury, NY	Ground-based equipment	220 **
Wildwood	NY State Route 25A and Lilco Road, Shoreham, NY	New steel monopole, antenna and ground-based equipment	195
Note: * New steel monopole to replace an existing wooden monopole ** Existing structure (monopole, lattice / guyed tower) *** Two antennas will be installed at Patchogue			

## **Reasons Supporting This Determination:**

PSEG Long Island, in conjunction with TRC Consultants, Inc., reviewed Phase 1 scope of work (construction and operation) and undertook a SEQRA assessment to evaluate whether Phase 1 has the potential to result in significant adverse environmental impacts. The Proposed Action is classified as a Type 1 Action as defined in SEQRA. A Full Environmental Assessment Form (“FEAF”) was prepared for Phase 1 including site-specific information for each of the 15 Project Sites. The EA evaluated the effect of Phase 1 on visual resources and character of the area, energy use, environmental hazards, and human health resources. SEQRA Type 1 notification requirements for Environmental Notice Board (“ENB”) publication and local agency filing will be satisfied after the issuance of this Negative Declaration.

### ***Visual / Aesthetic Resources***

A Visual Resource Assessment was prepared for each Project Site in accordance with the NYSDEC Program Policy “Assessing and Mitigating Visual Impacts” Program Policy DEP-00-2 (July 31, 2000). Viewshed assessments (five-mile radii) were prepared for each of the Project Sites where new monopoles will be installed. Photosimulations were prepared from multiple street-level locations at all Project Sites to show the existing visual environment compared to the proposed environment with the new monopole, if applicable, and antenna. The viewshed assessments and the visual simulations show that Phase 1 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 significantly interfered with nor substantially reduced.

### ***Cultural Resources***

Based on a review of the NYS Cultural Resource Information System database, some of the Phase 1 Project Sites are within a designated “archaeological sensitive area”. However, construction will occur within previously disturbed areas and is unlikely to result in any adverse impacts to archaeological resources. Supplemental information was requested by the NYS Historic Preservation Office (“SHPO”) on one (1) Project Site (Great River) related to potential visual impacts on a historic architectural resource. The NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (“OPRHP”) determined that all the Phase 1 Project Sites will have “No Effect / No Adverse Effect” on archaeological and/or architectural resources.

### ***Land***

It was assumed for a conservative analysis that each Project Site will disturb a maximum area of 900 sq. ft. (0.02 acres). Thus, the aggregate area for all the Project Sites disturbed by construction amounts to approximately 13,500 sq. ft. (0.31 acres). The final ground cover will be approximately 2,625 sq. ft. of concrete, plus up to approximately 10,875 sq. ft. of compacted blue stone. Excess soil will either remain onsite stabilized with vegetative cover or will be removed and disposed in compliance with applicable federal and state regulations.

The existing groundcover varies somewhat by Project Site, including asphalt, blue stone and bare earth. Any temporary disturbances to surrounding groundcovers from staging/laydown activities will be restored to pre-construction conditions. There will be no significant adverse impact on land.

### ***Ecology***

Since Phase 1 of the Proposed Action involves locations with existing, operating utility structures, the Project Sites already have active vegetation management programs to maintain required safety and operational clearances, which may include tree trimming, weed-whacking, herbicide treatment and/or mowing. The construction and operation of the Phase 1 Project Sites will not result in any significant loss of flora or fauna, nor any significant adverse impacts to threatened, endangered, and special concern species or critical habitats.

### ***Floodplain***

All 15 sites of the Phase 1 Project Sites are located outside of designated floodplains. Construction adjacent to designated floodplains 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.

### ***Coastal Zone***

Five Project Sites are in the New York State / Long Island coastal zone. These locations will not sustain any significant adverse impacts to these water and water-related resources during construction or operations. Coastal Zone Consistency determinations will be obtained from the New York State Department of State. Associated ground disturbances and structure footprints will be minimal, and BMPs for sediment and erosion control will be implemented.

### ***Groundwater***

The Proposed Action is located in or adjacent to Critical Environmental Areas (“CEA”) including protected ecosystems and multiple Special Groundwater Protection Areas (“SGPA”), which are listed to protect groundwater and drinking water. The Project Sites are located over the Nassau-Suffolk Sole Source Aquifer which lies beneath Nassau and Suffolk Counties. The new monopoles will be installed into holes drilled to depths ranging from approximately 18 to 28 ft. below the ground surface, which will be backfilled with concrete. At many of the Project Sites, groundwater is located deeper than the monopole holes. At Project Sites where groundwater may be encountered, dewatering and water disposal will be undertaken. No impacts to groundwater are expected as BMPs will be followed. Unanticipated and/or accidental releases of gases from the above-ground 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. BMPs will be employed to contain any accidental releases during fueling and equipment maintenance. Based on the Phase 1 scope of work and locations in previously disturbed and/or developed areas, no impacts to any CEAs, including SPGAs, are anticipated.

## ***Energy***

The power supply to each of the Project Sites will be provided by existing electric equipment through a newly installed service connection from an existing distribution line. The primary cause of energy consumption is expected to be the HVAC system attached to the communications shelter. Total energy usage per site is estimated at 151 Megawatt hours per year.

In the event of an electrical outage, backup power supply will be provided by a 35-kilowatt (“kW”) emergency generator fueled by a 500-gallon aboveground propane tank. Due to the flammable nature of propane, the tanks will have a 10-foot spark clearance and will be routinely checked and maintained after installation. PSEG Long Island will fill the propane tanks and service the generators according to their Standard Operating Procedures. The Substation’s Health and Safety Plan will be updated to include the physical hazard(s) associated with fuel storage and proper safety protocols for site maintenance.

Based on the low power level required and safety procedures that will be adhered to, operation of the Phase 1 of the Proposed Action will not result in a significant adverse effect on the environment from additional energy demand.

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

Phase 1 construction activities will not cause any significant adverse environmental impacts. Brief traffic disruptions may be experienced at some locations when construction equipment is entering or exiting a Project Site and will be addressed by deploying flaggers to regulate local traffic. Removed equipment (e.g. antennas and cables) will be transported and disposed according to applicable federal and state regulations. If a temporary electrical outage is required during connection of new wiring to existing substation equipment, potentially affected customers will be notified in advance. The duration of the potential outage during construction depends on site specific factors such as voltage and distance to distribution and transmission lines. The worst-case scenario would be an 8-hour outage although it is expected that most locations would require a shorter outage, if any.

Construction for Phase 1 is anticipated to take a total of approximately 12 – 14 months to complete with a projected completion date towards the end of 2020. The construction phase at each Project Site will last approximately three (3) months. The typical work schedule will be from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

Excess and/or unsuitable excavated soil resulting from construction activities, if any, will be temporarily stored onsite, and then disposed offsite according to all federal and state regulations. It is expected that all construction activities including parking, staging, and laydown areas will occur on Phase 1 Project Sites and therefore, no significant construction-related traffic impacts are anticipated.

## *Noise*

During construction activities, a minor increase in noise levels is anticipated for sites with pole and/or equipment shelter installation, primarily during excavation and/or drilling and concrete pouring activities.

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 decibels (“dBA”) in exercise mode and 73 dBA when operating in emergency conditions at a distance of 23 feet. At 110 feet from the generator, the maximum sound level under emergency conditions will be approximately 59 dBA, comparable to normal daytime noise levels (50 – 60 dBA) in a typical suburban community. At most Project Sites the closest residence is in excess of 110 feet, with the exception of the Baldwin Project Site where the nearest residence is at 60 feet with a decibel level of 64 dBA. The addition of noise at the same or lower decibel level than the existing noise levels does not have a significant impact on the ambient noise level. Additionally, for each new communications shelter, an HVAC system will be installed on the exterior to heat and cool the structure. Similar HVAC systems have noise levels of up 50 - 60 dBA (level associated with a normal conversation) at a distance of one (1) meter (3.3 feet) from the HVAC system. Reflective surfaces may lower or raise the decreasing effect of distance in some directions. Given the distance from the HVAC system to the closest residential neighborhoods at each Project Site, the HVAC equipment does not have any potential for causing a significant 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*

Construction activities may result in temporary minor increases in 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 regular testing. Based on the size and anticipated usage of the proposed generators, no state or federal air permits are required. The new generators and fuel tanks will be regularly inspected and maintained by PSEG Long Island.

## *EMF*

The operation of the DA antenna will generate RF radiation. RF radiation is a form of non-ionizing electromagnetic radiation like visible light. The RF antenna radiation from the proposed DA antenna results in exposure levels that are monitored by the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”). Antennas operate at one or more wavelengths with a specific Effective Radiated Power (“ERP”). The FCC guidelines require that an electromagnetic force (“EMF”) study be undertaken 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 DA antenna will operate at 70 cm and 33 cm wavelengths, both with an ERP of approximately 50 watts. All Project Sites will be under these criteria from both individual and cumulative perspectives. Therefore, there will be no significant adverse environmental effects from the DA antenna.

***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 on or in the vicinity of the Project Sites. Three Project Sites - Pulaski, Patchogue and Babylon - are all located within 2,000 feet of a remediated site. The Hauppauge Project Site is located within 2,000 feet of the permitted and operating Islip Municipal Sanitary Landfill. The Riverhead Project Site is situated adjacent to NYSDEC ID Site 152216, which was the location of a former aboveground manufactured gas and natural gas storage vessel. Based on a final Site Characterization (“SC”) report, the site has been closed. Lake Success is adjacent to NYSDEC Environmental Site 130045 where the NYSDEC has issued Records of Decision (“RODs”) for the on and off-site Operable Units and an Order on Consent was executed for the implementation of selected remedies. The Site Health Assessment indicates groundwater is being treated, that soil exposure is unlikely, and that indoor air quality is not impacted based on environmental sampling.

Due to the limited ground disturbance, closed incident statuses/completed remediation, and distances, Phase 1 of the Proposed Action is not expected to cause adverse human health impacts from exposure to any solid or hazardous substances or contaminants.

***Cumulative***

The Phase 1 installations will be located on existing electrical substations (except for Hauppauge where an existing lattice tower used for communications exists). The locations are physically separated from each other and no environmental impacts will extend from one site to another. Phase 1 will not result in any significant cumulative adverse environmental impact.

**For Further Information:**

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