

Name

Abena Asare

Your Comment

My name is Abena Asare, a resident of Brookhaven hamlet, and a Long Island utility ratepayer.

The updated Options Analysis released by the Long Island Power Authority last month makes clear that terminating the contract with PSEG and moving to a fully municipal authority must happen -- and that process must begin now.

After months of public discourse around PSEG's costly negligence and mismanagement in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Isias it is clear that they are incapable of responding to the challenge of providing and maintaining the resilient electric grid that Long Islanders need and deserve.

When Isaias hit, my family was out of power for about a week. During that time, we struggled to receive accurate and timely information from PSEG about when our power would be on. We did not feel as though the response of PSEG was agile or public-facing and we are concerned about the result as we approach storm season again.

Per LIPA's own findings, PSEG lied about its preparedness for the tropical storm, its immediate response to the storm, and the number of upgrades it made after the storm. LIPA determined that management failures were the root cause and that PSEG lacks proactive risk management. Time and time again in public meetings over the past few months, PSEG has continued to obfuscate the truth and avoid accountability. They have demonstrated themselves to be untrustworthy partners in managing our energy system with transparency and public oversight. PSEG can't fix the problem because they are the problem.

This will be the case with all other for-profit vendors that LIPA could hire to manage our system. The public-private partnership is unreliable, unaccountable, and more expensive. Years of these partnerships have removed us further from the root of our needs on Long Island: an energy system in service of people, not profits. The time has come to finally move to full public power.

Public power works. Across the country and on Long Island, publicly owned utilities have proven more affordable and reliable for residential customers. They are more responsive to customer needs, yielding better customer satisfaction. Their shorter outage times safeguard households' food and medicine and improve the productivity of small businesses. PSEG promised LIPA it would be in the top 25% of customer

satisfaction, and as of right now, it is dead last nationwide. LIPA has estimated that it can save nearly \$1 billion over the next decade by opting for municipalization. As climate catastrophe looms, these savings can be invested in providing 100% clean, renewable energy on a grid that can handle what is to come.

The LIPA Board must terminate its contract with PSEG, not solicit inquiry from other private providers, and instead commit to a new paradigm of energy management on Long Island.

This moment calls for more than just getting rid of PSEG -- we need a democratic LIPA that is accountable to our region's communities. This is the moment to reimagine, reinvent, and restructure LIPA so that it is led by those most impacted by decisions concerning our energy system: ratepayers, workers, municipalities, community organizations, low-income households, and environmental justice communities. We must ensure that those who use, pay for, and work for the system have a say in how it runs. We must invest in public-public partnerships to ensure the collective management of our common energy resources. Public power involves the operation, management, and policymaking of electric utilities exclusively by the public for the public interest and that is why the push for municipalization on LI must also ensure the following:

A formalized partnership with a Long Island university-based Energy Observatory to contract with LIPA to conduct community engagement and research in order to offer recommendations to LIPA's Board on clean energy, ratepayer protections, worker issues, and climate justice, which the Board is obligated to consider and respond to.

An accountable and representative Board that includes, at least in part, the direct election of members from ratepayers residing within equally apportioned districts within LIPA's service area.

Proper oversight by the Public Service Commission, as with the rest of New York State, along with other robust mechanisms for public accountability.

The modification of the mission of LIPA to include climate justice, energy democracy, participatory democracy, and equity in order to codify its commitment to a new paradigm of energy management on Long Island.

We can no longer separate LIPA from everyday Long Islanders. Our energy future must be managed collaboratively and collectively through public power. Further delay is further time, money, and resources wasted on a utility model that is structurally unreliable, unaccountable, and more expensive. It's time for the LIPA Board to act.

Sincerely,
Abena Asare