

Name:

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Comment:

The Long Island Progressive Coalition (LIPC) is a grassroots community-based organization founded in 1979. We fight for structural change at the local, state, and national levels to attain racial justice, build community wealth, and realize a just transition to a 100% renewable energy future. We are also a leading member of NY Renew, the unprecedented statewide coalition responsible for passing New York State's landmark climate bill, the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA).

In November of 2020, the Long Island Progressive Coalition, the Suffolk County & Nassau County chapters of DSA, and Food & Water Watch came together to urge the Long Island Power Authority to terminate its contract with PSEG-LI, municipalize, and democratize in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Isaias, which resulted in 645,000 LI residents without power for, on average, more than 2-7 days.

Over the past year we have built a network of supporters through the [Reimagine LIPA statement](#), consistently mobilized ratepayers to weigh in at monthly LIPA Board meetings, held forums on the benefits of public power with diverse stakeholders and decision-makers, created toolkits to spur additional public action, worked with relevant elected officials to amplify the issue statewide, and published Op-Eds and Letters to the Editor in multiple media outlets.

- December 2020: Published first list of signatories of the [Reimagine LIPA statement](#).
- January 2021: Published [Newsday Op-Ed](#) for public power.
- February 2021: Held LIPA Reimagined Forum where we were joined by LIPA Board of Trustees, LIPA staff, Long Island elected officials, solar industry groups, business groups, and grassroots supporters. In total we had 265 registrations with 145 attendees on the call. Provided here is a [copy of the presentation](#) and a [video recording of the event](#).
- April 2021: LIPC, along with other signatories of the Reimagine LIPA statement helped solicit the signatures for the letter that went to former Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo from lawmakers on Long Island and Rockaway calling for LIPA to terminate its contract with PSEG-LI, and to instead transition LIPA to a fully public power authority. [Newsday reported on this](#) and was also covered in [News 12](#).
- May 2021: Reimagine LIPA signatories organized a public teach-in to prepare testimony for the LIPA public hearings on the Phase II Options Analysis. As a result of our efforts, 90% of the testimony, both live and written, was in favor of public power for our utility.
- June 2021: Held a rally outside of LIPA headquarters with 40+ advocates calling for public power in the aftermath of the overwhelming consensus for the board to

terminate its contract with PSEG and to commit to full municipalization coming out of the May public hearings. The event was widely covered in [News 12](#), [WSHU](#), and [Newsday](#).

The Reimagine LIPA statement, with 35 signatories, includes traditional environmental organizations, grassroots community groups, civil rights organizations, reproductive healthcare providers, statewide climate justice coalitions, business associations, women's groups, Indigenous groups, and faith organizations. It represents a cross-cutting set of stakeholders aligned around the need for public power and demonstrates the widespread organized community support for moving away from the failed public-private partnership model. The letter to Governor Cuomo, signed by 15 Long Island and Rockaway lawmakers, demonstrates the widespread organized political support for moving away from the failed public-private partnership model. The updated Options Analysis released by the Long Island Power Authority itself affirms the only credible and viable choice is public power. And as noted just above, 90% of the testimony from the public hearings in response to the updated Options Analysis, both live and written, was in favor of public power for our utility.

In light of all of this, we are here to say that this new contract does not fix the fundamentally flawed model of our utility and that we need to municipalize. It is impossible to comment on this reformed contract without noting the structural issues surrounding this.

We are also concerned that this contract is moving ahead before the Attorney General finishes her investigation into whether PSEG's failed storm Isaias response broke state laws and before we know the responsiveness of the new storm outage-management computer system that PSEG has neglected to deliver on. We urge the LIPA Board to delay this vote and suspend this process until they have more information on which to make a sound decision.

Decisions about the future of the Long Island Power Authority, its relationship to PSEG, and its responsibilities to Long Island and Rockaway ratepayers should belong to the ratepayers of this region, and the ratepayers of this region alone. Former Gov. Andrew Cuomo only had his legacy in mind when he pushed LIPA and PSEG to renew terms earlier in July.

Former Gov. Cuomo deliberately ignored LIPA ratepayers and elected officials' stated preferences. Instead, he exerted his influence on behalf of PSEG to avoid further embarrassment as his tenure was coming to an end. With his resignation, this entire deal has been called into question. We believe the onus is now on Governor Hochul to steer our course back towards public power. She must reject her predecessor's failed vision for our region and embrace a proven model for ensuring Long Island enjoys reliable, affordable, and renewable power.

Regardless of the content of this new contract, a decision to move ahead with PSEG and not commit to public power would be an insult to Long Island and Rockaways communities, a dereliction of responsibility to the needed democratic management of our energy system, and a grave mistake as the climate crisis worsens. LIPA can save nearly \$1 billion over the next decade through municipalization. Instead of bonuses to unaccountable managers and dividends to distant stockholders, LIPA could lower rates and improve service for customers, invest in resilient infrastructure and improve its crisis management system.

It was communicated earlier this year during a NYS Senate Budget hearing that LIPA had in its power the ability to municipalize on its own. Once the tentative agreement was struck in July, this assertion was walked back and pushed to Albany to decide. While we will work with Albany to make necessary legislative changes, we ask that LIPA continue to flesh out Option 4 and support the development of a roadmap to a fully municipalized system. If the LIPA Board does move ahead with this contract, it must at the very least commit to not renewing it after 2025 and begin working with community stakeholders right now to build the public power system we deserve.

LIPA must engage in more robust and intentional community engagement in the conduct of utility operations. While these public comment sessions are appreciated and vital, they also feel somewhat insincere. The public had less than 30 days to read a 300 page contract, digest it, develop comments on it, and then deliver those comments. The majority of the turnout for these is based on the work of community organizations like ours, not the efforts of the utility to seek input. And as seen during the Option Analysis comment sessions, public input does not translate into utility response. It often feels that proposals put before us to comment on are decisions already made.

We need a democratic LIPA that is accountable to our region's communities. A LIPA that 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. Despite the flawed model utilized in its conduct, LIPA is and proudly claims to be a public power utility and that must mean the operation, management, and policymaking of the electric utility exclusively by the public for the public interest, which can only be the case with ongoing and meaningful engagement.

LIPA should heed the call for full public power, which grows louder every day on Long Island, throughout the state, and across the country. We cannot afford more delays. Further delay is further time, money, and resources wasted on a utility model that is structurally unreliable, unaccountable, and more expensive. None of this is addressed by the proposal before us today and we deserve better.