

Name:

Sarika Kumar

Comment:

My name is Sarika Kumar, I am a resident of Jericho, NY, and a Long Island Power Authority ratepayer. I am here to say that this new contract does not fix the fundamentally flawed model of our utility and that we need to municipalize.

I am 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. I urge the LIPA Board to delay this vote and suspend this process until they have more information on which to make a sound decision for the future of the utility.

In the months after Tropical Storm Isaias, we saw tense and bitter exchanges as PSEG refused to negotiate with the LIPA Board's good faith demands. The LIPA board members expressed their fundamental mistrust of PSEG after learning how PSEG lied about its preparedness for the tropical storm, its immediate response to it, and the number of upgrades it made afterwards. LIPA itself determined that management failures were the root cause and that PSEG lacks proactive risk management.

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.

Following LIPA's public hearings about its updated Options Analysis in May, it's clear that we have overwhelming consensus for the board to terminate its contract with PSEG and to commit to full municipalization. 90% of the testimony, both live and written, was in favor of this path for our utility. The testimonies added to the chorus of community and political support for public power on Long Island.

Last year, environmental organizations, grassroots community groups, civil rights organizations, reproductive healthcare providers, business associations, Indigenous groups, and faith organizations signed onto the [Reimagine LIPA](#) statement, demonstrating the widespread

support for moving away from the failed public-private partnership model. Fifteen Long Island and Rockaway lawmakers also showed their support for full municipalization by signing a letter addressed to former Gov. Cuomo earlier this year.

Regardless of the terms of this new contract, the decision to move ahead with PSEG after everything we know is an insult to Long Island communities. Anything less than not signing this contract is a dereliction of duty to LIPA ratepayers who need democratic management of our energy system to deal with the worsening climate crisis.

LIPA can save nearly \$1 billion over the next decade through municipalization. Instead of paying bonuses to unaccountable managers and dividends to distant stockholders, LIPA could lower rates and improve service for customers by investing in resilient infrastructure and improving its crisis management system.

This Board has a choice to make: vote in favor of the contract and betray LIPA's ratepayers, or cut ties with PSEG and commit to a new paradigm of energy management on Long Island. I urge you to do the latter.