

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

Project: Bridgehampton New 13 kV Feeder and Conversion and Reinforcement (the “Proposed Action”) Approval Request Memo

Date: July 20, 2023

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 LXXXI 10052.

The Long Island Power Authority (“Authority”) has determined, based on information provided by PSEG Long Island and the Environmental Assessment Form Parts 1, 2 & 3 prepared by PSEG Long Island that the Proposed Action described below will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment and a Draft Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

Name of Action: Bridgehampton New 13 kV Feeder and Conversion and Reinforcement (the “Proposed Action”)

Location: Within the exiting Bridgehampton Substation, Bridgehampton-Sag Harbor Turnpike, Scuttle Hole Road, Lumber Lane, Montauk Highway, Ocean Road, Sagaponack Road, Sagg Main Street, and Bridge Lane within the hamlet of Bridgehampton and the Village of Sagaponack, Town of Southampton, Suffolk County, New York

SEQR Status: Unlisted

Conditioned Negative Declaration: No

Proposed Action Description:

The Proposed Action includes the installation of one new 13kV underground distribution feeder from the LIPA-owned Bridgehampton Substation (the “Substation”) and upgrades to overhead distribution circuits to improve distribution capacity in order to reduce electric load conditions and increase reliability to LIPA customers throughout the Town of Southampton. The Proposed Action will be constructed at multiple locations within the hamlet of Bridgehampton and the Village of Sagaponack, Town of Southampton, Suffolk County, New York. More specifically, construction will occur along Bridgehampton-Sag Harbor Turnpike, Scuttle Hole Road, Lumber Lane, Montauk Highway, Ocean Road, Sagaponack Road, Sagg Main Street, and Bridge Lane (see Figure 1 and Figure 2).

This work is required to diversify and distribute loads, reduce peak electric load conditions and mitigate potential loss of service to LIPA customers. Additionally, the Proposed Action will upgrade older poles to current distribution design standards.

Approximately 20,000 feet (3.8 miles) of underground cable, within conduit, and spare conduits will be installed predominately via open trench within the roadway. The cable will be installed via horizontal directional drill to cross Sunrise Highway and beneath the Long Island Railroad. The underground cable will connect to the existing switchgear in the Substation and exit through existing spare conduit located on the southeast side of the Substation (see Figure 2). The new feeder and spare conduits will continue south along Bridgehampton-Sag Harbor Turnpike, then turn west on Scuttle Hole Road for approximately 1.1 miles before turning south on Lumber Lane. Continuing south on Lumber Lane, the underground feeder and spare conduits will cross Montauk Highway and continue south on Ocean Road to the south side of the intersection of Sagaponack Road and Ocean Road, where it will terminate at a new wood riser pole.

The Proposed Action also includes the installation of two new wood poles; the riser pole on Ocean Road mentioned above and a single new pole on Sagg Main Street. The two new distribution poles will be installed within existing utility pole alignments, and will be no more than 10 feet taller in height than existing adjacent poles. Additionally, 42 existing wood poles and approximately 6,235 feet of overhead wire will be replaced. Overhead work will occur on Sagaponack Road, Sagg Main Street, and Ocean Road Replacement poles will also be wood, each no more than 10 feet taller in height than the pole it is replacing, and will be located within the same general location of the pole it is replacing. See Table 1 for replacement pole heights. Additional work, including but not limited to the replacement/installation of guy wires, anchors and pole-top modifications will occur as needed.

Table 1: Replacement Pole Heights

Existing Pole Height (feet)	New Pole Height (feet)	New Pole Height Above Grade (feet)	Number of Poles
30	40	33	4
35	40	33	1
35	45	37.5	20
40	45	37.5	15
45	45	37.5	2

No new equipment to be installed at the Substation and no broad-scale clearing of vegetation will be required. Tree trimming and removal of select hazardous trees may be required during construction.

Reasons Supporting This Determination:

The Proposed Action is an “Unlisted” Action as defined in SEQRA. An Environmental Assessment (“EA”) was completed by PSEG Long Island. The EA analyzed the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action. Based on a review of the Proposed Action’s

scope of work in accordance with the requirements of SEQRA, a Short Environmental Assessment Form Parts 1, 2 & 3 (“SEAF”) were prepared. Key findings are outlined below.

- Installation of a new underground feeder will occur within paved roadways, and in the immediate vicinity of, the existing Substation where electrical infrastructure currently exists. Additionally, installation of two new distribution poles and replacement of existing utility poles will occur adjacent to paved roadways where electrical infrastructure that is comparable in both height and appearance currently exists. Therefore, the Proposed Action will not result in any significant adverse visual or land use impacts.
- The Proposed Action is located within the South Fork Special Groundwater Protection Area (SGPA) and the Aquifer Protection Overlay District, and adjacent to Long Pond which are designated as Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs) as they provide a benefit to human health, protect groundwater, water quality, and drinking water (see Figure 3). The Proposed Action will involve ground disturbance at relatively shallow depths (less than 25 feet below grade). Based on the United States Geological Survey Long Island Depth to Water Viewer, groundwater within the designated CEAs where the Proposed Action will occur is located at a minimum depth of 28 feet below grade, and at a depth greater than 50 feet below grade for the majority of the route; therefore, excavation activities will not encounter groundwater. Further, the Proposed Action will not involve any waste discharges to ground surface and will not involve the installation of any sanitary facilities. Therefore, the Proposed Action will not result in significant adverse impacts to these CEAs.
- The Proposed Action is located within an area that is designated by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) as archaeologically sensitive. The Proposed Action will be completed within, and immediately adjacent to paved roadways and in the vicinity of the existing Substation. Due to the Proposed Action being located within an archeologically sensitive area, a consultation request was submitted to OPRHP. In a letter dated January 26, 2023, OPRHP confirmed that no listed or eligible archeological and/or historic resources would be impacted by the Proposed Action (see Attachment A). Given the location of the Proposed Action within a previously disturbed area, as well as the findings of OPRHP, the Proposed Action will not result in significant adverse impacts to archaeological resources.
- No underground portions of the Proposed Action are located within or immediately adjacent to any New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) regulated wetlands or wetland adjacent areas. Portions of overhead work and pole replacements located on Sagaponack Road are located within regulated adjacent areas of both tidal and freshwater wetlands. These activities are authorized under PSEG Long Island’s NYSDEC Maintenance Freshwater Wetland Permit (1-9901-00011/00035) and Maintenance Tidal Wetland Permit (1-9901-00011/00037). All work within the regulated adjacent areas will be performed in accordance with the conditions of these permits, and therefore, the Proposed Action will not result in significant adverse impact to wetlands.
- Correspondence with the New York Natural Heritage Program (NYNHP) was completed and the following threatened or endangered species were identified as being potentially located in the vicinity of the Proposed Action: eastern tiger salamander (state-listed endangered), scarlet bluet (state-listed threatened), pine barrens bluet (state-listed threatened), northern long-eared bat (state and federally-listed threatened), and bald eagle (state-listed threatened), creeping St. John’s wort (state-listed

threatened), and small white snakeroot (state-listed endangered). Habitats associated with these species and impacts to said species are discussed below.

Flora Habitat Requirements and Proposed Action Impact

Creeping St. John's wort and small white snakeroot are flowering plants which are associated with wetland habitats to the east side of Bridgehampton-Sag Harbor Turnpike. The vast majority of the Proposed Action will be completed within the limits of the paved roadway, within the crushed-stone covered road shoulder, and within the existing Substation, which is fenced and covered in crushed dolomite. As such, these areas do not contain suitable habitat for the aforementioned threatened and endangered plants and no significant adverse impact to these wetland species will occur.

Fauna Habitat Requirements

Pine Barrens Bluets and Scarlet Bluets are known primarily to inhabit acidic, coastal plain ponds with sandy substrate and emergent vegetation such as Bayonet Rush along the shoreline¹.

Eastern Tiger Salamanders inhabit sandy pine barren areas with temporary or permanent pools for breeding. In New York, the eastern tiger salamander is found only on Long Island with most of the known breeding colonies restricted to the Central Pine Barrens. In the absence of natural pools or ponds, it may breed in man-made depressions filled with water². NYSDEC regulates activities within 1,000 feet of known eastern tiger salamander breeding sites, and implements specific habitat preservation requirements for disturbances that fall within 535-feet of a breeding pond (100% preservation), and within 1,000 feet of a breeding pond (50% preservation).

Northern long-eared bats spend winter hibernating in caves and mines, called hibernacula. They typically use large caves or mines with large passages and entrances; constant temperatures; and high humidity with no air currents. Northern long-eared bats roost underneath bark, in cavities, or in crevices of trees during summer. Males and non-reproductive females may also roost in cooler places, like caves and mines. It has also been found, rarely, roosting in structures like barns and sheds³.

Bald eagles prefer undisturbed areas near large lakes and reservoirs, marshes and swamps, or stretches along rivers where they can find open water and fish⁴. They tend to use tall, sturdy conifers that protrude above the forest canopy, providing easy flight access and good visibility. Bald Eagles build some of the largest of all bird nests and typically return to the same nest year after year⁵.

Proposed Action Impact on Threatened, and Endangered Fauna

The vast majority of the Proposed Action will be completed within the limits of and immediately adjacent to the existing paved roadway and within the existing Substation, which is fenced, covered in crushed dolomite, and does not contain suitable habitat for the aforementioned threatened or endangered species. Work activities beyond the

¹ <https://guides.nynhp.org/scarlet-bluet/> & <https://guides.nynhp.org/pine-barrens-bluet/>

² <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7143.html>

³ <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9045>

⁴ <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/74052.html>

⁵ https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Bald_Eagle/lifehistory#

Substation fence will be located within the paved roadways or directly adjacent to the roadway within the gravel road shoulder. Only the replacement of existing utility poles and installation of new poles will occur within vegetated areas directly adjacent to the roadway. Portions of the Proposed Action on Lumber Lane and within the Bridgehampton Substation are located within 1,000 feet of known tiger salamander breeding ponds. All ground disturbance in these areas will be confined to previously developed areas; beneath the paved roadway and within the dolomite covered substation. As no removal of vegetation will occur within 1,000-feet of the known tiger salamander breeding ponds the Proposed Action complies with all regulatory requirements for the species and no further action is required.

Tree trim and removal of hazardous trees will be required where overhead C&R work will occur. This work is consistent with ongoing maintenance activities routinely undertaken. As NYNHP identified summer occurrences of northern long eared bat along the project route, all tree removal activities will occur between December 1 and February 28 to avoid potential incidental take of the species.

Correspondence with the NYNHP which indicated eastern tiger salamander breeding ponds are located within 1,000 feet of the Substation (See Attachment B). However, the Proposed Action does not include any work within 535 feet of known eastern tiger salamander breeding ponds. Given that no ground disturbance activities and removal of suitable habitat will occur within 535 feet and no habitat removal will occur within 1,000 feet of known eastern tiger salamander breeding ponds, the Proposed Action will not result in a “take” as per 6 NYCRR Part 182.

All vegetation removal will be extremely minor in nature and is anticipated to occur within the immediate area of pole installation work. No permanent loss of habitat for any rare, threatened or endangered wildlife species will occur. Therefore, the Proposed Action will not result in significant adverse impact to the rare, threatened and endangered species described above.

No potential for a significant adverse impact on the environment, flora, fauna, community character or human health has been identified as a result of the Proposed Action. Based on the SEAF and PSEG Long Island’s recommendation according to the standards as set forth in SEQRA, the Proposed Action will not result in any significant adverse environmental impacts and a Draft Environmental Impact Statement need not be prepared.

For Further Information:

Contact Person: Erin Gorman, Manager Environmental Projects and Permitting
PSEG Long Island

Address: 175 East Old Country Road, Hicksville, NY 11801

Telephone Number: (800) 490-0025

E-mail: PSEGLongIslandSEQR@pseg.com

/s/ Billy Raley
Billy Raley, Senior Vice President, Transmission and Distribution,
Long Island Power Authority

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