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The Long Island Power Authority Takes Key Steps to Advance System Resilience on Long Island and the Rockaways

Uniondale, NY—Following the release of PSEG Long Island’s Climate Vulnerability Plan, the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA) Board of Trustees is announcing a series of policy changes and strategic initiatives to facilitate underground transmission and distribution lines across Long Island and the Rockaways to enhance reliability and community resilience. This change aligns with LIPA’s ongoing commitment to improving service for its customers while supporting Long Island’s clean energy future with smart, cost-effective investments.

Under this initiative, LIPA policy will now require all new transmission lines over 65 kilovolts (kV) to be constructed underground, with overhead construction only considered when proper justification is provided. This move is part of LIPA’s broader strategy to fortify the grid against severe weather events, improve service reliability, and meet community-driven goals for environmental stewardship.

“The LIPA Board is committed to reliable and resilient electric service across our territory, and these changes recognize the evolving threat of severe weather and climate change on our system,” said Tracey Edwards, LIPA Board Chair. “We’ve listened closely to our customers and our partners in Government who have called for more undergrounding, especially in areas with consistent service disruptions. Our policy changes demonstrate that we are committed to meeting their needs with thoughtful, sustainable solutions.”

Second, LIPA is evaluating additional undergrounding on mainline distribution, particularly in areas with rear property lines and heavy tree conditions. This work, which involves underground bypasses to improve service reliability, is aligned with ongoing reliability projects funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Forty miles of underground bypass work has already been completed, with an additional nine miles planned over the next three years.

Third, communities seeking to go underground will have more opportunities to engage with their utility to advance undergrounding. LIPA has directed staff to convene an underground working group of key internal and external stakeholders to ensure awareness of existing programs, maximize cost-savings by better coordinating planned work, and identify and help advance projects where communities throughout the service territory seek undergrounding solutions. Better coordination can significantly reduce project costs while providing customer benefits including reliability and aesthetics.

Additionally, the LIPA Board has requested that new policy guidelines be considered to help inform future distribution-level undergrounding work based on reliability. Staff will explore undergrounding programs from other utilities to determine if there are cost-effective best practices that can be incorporated into LIPA’s service territory to drive customer reliability. These

new guidelines will set out a clear and consistent approach to reliability-driven underground work and ensure that funds spent on these initiatives drive reliability first.

“LIPA is proud to take this major step toward modernizing Long Island’s energy infrastructure,” said John Rhodes, CEO of LIPA. “Our focus on undergrounding reflects our commitment to delivering more reliable service while ensuring fairness for all communities we serve. Over time, these changes will provide long-term benefits for customers, from increased resilience to greater alignment with clean energy initiatives.”

Rich Schaffer, Town of Babylon Supervisor, with the support of other Suffolk Town Supervisors, said, “We commend the LIPA Board of Trustees for their leadership in raising this important issue. By prioritizing the transition to underground systems, LIPA will continue to position itself as a leader in sustainable energy infrastructure and enhance the quality of life for our residents.”

Ed Romaine, Suffolk County Executive, said, “LIPA’s decision to increase focus on undergrounding is great news for Suffolk County residents, especially in storm-prone areas. This policy change not only strengthens our infrastructure but also aligns with our shared vision of sustainability and environmental protection.”

Bruce Blakeman, Nassau County Executive, said, “Prioritizing underground construction for new transmission lines is a transformative step toward building a more reliable and resilient power grid. LIPA is not only reducing future risks of storm-related outages but also enhancing the quality of life for Nassau County’s residents.”

Don Clavin, Town of Hempstead Supervisor, said, “LIPA’s commitment to making underground construction the preferred option for new transmission lines is a crucial advancement in enhancing our energy resilience. Super Storm Sandy exposed the vulnerabilities of our above-ground infrastructure, and with this shift, LIPA is addressing those risks head-on. This policy shift is a big step forward to prepare our communities for future severe weather events.”

Joseph Saladino, Oyster Bay Town Supervisor, said, “We value forward-thinking infrastructure improvements that benefit our residents and enhance the suburban character of our neighborhoods. LIPA’s dedication to underground transmission lines demonstrates its focus on reliability, environmental stewardship, and community improvements. These efforts not only strengthen our power grid but also align with our shared goal of creating a resilient future for all neighborhoods in the Town of Oyster Bay.”

Jen DeSena, North Hempstead Supervisor, said, “North Hempstead is happy to support any initiatives that prioritize reliability and environmental responsibility for our residents. LIPA’s commitment to undergrounding new transmission lines is an investment in our future – reducing outages, protecting beautiful neighborhoods, and making for a more resilient Long Island.”

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ABOUT LIPA

LIPA is a not-for-profit public utility that aims to serve our customers and community by

providing clean, reliable, and affordable energy to Long Island and the Rockaways. LIPA contracts with PSEG Long Island to manage its electric system to performance standards specified by its Board of Trustees under a four-year contract. For more information, visit lipower.org and follow us on [LinkedIn](#).