

Reimagine LIPA: Public Power Statement

The time to reimagine the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA) is long past due. Our utility and the systems of oversight around it have failed Long Island and the Rockaways over and over again, yet some are calling for LIPA to restructure its contracts or to fully privatize. We cannot risk treading the same old path with a new pair of shoes. Instead we must strike out on a better road, envisioning a publicly owned, controlled, and managed power authority, establishing new standards for accountability, equity, resilience, and democracy.

Almost 35 years ago, New York State established LIPA to replace the Long Island Lighting Company (LILCO) to address private utilities' failure to provide adequate services. However, years of public-private partnerships have removed us further from the root of our needs: an energy system in service of people, not profits. On good days, we pay outrageous rates for inadequate service. On bad days, we wait in the dark unable to get clear answers on when service will return. On all days, we maintain reliance on climate-wrecking fossil fuels that put our region at risk of further catastrophe.

Our utility consistently fails us, no more apparent than during last summer's Tropical Storm Isaias which proved PSEG-LI incapable of responding to the challenge of providing and maintaining the resilient electric grid that Long Islanders and those in the Rockaways need. We call on LIPA to terminate their contract with PSEG-LI as soon as possible and fully municipalize. The storms could only get worse and the region is already fed up.

We must fully commit to a new paradigm of energy management on Long Island and the Rockaways and oppose any efforts to further privatize our energy services. Across the country, 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. And they can ensure that Long Island and the Rockaways help fulfill the legal and moral obligation we have to prevent climate catastrophe by moving off fossil fuels and transitioning to 100% clean, renewable energy.

With a proper process in place, we can 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 can ensure that those who use, pay for, and work for the system have a say in how it runs. This is a choice we can make together as Long Island and the Rockaways to prevent further encroachment of our energy commons by the forces of privatization. After a past riddled with mismanagement and failure after failure for Long Island and Rockaway communities, now is our moment to reimagine LIPA, end corporate control and abuse of our energy systems, and

realize the benefits of public power and full municipalization: real accountability, reliable service, affordable power, and a commitment to our transition off harmful fossil fuels.

We demand a genuine, inclusive, and robust process as LIPA's path forward is determined. We can no longer separate LIPA from everyday Long Islanders and those in the Rockaways. We call for a public process that convenes appropriate stakeholders to serve as a watchdog in this crucial moment through public hearings, town halls, and other forms of participatory community engagement.

Signed:

Long Island Progressive Coalition
Nassau County Democratic Socialists of America
Suffolk County Democratic Socialists of America
New York Communities for Change
Food & Water Action
Shinnecock Grave Protection Warrior Society
Sierra Club
NY Renews
OLA of Eastern Long Island
S.T.R.O.N.G Youth, Inc.
Green Party of Nassau County
HUMuS: Huntington Mobilization for Sustainability
NAACP Freeport-Roosevelt Youth
Progressive East End Reformers
Suffolk Progressives
Environmental Action Coalition
Four Directions Mutual Aid
Nassau Hiking & Outdoor Club
All Our Energy
Peak Power Long Island
Long Island Activists
Together We Will LI
Planned Parenthood Hudson Peconic
Warriors of the Sunrise
Long Island Metro Business Action (LIMBA)
Mothers Out Front Long Island Team
National Organization for Women, Suffolk Chapter
Long Island Alliance for Peaceful Alternatives
Sustainability Department of the Sisters of St. Joseph, Brentwood
Transition Town Port Washington

Cooperation Long Island
Bay Shore Babylon Women's Huddle
NY02 Indivisible
Long Island Network for Change
Sunrise Long Island
Peoples Climate Movement-NY
South Country Peace Group, Inc.
Climate Reality Project, Long Island Chapter