

REGION'S LARGEST BATTERY ONLINE IN THE SOUTH FORK

Energy officials say it will boost Hamptons power

BY MARK HARRINGTON
mark.harrington@newsday.com

Talk about a Hamptons power trip.

Starting this month, the South Fork becomes home to Long Island's first and largest utility-scale battery storage unit as part of an effort by PSEG Long Island and LIPA to boost power to the energy-starved Hamptons — from the Shinnecock Canal to Montauk Point.

PSEG and the battery's owners at National Grid and NextEra Energy Resources flipped the switch on the barrack-sized unit Aug. 1.

The 5-megawatt battery storage unit, located at a LIPA substation in East Hampton, is one of two set for the South Fork as a way to deal with what the utility says is soaring electric demand. At peak summer times, the South Fork draws some 300 megawatts of power, PSEG officials said. One megawatt powers 800 to 1,000 homes, but South Fork customers use more than most, PSEG has said, particularly during the summer.

A second battery is planned for Montauk later this year.

Both units, costing a combined \$110 million over a 20-year contract with NextEra and National Grid, have the potential to save money on energy but for now are being used to improve reliability on the system, said Daniel Eichhorn, president of PSEG Long Island.

LIPA chief Tom Falcone said the units will be in place to store energy when a \$1.62 billion wind farm off the coast of Rhode Island is producing energy by the end of 2022.

The batteries recharge at night — it takes eight hours to charge them — when power is



The 5-megawatt battery storage unit, at a LIPA substation in East Hampton, will improve system reliability in the Hamptons.

cheapest, and they discharge during peak times, when demand is highest and energy is most costly.

The unit helps stabilize the East End grid by reducing the amount of energy that's required during the high-heat summer months, Eichhorn said. That means power plants run less, including temporary generators that are sent out to the Hamptons each summer to help deal with soaring peak energy, primarily driven by air conditioners in mega-mansions during the afternoon and evening. They can also lessen the need

for aging diesel-fueled plants located near them at the East Hampton site.

The first battery — operable Aug. 1 at a 20-year cost of \$51 million — has been undergoing testing in its early phases but is fully functional.

The unit isn't the first in the state. AEG Energy Storage in 2011 installed an 8-megawatt system in Johnson City, just outside Binghamton, but a federal database says it's since been decommissioned, and an AEG representative didn't respond to requests for comment. The LIPA units will have greater capacity,

rated at 40 megawatt hours each. Across the United States, larger units are planned or already in operation, including in California and New Jersey. Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo this year announced a plan for 1,500 megawatts of battery storage statewide by 2025.

The project met some initial resistance among residents who live around it.

Marguerite Wolffshon, planning director for East Hampton Town, said the planning board approved the project earlier this year after addressing concerns about noise and potential fire

hazards. Air-conditioning units around the batteries are the only source of the noise, Wolffshon said, which is below code requirements, and local fire responders met with the company to get assurances the project would not present any new hazards. "So far so good," she said Friday.

Charlie Esposito, who lives about 100 yards from the long metal bunker containing the battery at the East Hampton substation, said she hadn't heard about it until a reporter's visit, but had questions about electromagnetic radiation from the unit,

Assembly candidate off ballot

BY RICK BRAND
rick.brand@newsday.com

Democratic Assembly contender Michael Marcantonio was thrown off the November ballot in state Supreme Court Friday for failing to meet the five-year state residency requirement.

Marcantonio will go to the state Appellate Division in Brooklyn on Tuesday in an effort to overturn the ruling.

Supreme Court Justice Richard Horowitz said the first-

time contender did not meet the state residency requirement after backers of GOP incumbent Andrew Raia showed he changed his voting residence to Durham, North Carolina, and voted there in 2012 and 2014 while a law student at Duke University.

Horowitz, a Democrat, issued the ruling after an hourlong hearing Friday in Central Islip, where Marcantonio testified and opponents submitted documentation of his North Carolina voting and registration records.

"This is not a victory," said Raia, the veteran lawmaker from East Northport seeking his ninth term. "Unfortunately, the local Democratic committee knew that Michael Marcantonio had residency issues and they knew there would be a challenge in court long before he received the nomination."

However, Raia backers withdrew claims Marcantonio had not lived for a year in the 12th Assembly District, also required under state law.

"My client has been a resident

of Northport all his life," said Lawrence Silverman, Marcantonio's lawyer. "I don't believe his registering to vote while going to college should disqualify him."

While a state Court of Appeals ruling in 2016 indicates registering to vote out of state vacates a voter's New York residency, Silverman said he does not believe that was the court's intent.

Democrats had high hopes for Marcantonio, 31, who already has raised \$107,000 to run against Raia. The incumbent has collected \$47,000.

NY American Water ratepayers want public takeover

BY MARK HARRINGTON
mark.harrington@newsday.com

A U.S. senator's call for a federal probe of New York American Water on a Glen Head driveway Monday morning became a wider platform for angry water customers to demand a public takeover of the privately owned water company.

Residents who have seen their water bills increase upwards of \$800 for a month's worth of water applauded recent efforts by Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) and Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo to take the company to task for skyrocketing bills this year. But they said those efforts would not deter them from their mission of taking the water company away from private ownership.

"We want them out," Agatha Nadel, a member of the executive committee for the North Shore Concerned Citizens group, said of the embattled water company. "This atrocity has gone on for too long. We want them to pack their bags and get out of town."

The group has been leading the charge to oust the water company after high bills and irregularities in the company's state-approved rate increase. A company spokesman didn't immediately comment about the prospects of a public takeover. But in a statement Sunday night, American Water deputy chief operating officer Bill Varley cited the settlement with New York State, which he said provides millions of dollars in rate relief and which the company "worked day and night to reach."

"New York American Water will also work with the PSC and an appointed independent moni-



Activist Agatha Nadel, with Sen. Chuck Schumer on Monday in Glen Head, is demanding a takeover.

tor as an added step to review controls and processes in an effort to help earn customer confidence," he said.

Nadel expressed appreciation for the "Band-Aid" announcement of a Public Service Commission settlement Saturday that eliminates a contested conservation rate and appoints an independent monitor, among other concessions. But, she said, "New York State must be a leader in the war against private water... We must stop this cancer before it's too late."

Thus far efforts to do so have been stalled by lack of state funding to pay for feasibility studies examining the cost and options for public water.

State Sen. Carl Marcellino (R-Syosset), who has sponsored bills in the Senate to request that funding, expressed confidence the ratepayers will

"get what they need to get." A public takeover, he said, is "long overdue."

State Assem. Charles Lavine (D-Glen Cove) said he supported the feasibility study, which "will tell us whether ratepayers can connect to a public water service," calling it "a step in the right direction."

Schumer pointed to a recent \$806 monthly water bill received by the Nadel family, which hosted the meeting, in saying the high bills "drown you." He criticized the PSC for having "rubber-stamped" the 2017-approved rate increase in the first place, saying the company initially "didn't do its job." Pointing to the independent review and settlement, he said, "The state issue is being dealt with, we hope and believe."

PSC spokesman James Denn responded, "There is no basis

to say the PSC has been anything but aggressive in holding this company accountable to its customers. Our rate case was fully open and transparent to all; and we have swiftly and aggressively addressed the company's failures."

Schumer has called for a probe by the federal Government Accountability Office, citing federal support for the \$68 million in New York State debt funding for the company's 2012 acquisition Aqua America. Schumer said American Water was also "in line" to get more from the fund.

The North Shore citizen's group would like to see a merger with the nearby Jericho water district, but only a feasibility study showing no impact on that district's customers will allow it to happen.

and the potential for noise. Three diesel generators were operating nearby at midday Friday. "If it's noisy I'm going to be really upset," she said. The units, housed in a green bunker behind the diesel generators, weren't audible.

PSEG officials said the units will help offset the need for temporary generators that are shipped out to the Hamptons each summer as visitors flood the area. PSEG trucks in 17 megawatts of temporary generation for East Hampton and 6 megawatts for Montauk each summer. It no longer needs to do so for Shelter Island, which has a new distribution cable under the Peconic Bay completed earlier this year. PSEG is also expected to reach a goal of reducing power by 8 megawatts on the South Fork through demand-reduction techniques, including utility-controlled thermostats and efficiency measures, by next year, Eichhorn said.

But the main fix for the South Fork is a series of new transmission cables that will be installed in largely existing underground tunnels, or conduits, over the next several years. The new cables include a 138,000-volt cable from Wading River to Riverhead, a second 138,000-volt cable from Riverhead to the Shinnecock Canal substation, a 69,000-volt cable from the canal to Southampton in an existing conduit, and a 138,000-volt cable to Wainscott, where a new substation is planned by 2026.

That \$513 million project will be capped by the 90-megawatt wind farm that's projected to come on line in December 2022. The combined cost for all the South Fork units, including the batteries, is about \$3.68 per month for all PSEG ratepayers, the utility has said.

Commercial fishing groups oppose the wind farm and the 50-mile 138,000-volt cable that will run from waters off Long Island through local waters, concerned it will limit fishing grounds and that the cable will ensnare trawler nets. They say PSEG should focus on repairing just the grid, which largely solves the electric need, while avoiding the expense of the \$1.62 billion wind farm. That farm will provide actual capacity of between 30 megawatts and 40 megawatts, given the intermittent nature of wind, said Jim Parmelee, senior manager of power resources and contracts for PSEG.

The grid work is underway, and the second battery system will be operational by year-end.