

Travel deals and some meals, too

In the market for a honeymoon destination, Danielle Turo, center, of Holbrook, and her mother, Tres, right, talk to British Virgin Islands representative Shondra Maduro on Saturday at the Newsday AAA Travel Expo at NYCB Live's Nassau Coliseum. The one-day event let guests check out travel and food ideas from local, state and international exhibitors.



DEBBIE EGAN-CHIN

SOME AIRLINES HAVE CAMERAS ON SEAT-BACKS

Now there is one more place where cameras could start watching you — at 30,000 feet.

Newer seat-back entertainment systems on some airplanes operated by American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, United Airlines and Singapore Airlines have cameras, and it's likely they are also on planes used by other carriers.

All four airlines said that they have never activated the cameras and have no plans to use them.

However, companies that make the entertainment systems are installing cameras to offer future options such as seat-to-seat video conferencing, an American Airlines spokesman said.

A passenger on a Singapore flight posted a photo of the seat-back display last week, and the tweet was shared several hundred times and drew media notice. BuzzFeed first reported that the cameras are also on some American planes.

A United spokeswoman repeatedly told a reporter Friday that none of its entertainment systems had cameras before apologizing and saying that some did. On Saturday, Delta also said some of its in-flight entertainment screens have the cameras.

The airlines stressed that they didn't add the cameras — manufacturers embedded them in the entertainment systems. American's systems are made by Panasonic, while Singapore uses Panasonic and Thales, according to airline representatives. Neither Panasonic nor Thales responded immediately for comment.

As they shrink, cameras are being built into more devices, including smartphones. The presence of cameras in aircraft seats was known in aviation circles about two years ago.

Seth Miller, a journalist who wrote about the issue in 2017, thinks equipment makers didn't consider the privacy implications. There were already cameras on planes — although not so intrusive — and the companies assumed that passengers would trade their images for convenience, as they do with facial-recognition technology at immigration checkpoints, he said.

"Now they're facing blowback from a small but vocal group questioning the value of the system that isn't even active," Miller said. — AP

Wanted: LIPA answers

Critics want to know about wind farm credits

BY MARK HARRINGTON
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When LIPA trustees voted in November to approve a \$388 million expansion of the planned South Fork offshore wind farm, they were told federal tax credits that were being phased out made the year-end vote a "one-time opportunity" to save customers millions of dollars.

In the aftermath of that vote, which allowed developer Orsted to increase the project's size by 40 megawatts, Orsted is declining to say whether LIPA's action allowed it to meet the year-end deadline to qualify for the 2018 credit, or whether it applied last year at all. Doing so would allow the company to qualify for federal funds amounting to 18 percent of the project's cost. The credit falls to 12 percent this year before expiring at year end.

"We'll have to decline — we can't comment on our financial strategies for the project because it's commercially sensitive information," Meaghan Wims, a spokeswoman for

Orsted, said in an email.

That explanation was insufficient for Assemb. Fred Thiele (I-Sag Harbor), who last month pulled his support of the former Deepwater Wind project over issues of "transparency" from Orsted. Deepwater Wind was acquired by Orsted for \$510 million in October.

"As a governmental entity, the [LIPA] board of trustees made a decision to increase the size of the Deepwater project based on Orsted's representation that it would apply for a tax credit in 2018," Thiele said. "The public has a right to know whether or not they are going to benefit from that tax credit."

Loss of Thiele's backing for the project was a setback because of his long-standing support for the South Fork wind farm to power his East End district. The project also requires local approval for a cable that makes landfall in Wainscott.

Wims said the company "anticipates" qualifying for a federal tax credit but declined to say which one. She confirmed that the company "bears the risk of qualifying for tax credits," meaning LIPA won't be subject to a higher cost for energy if Orsted fails to qualify.

LIPA chief executive Tom Falcone said Orsted offered LIPA

two separate prices for power from the expanded array — one if the contract was approved in November and the company qualified for the tax credit, and a second price if it did not qualify.

"We weren't going to take the risk of whether they executed or not" in qualifying for the credit, Falcone said last month, adding he was unaware whether Orsted had expected to qualify for the 2018 credit. "It wouldn't be right for us to take the risk."

The board resolution trustees voted on said their approval "will permit the amended project to qualify for the 2018 federal tax credit, which is scheduled to decline by 20 percent" this year. The resolution said qualification for the 2018 credit "results in approximately \$15 million of savings to LIPA customers."

Two LIPA board members were divided in their reactions to the vote. LIPA board vice chairman Mark Fischl said he didn't see a significant difference between the written board resolution and the notion that his vote essentially transferred the tax-credit risk to Orsted.

"I think it gets you to the same place," Fischl said. "I don't see an issue."

LIPA trustee Matthew Cordaro, who abstained from the