



School energy storage nassau

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A 5-megawatt battery storage unit at a substation in East Hampton is shown on Aug. 17, 2018. The unit was returned to service in July after a fire in May 2023. Credit: Veronique Louis

Several hundred residents crowded North Shore High School's auditorium in Glen Head last week for a community meeting in which leaders took aim at projects that are linchpins in the state's plan for a carbon-free energy grid in coming decades.

Speakers during the nearly two-hour meeting raised concerns about a 275-megawatt battery storage facility planned for the waterfront in Glenwood Landing at the site of a legacy fuel oil port facility. If built, the project, called Oyster Shore Energy, would be among the state's and the country's largest battery storage facilities.

Speakers at the meeting raised the specter of fires, impossible evacuation plans, pending fire-safety codes and impacts on traffic, insurance rates and home values if the plan is approved by the Town of Oyster Bay.

"We don't want to be the next class-action community," said Christine Panzeca, a resident who led a presentation about the planned battery storage unit by Jupiter Power. She noted that most of the company's existing projects are not in densely populated areas. "We need to pause and we need to assess what's coming here."

Speakers also took aim at a major transmission line project known as PropelNY Energy, which would install chiefly underground high-voltage cables through major transmission corridors of Nassau County, including about 15 miles of the North Shore community.

"This project is going to create incredible congestion in the area," said George Pombar, president of the Glen Head-Glenwood Civic Council, adding that the impacts would be felt for years.

The biggest concern about the battery facilities, speakers said, was the danger of fires. The facilities are intended to store energy from a generation of new renewables such as offshore wind, while replacing small plants called peakers that burn natural gas and diesel fuel.

Residents from Southold to Holbrook, and Babylon to Oyster Bay have raised concerns about them, even as Gov. Kathy Hochul charges forward with a plan for 6,000 megawatts of the units across the state by 2030.

Widespread community opposition to battery storage poses significant challenges for the state and LIPA's plan to transition the power grid to mostly green energy by 2050. The batteries are considered critical to helping balance grid demand when intermittent wind-energy isn't being produced (primarily in the summer),



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while providing essential on-demand power when fossil-fuel generating plants are retired in coming decades. There are few other alternatives to the batteries, and larger ones will be needed to help store green energy when demand is lower, chiefly at night.

Newsday has reported that developers have submitted preliminary plans for dozens of battery facilities across Long Island and the state. Among them, according to the New York State Independent System Operator, are a 110-megawatt facility in Holtsville that has garnered strong local opposition.

Panzeca pointed to battery fires around the county and raised questions about the ability of local fire departments and the community to respond. "If we have an event here I don't think we'd be able to evacuate," she said, suggesting "shelter-in-place" orders would be relied on. She also raised concerns that the batteries, many of which are made in China and could be subject to damage or defects, would be operated remotely once commissioned.

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