

Unfair cost to LI of offshore wind

Local ratepayers shouldn't shoulder undue burden for renewable energy off our coast

BY KYLE STROBER
Guest essay

For decades, Long Island has been paying down the \$6 billion Shoreham atomic energy plant — built but never opened, a testament to those whose vision of the future was seduced by flawed nuclear technology. Depending on whose math you use, Shoreham's current debt is now pegged at approximately \$9,000 per Long Island ratepayer, and it remains one of the key reasons the cost of power on the Island is among the highest in the nation.

And that burden is about to get far heavier.

The New York State Public Service Commission has issued an order that 75% of the costs of infrastructure upgrades associated with offshore wind generation should be borne by downstate utilities and their customers. Or to put it plainly, a significant cost of the state's plan to build offshore wind turbines will come out of the pockets of Long Islanders.

That decision, in conjunction with the state initiative to develop 9,000 megawatts of offshore wind by 2035, is part of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA). As currently proposed, it would unfairly burden downstate ratepayers by placing much of the cost on them, even though the benefits of green energy infrastructure upgrades will positively touch all New Yorkers.

With Long Island and the downstate metropolitan area the only region that abuts the Atlantic Ocean, it would suggest that the state's wind turbine initiative was designed to specifically saddle Long Island with the cost. Without much in the way of recourse, our region would face one more unfunded mandate that is part of a far greater statewide goal of sustainable energy.

The Association for a Better Long Island and the Long Island Builders Institute have jointly submitted official protests to Albany, observing that Long Islanders have a long



NEWSDAY / MARK HARRINGTON

New York State has committed to developing 9,000 megawatts of offshore wind by 2035, from turbines like these off Block Island.

history of supporting state energy initiatives that have benefited other regions. A January 2020 state comptroller's report stated that the Long Island Power Authority and its ratepayers could spend up to \$820 million over the next decade to subsidize upstate nuclear power plants, via the state Energy Research and Development Authority's Zero Emission Credits program.

This kind of energy altruism

by Long Island ratepayers has never been returned. Long Island did not share the multi-billion-dollar cost with state ratepayers when the Shoreham plant was closed and its debt clock began to run. The idea that now all New Yorkers would not equally share in the cost of the offshore wind initiative is regressive and suggests that the PSC believes Long Island ratepayers can be financially punished for living close

to a steady and inexhaustible supply of wind energy. This financial burden would represent, in essence, a significant tax increase not enacted by elected representatives but by PSC bureaucrats based in Albany. Recognizing, perhaps, just how profoundly unfair this is, the PSC has agreed to suspend this wind turbine hike pending public comment, but if past actions are prologue this represents a postponement, not a reprieve.

The Association for a Better Long Island welcomes the arrival of renewable energy but will continue to insist that the PSC reconsider its current order that burdens Long Islanders and issue new instructions that establish a more equitable cost-sharing arrangement in regards to the state's green-energy goals. The goal of this effort is to combat climate change together, as one state, and not bankrupt a region still digging out from the failed policy of nuclear energy.

■ **THIS GUEST ESSAY** reflects the views of Kyle Strober, executive director of the Association for a Better Long Island.



NEWSDAY / ALEANDRA VILLA LOARCA

Randy Ramnarine, director of transportation for NICE — Nassau Inter-County Express buses — shows on Monday the proper way to access bicycle racks on the front of a bus that is so equipped.

constructed or designated along streets and sidewalks, and connected throughout Long Island on public lands, such as parks, municipal properties, schoolyards and rights of way or easements.

Plenty of cycling clubs, fitness enthusiasts and commu-

nity organizations can advise and assist in laying out routes and helping keep down taxpayer costs.

— JAMES T. ROONEY, CENTERPORT

As a Suffolk County biker, pedestrian and motorist, I applaud the efforts of the

county to provide bike paths. Currently, it's frightening to ride a bike in most of the county.

It would benefit residents and visitors to take steps throughout the county to provide more bike lanes that are clearly marked, and to educate bikers, pedestrians and motorists on how to share the road. Promoting the healthy habit of safe biking will reap both human and environmental rewards.

— MARTHA SOLOWEY, W. SAYVILLE

Make Captree Park a full-time bus stop

One simple, inexpensive, perhaps free, way to increase ridership of Suffolk buses would be to make the "sometimes" stop at Captree State Park a full-time stop ["Next stop for Suffolk buses?," Editorial, July 11]. Currently, the bus travels between the Babylon train station and Robert Moses State Park and stops at Captree only twice a day, bypassing it

the rest of the time. Originally, this schedule may have been created because of the timing of fishing boats. But with the heavily used bicycle path ending at Captree, there is no easy connection back to Cedar Creek Park in Seaford, about a 19-mile trip.

I am an avid user of the Captree path, having ridden it almost daily since it opened. Bike-rack-equipped county buses could easily provide a reliable link at almost no cost.

— ED LANGONE, LINDENHURST

Child tax credits should be fair for all

Kudos to President Joe Biden for giving families with

young children tax credits ["Expanded child tax credit: 5 things to know," News, July 12]. However, I would like to know why taxpayers with no minor children and earning well below the yearly earnings of families with young children are not given any credits. Surely, families earning up to \$440,000 yearly can afford to feed their children.

Who will help feed older adults struggling to pay bills, earning well below that amount? Why aren't Social Security benefits raised? The elderly, who raised children without tax credits, deserve it. Are they now the forgotten people?

— BARBARA MCNALLY, LINDENHURST

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