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Nassau County and Suffolk County Planning Commissions and LIPA Launch New Unified Solar Permit Initiative

First of its kind, Bi-county initiative to streamline and standardize permitting for installation of residential solar electric and solar hot water systems across Long Island

Farmingdale, NY - Advancing Long Island's position as a national leader in solar energy, the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA) and the Nassau and Suffolk County Planning Commissions announced the launch of a new unified solar permitting process as part of the Long Island Unified Solar Permitting Initiative (LIUSPI).

This ground-breaking solar initiative emanated from a working collaborative of stakeholders and municipal officials from across Long Island to develop a model process that could be used by all municipalities throughout Long Island to effectively and uniformly handle the application for and approval of residential solar electric and solar hot water systems in each respective jurisdiction. This regional collaboration, which includes government officials, industry representatives, renewable energy advocates and the Island's utility as partners, is among the first effort of its kind in the country.

"The Suffolk County Planning Commission has worked to bring together Suffolk's municipalities and stakeholders to address issues that are of regional importance across Suffolk County," said David Calone, Chairman of the Suffolk County Planning Commission. "In this case, we are particularly pleased to partner for the first time with our colleagues at the Nassau County Planning Commission to create this process to streamline the solar permitting process. We also appreciate the support of LIPA in making possible this effort to accelerate solar installations across Long Island."

"This has been a tremendous opportunity to partner with my Suffolk counterpart, the Suffolk County Planning Chairman Dave Calone, and LIPA, on working to promote a uniform permit process for solar panels," said Jeffrey Greenfield, Chairman of the Nassau County Planning Commission.

Currently, the solar installation approval process for Long Island has a different set of regulations for each town and village, which creates confusion, delays and extra costs for many Long Islanders wishing to install photovoltaic systems on their homes with the hopes of improving the environment and lowering their energy bills. This new permitting process, which

will cover more than 80% of residential solar systems, will reduce costs, save time, and improve public safety.

The Long Island Unified Solar Permitting Initiative is expected to achieve success similar to the advancement and implementation of Energy Star building codes which have been successfully adopted by 10 of Long Island's 13 towns resulting in the construction of over 1,000 new homes. These homes have proven to be at least 30% more energy-efficient than those homes constructed using the old codes.

In addition to co-authoring the new solar code, the Long Island Power Authority has committed to providing implementation assistance of \$15,000 to each township and \$5,000 to each of the first ten villages in Nassau and in Suffolk that adopts the authorizing legislation sufficient to accomplish the five key components of the LIUSPI plan by December 31, 2011.

"Eliminating the red tape from green energy will allow our customers to have a better experience during the permitting and installation process," said LIPA Chief Operating Officer Michael D Hervey. "In addition, I expect LIUSPI to act as a catalyst to encourage more homeowners to take advantage of LIPA's solar programs and save money, while at the same time helping to foster new jobs in the local solar market."

"One way to encourage greater use of solar power is to make the process as easy as possible, and adopting a unified solar code for our region is a great first step," said Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy.

"The extraordinary efforts of this collaborative and the leadership of LIPA, and the Nassau and Suffolk Planning Commissions in bringing together municipalities from all parts of Long Island to create a speedy uniform solar permitting process, has resulted in a unique success which no doubt will benefit Long Islanders and our environment for years to come," said Neal Lewis, Executive Director of the Sustainability Institute at Molloy College.

Highlights of The Long Island Unified Solar Permitting Initiative:

- waived or minimal application fees;
- provide permit determinations within 14 days of submittal of a completed application;
- creation of a new "Solar Energy System Fast Track Permit Application" as an alternative to existing building permit forms;
- Create a central registry of solar installations;
- Require warning labels on the utility meter and any AC disconnect switch.

"Inconsistent local permit requirements can add hundreds of dollars to the cost of installing a solar electric system," said Gordian Raacke, Executive Director of Renewable Energy Long Island, a regional not-for-profit organization. "Having the same straightforward rules for solar permits all over Long Island will make it easier and cheaper for homeowners to generate clean electricity from sunshine while ensuring that these systems are properly designed."

"The Long Island Solar Energy Industries Association (LISEIA) is appreciative of the initiative shown by the Suffolk and Nassau County Planning Commissions and LIPA in tackling this impediment to solar deployment on Long Island. The hard work and tough choices made by all the stakeholders is a remarkable accomplishment and something to be proud of, and LISEIA was especially gratified for the opportunity to actively participate and we are certain that the end result is worthy of adoption by most municipalities on Long Island," said Sail Van Nostrand, Chairman of LISEIA.

LIPA's nationally recognized solar programs continue to reduce Long Island's dependence on fossil fuels, improve the environment, transform the solar market, and foster new clean energy jobs. Since its inception, LIPA's solar programs have rebated over \$111,595,334.00 million for the installation of 4,436 PV systems at a name plate capacity of 32.9 MW (DC) or a total of over 38,336 MWh (AC) annually in LIPA's service territory.

"With actions such as enacting our Solar Fast Track Code four years ago, Huntington has for some time tried to make it easier for homeowners and businesses to convert to solar energy," said Huntington Councilwoman Susan Berland. "Huntington is pleased to be part of this initiative, which will help residents across Long Island save on energy costs and preserve the environment."

"I am proud to have been a part of the process in the legislation to streamline these types of applications and want to thank LIPA for their support with the green energy initiative," said Riverhead Councilwoman Jodi Giglio.