

SEQRA BESS Environmental Assessment Summary

This handout summarizes what the Environmental Assessment Form (EAF) reviewed for the proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) at 220 Rabro Drive in Hauppauge — and what it did not review. This information was obtained through a Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) request to the Town of Islip.

What the Environmental Assessment Reviewed

- A utility-scale, battery-only BESS facility with containers, inverters, transformers, and a project substation.
- An unmanned site operating 24/7 with remote monitoring.
- A 12-foot sound/visual barrier wall and landscaped buffers.
- Noise impacts estimated to comply with Town limits (1–3 dBA increase at nearby receptors).
- Industrial zoning compliance and minimal traffic (approximately one maintenance visit per month).

What the Environmental Assessment Did NOT Analyze

- No petroleum, diesel, or gasoline storage tanks (ASTs or USTs).
- No backup or emergency generators.
- No fuel handling or combustion-based equipment.
- No site-specific fire modeling or worst-case thermal runaway scenarios.
- No toxic plume, smoke dispersion, or off-site air impact analysis.
- No cumulative environmental impact analysis for future system expansion or augmentation.
- No finalized emergency action plan or first-responder coordination plan.

Key Assumptions and Gaps

- The project is assumed to remain battery-only, with no fuel systems added later.
- Remote monitoring is assumed sufficient, though the monitoring location was not clearly defined during review.
- Emergency response procedures and first-responder protocols were not finalized at the time of review.
- Decommissioning details and enforcement mechanisms were incomplete.
- Battery augmentation every 3–5 years was disclosed but its environmental and safety impacts were not evaluated.
- Due to the current moratorium, the project is on hold, meaning additional disclosures may not surface until later stages.

Why This Matters

The SEQRA review relied heavily on applicant representations and assumptions. If fuel tanks, generators, expanded operations, or new safety risks are introduced later, they were not evaluated under the original environmental review.

Key Points

1. **The environmental review evaluated a limited version of the project**, not the full range of infrastructure or operational changes that could emerge later.
2. There is **no emergency action plan** or detailed coordination with first responders.
3. **Worst-case fire, thermal runaway, and toxic plume scenarios were not evaluated**, leaving unanswered safety and evacuation questions.
4. **Long-term expansion and battery replacement were acknowledged but not reviewed**, despite being integral to how BESS facilities operate.
5. **The moratorium delays transparency**, meaning serious safety disclosures may only surface late in the process — as already seen in Holtsville.

What We Are Asking Officials to Do

- Require a full, updated environmental review before the project proceeds.
- Mandate disclosure and analysis of any backup generators, fuel tanks, or combustion-based equipment.
- Require a detailed, site-specific emergency response and fire mitigation plan coordinated with local first responders.
- Evaluate worst-case fire, smoke, and toxic plume scenarios with independent analysis.
- Ensure any future expansion or augmentation triggers additional SEQRA review.