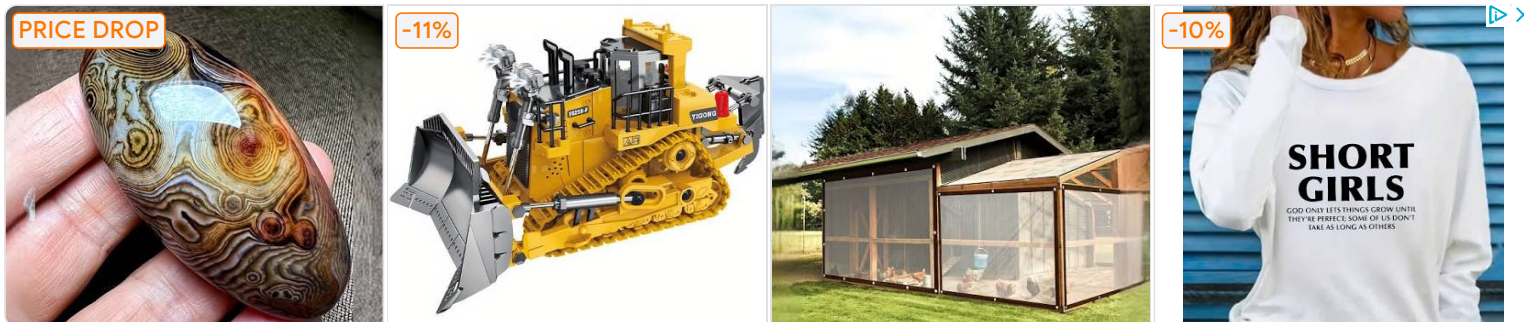


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BUSINESS

Plans withdrawn for community-opposed lithium-ion battery storage system on Staten Island

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New Leaf Energy has withdrawn plans for a lithium-ion battery storage facility that was slated to be built in the parking lot of Our Lady of Pity

R.C. Church in Bulls Head. (Staten Island Advance/Jan Somma-Hammel)

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By [Jessica Jones-Gorman | jgorman@siadvance.com](mailto:jgorman@siadvance.com)

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. – After [community members and local leaders voiced concerns about the location of a proposed lithium-ion battery storage facility, condemning its purported placement in close proximity to a church and six local schools](#), developers have announced their intention to officially withdraw project plans.

“A rep from New Leaf Energy called my office this morning and told me the company will be rescinding their application,” said Assemblyman Sam Pirozzolo, (R-Mid-Island/North Shore) who represents the 63rd district and has been vocal about community opposition to the project.

“Although these facilities are beneficial to our distribution grid, due to risk of fire and exposure to toxic chemicals, this has no place in school or residential zones. This project lacked concern for public safety and common sense, and my office will always stand up to protect their children and neighborhoods. I will move forward with introducing legislation at the state level to prevent these situations from occurring in sensitive zones in the future,” he added.

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According to information provided by New Leaf, the battery energy storage system (BESS) was intended to include six large-scale rechargeable lithium-ion battery systems manufactured by Tesla, each one capable of storing up to 20 megawatt-hours (MWh) of electricity. Con Edison would store energy produced during periods of low demand there, and then draw power from the facility during peak hours.


[It's a green means of energy harvesting that New York state is making a push for](#), recently unveiling an ambitious roadmap to rapidly expand its energy storage capabilities by the end of the decade. But Bulls Head residents were alarmed by its placement – in the parking lot of Our Lady of Pity R.C.

“We are proactively addressing this issue, because we are not comfortable with the idea of these units -- which are not yet time-tested for fire safety and toxic emissions -- being located 100 feet from our school,” noted Gina DeSantis, president of Moore Catholic High School, which borders the proposed site.

Other schools near the site include: New World Preparatory Charter School, also on the Moore Catholic campus; PS 60 located at 55 Merrill Ave; Children At Play Preschool, 40 Merrill Ave; Hellenic Classical

campus, 1500, located at 35 NORTH AVE, CHILDREN AT PLAY PRESCHOOL, 15 NORTH AVE, FLEMING CLASSICAL Charter School, 1641 Richmond Ave.

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“While the battery storage facilities may be the future of energy infrastructure, they don’t belong in residential communities,” said Congresswoman Nicole Malliotakis (R-Staten Island / Brooklyn). “The plan to place one at Our Lady of Pity’s parking lot was inappropriate. I’m pleased New Leaf has rescinded its proposal and I will continue to support Assemblyman Pirozzolo’s efforts to stop others from potentially hazardous placement in our community.”

Councilman David Carr (R- Mid-Island) added: “Battery Energy Storage Systems are an important new technology that could enhance our energy infrastructure, but we have to find the right places to site them. The community made clear that this was not the right place, and I credit New Leaf and Our Lady of Pity for heeding their voice.”

Assemblymember Michael Reilly (R-South Shore) echoed similar sentiments.

“If there’s one thing that stands true about development of any kind on Staten Island, it’s that the local community must have a seat at the table from the very beginning,” Reilly said. “I hope that New Leaf and other companies that are looking to be involved in this emerging market prioritize the community’s input before closing on deals to place future battery sites.”

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The proposed project is not the only one of its kind in Staten Island. [A lithium-ion battery storage unit is currently being built on Clifford Lane in Great Kills. Its developer, NineDot Energy, said it should be](#)

currently being built on streets late in Great Kills. Its developer, New Leaf Energy, said it should be operational and ready to harvest energy this year. And, according to Frank Morano, chair of Community Board 3, an application seeking to install an identical BESS unit at 405 Arthur Kill Rd. adjacent to Holtermann's Bakery, was recently rejected. At the corner of Littlefield Ave. and Hylan Blvd. in Eltingville, BESS units are already standing.

Pirozzolo says he is currently working on legislation to ensure they cannot legally be built in residential zones.

"It's clear that, under current building regulations, these sites can be constructed without community input or with much oversight, which is why I plan on co-sponsoring Assemblyman Pirozzolo's legislation to prohibit the placement of these sites in the heart of residential communities, and especially near our schools," Reilly said.

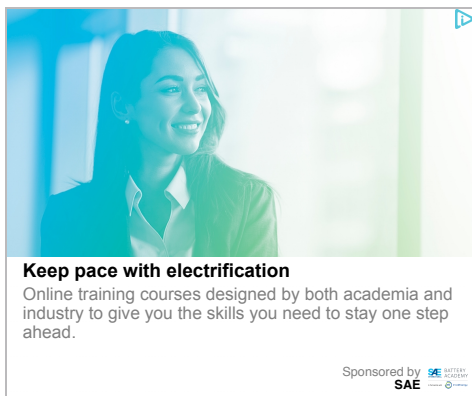
At the time of publication, New Leaf Energy did not respond to a request for comment about the project withdrawal.

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