

\$500,000 in funds would be used to create first system of its kind on Long Island

Islip, NY— Today, U.S. Rep. Steve Israel (D-NY), Islip Town Supervisor Phil Nolan, and Islip Councilman John Edwards announced \$500,000 in federal funding to study and design a photovoltaic system to be installed atop the closed Islip Municipal Sanitary Landfill. Photovoltaic technology uses solar panels to convert light directly into electricity.

“As oil prices keep climbing, we need to move fast to harness alternative energy sources,” Rep. Israel said. “With photovoltaic solar power at Islip’s closed, capped landfill, we can turn trash into treasure. This system will be the first of its kind on Long Island. It represents another important step away from foreign oil and toward energy independence.”

“With our Clean Energy Taskforce, the Town of Islip has been leading the way in promoting clean, renewable energy. Our plan to produce more than three million kilowatts of energy annually with photovoltaic technology will provide a practical example other Long Island communities can follow,” said Supervisor Nolan. “We’re very thankful to Congressman Israel for his efforts in securing this funding to move the project.”

“The large amount of land needed for an alternative energy facility of this magnitude is not easy to find, which makes building on a capped landfill a huge advantage,” said Councilman Edwards. “While the area atop the landfill is unsuitable for most uses, it is ideal for solar energy due to its elevation, remoteness from other structures and the passive nature of a photovoltaic system.”

The landfill contains an estimated 70 acres of raw garbage and was part of the EPA’s Superfund program to clean up hazardous waste sites. Because of contamination from dry cleaning chemicals, the site was capped in the late 1990s. Today, vegetation grows atop the cap, and in the future, the still hazardous site will create pollution-free electricity.

The conversion of the landfill to a solar energy-producing site is an example of a movement supported by the US Department of Energy to turn “brownfields,” previously contaminated sites, into “brightfields,” sites that produce solar energy.

The U.S. Department of Energy describes the benefits of Photovoltaic (or PV) technology as follows:

- It's highly reliable and needs little maintenance.
- It costs little to build and operate.
- It has virtually no environmental impact.
- It's produced domestically, strengthening our economy and reducing our trade deficit.
- It's modular and thus flexible in terms of size and applications.
- It meets the demand and capacity challenges facing energy service providers.
- It helps energy service providers manage uncertainty and mitigate risk.
- It serves both form and function in a building.

The funds were included as part of the Fiscal Year 2009 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill. The bill passed the full House Appropriations Committee on June 25, 2008. It will now move to the House of Representatives for consideration.