

ONLY IN NEWSDAY

Remembering Flight 800, 30 Years Later

Liers, family
members share
their stories

A6-8 | VIDEO AT NEWSDAY.TV



A truck moves the reconstructed wreckage from a Calverton hangar.

NEWSDAY, 1999 / DICK KRAUS

Trump Questions Past Elections In Speech to Nation

Releases formerly
classified documents,
offers no proof
outcomes were altered

A2

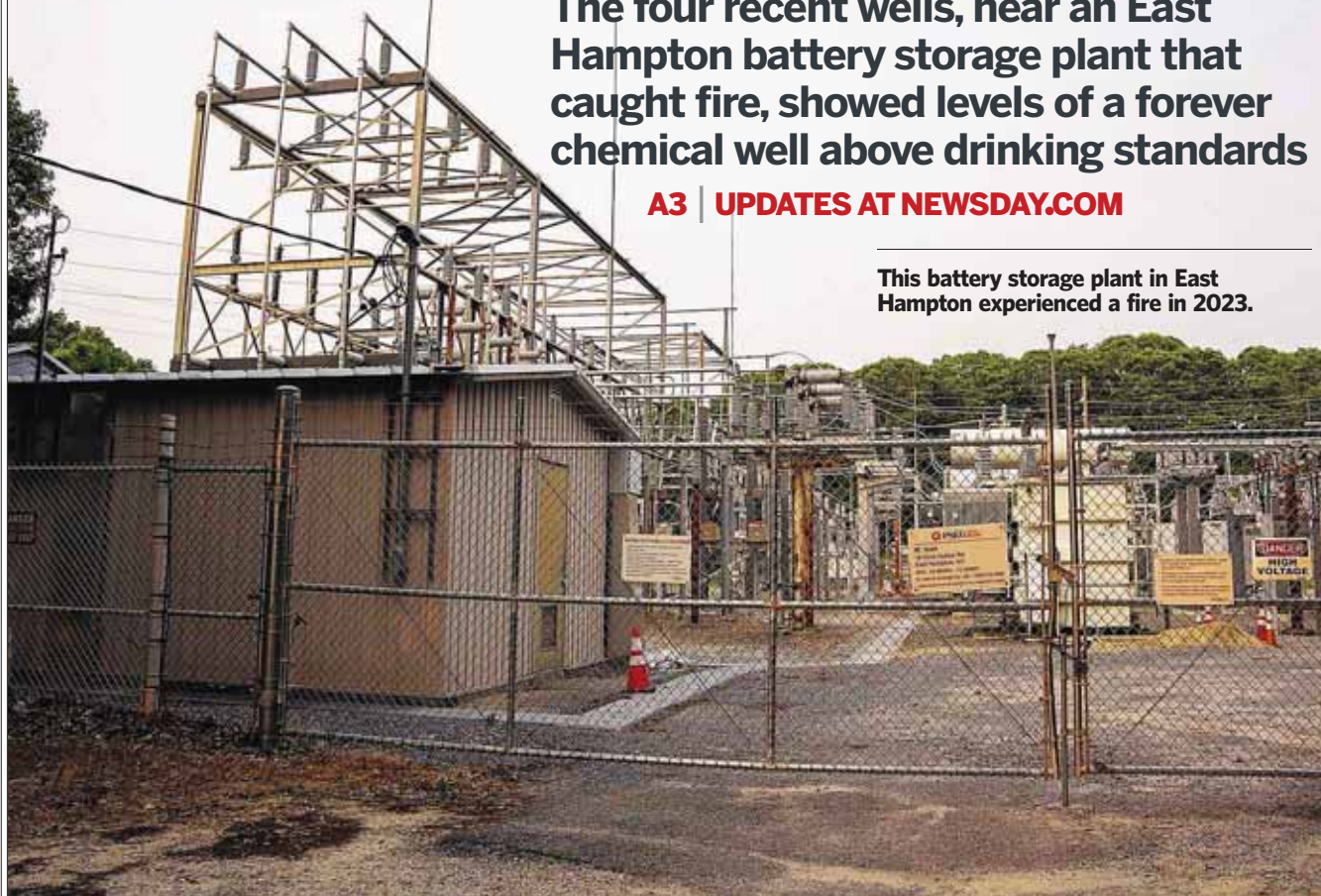
ONLY IN NEWSDAY

HIGH LEVELS OF TOXIN IN TEST WELLS

The four recent wells, near an East Hampton battery storage plant that caught fire, showed levels of a forever chemical well above drinking standards

A3 | UPDATES AT NEWSDAY.COM

This battery storage plant in East Hampton experienced a fire in 2023.



THOMAS HENGGE

FIRST IN NEWSDAY

AMAZON PLANS \$1B COMPLEX IN HOLBROOK

A10

FOREVER CHEMICALS IN LI WELLS

Toxic plume found after 2023 battery storage plant fire

ONLY IN NEWSDAY

BY MARK HARRINGTON

mark.harrington@newsday.com

The most recent test wells just south of a battery storage plant in East Hampton have shown levels of a forever chemical at more than 1 million parts per trillion, raising questions about the extent of contamination from the plant.

Newsday on Wednesday received a copy of the latest report after tests conducted by Suffolk County earlier this month. It showed extremely high detections that are well above drinking water standards of the toxin, known as ultrashort-chain PFPrA, at the test wells. Around 30 residents have private wells in the area, and not all have been tested yet.

Suffolk said tests at private homes have not yet shown the toxin above drinking water standards, but noted the plume is moving southward and “there’s always a concern” it could, said Andy Rapiejko, associate hydrogeologist for the Suffolk Health Services Department. “We don’t know unless we test.”

Impact of plume

The toxic plume has already affected public drinking water wells around 2,500 feet south of battery plant, which experienced a thermal-runaway fire in 2023 that was treated with more than 2.2 million gallons of water. Soot-impacted water pooled off-site. The test wells are just north of public wells operated by the Suffolk County Water Authority.

Suffolk County has tested the water from nine private wells around the plume. Thus far, the tests haven’t shown the specific chemical above the 50,000 parts per trillion standard, Rapiejko said.

Levels of the toxic compound at the separate Suffolk test wells were found to be as high as 1.7 million parts per trillion in one sample, and 1.08 million parts per trillion in another’s home’s



A lithium-ion battery storage facility in East Hampton. Tests of some nearby wells show high levels of forever chemicals from a toxic plume.

WHAT NEWSDAY FOUND

■ **Recent tests of private wells just south of a battery storage plant in East Hampton** have shown extremely high levels of a forever chemical at more than 1 million parts per trillion at several homes.

■ **A copy of the latest private well report after tests** conducted by Suffolk County earlier this month showed detections that are well above drinking water standards of the toxin, known as ultrashort-chain PFPrA, at four homes.

■ **The toxic plume has already affected public water wells** around 2,500 feet south of battery plant, which experienced a thermal-runaway fire in 2023.

sample. There were also separately high readings of PFOS and PFOA at two of the wells, according to the data.

Justin Hogan, an East Hampton resident who lives across the street from a test well that showed the highest levels, called the figures “ridiculous.”

He’s on public water, but said, “If we have a toxic plume underneath this property, I don’t know what it does to the property values.”

The plume is the subject of a federal lawsuit filed by the Suffolk water authority, which was forced to shut down or sharply restrict those drinking water wells because of the discovery of the forever chemicals in the water. Those closures have heightened a water shortage in the Hamptons at the height of the summer season.

In responses to Newsday on Thursday, water authority spokesman Dan Dubois said two partially impacted public wells are on restricted use and neither has been used for drinking water since at least late June.

One well is in “restricted status and has not been run since June 26th. Well 4 is out of service as we await new sample results,” Dubois wrote in responses to Newsday. Two other wells have been off since the spring. The county has not yet released test results from those wells.

Earlier this week, the authority declared a Stage 1 water alert on the East End, because of a drought and record use, but also because the four East Hampton wells are essentially out of service.

Gov. Kathy Hochul, who has long advocated for the battery plants, doubling the state mandate for them to 6,000 megawatts by 2030, in 2023 declared there were “no harmful levels of toxins detected” at the East Hampton site and two oth-

ers that experienced fires that year. A state task-force analysis at the time, she said, “shows no notable lasting impacts on the health or safety of the first responders or the communities they serve.”

Hochul spokesman Ken Lovett previously has said while the governor can’t comment on the litigation, she “immediately” reconvened her interagency fire-safety working group “on becoming aware of the situation,” and the State Departments of Health and Environmental Conservation “are investigating any potential impacts to water quality.”

Since been rebuilt

East Hampton Village Mayor Jerry Larsen is calling for quicker and more decisive action. “My concern is what is the plan with this plant?” he said. “This could happen again tomorrow and we’d have the same results.”

The battery plant has since been rebuilt and restored to operation in 2024. Another battery facility in Montauk has also undergone redesigns, Newsday has reported. Both are under contract to LIPA.

Larsen said, “I think we should shut it down until we know there’s some sort of [water] containment plan for this plant” in the event of another fire. “I think we shut down this

one and the one in Montauk until we know there’s a plan.”

The owner of the sites, National Grid and its battery partner NextEra, have declined to comment on the topic, citing the pending litigation, though NextEra spokesman Chris Curtland has previously said, “. . . we stand ready to work with county and state agencies on any further actions that require our assistance.”

The state Department of Environmental Conservation, which did not order groundwater testing in 2023 because soil tests didn’t show conclusive impacts and closed its investigation of the site in 2024, didn’t immediately respond to Newsday questions about the latest Suffolk test results.

DEC has previously said it is developing a work plan for the site, one including new rounds of water tests and an investigation of all possible causes of the plume. DEC said it plans to release a report on the site by late summer or early fall.

At a meeting Monday of state and local officials about the plume, the DEC told attendees it expects to have a contractor on site by Friday, with drilling of up to eight wells to begin sometime next week, according to an official who attended who asked not to be identified. Results could be available in a month.

THOMAS HENGGE

newsday.com

NEWSDAY, FRIDAY, JULY 17, 2026