



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA LETTER**

**Agenda Number:**

**Clerk of the Board of Supervisors**  
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-2240

**Submitted on:**  
**(COB Stamp)**

**Department Name:** County Executive Office  
**Department No.:** 012  
**Agenda Date:** July 1, 2025  
**Placement:** Administrative Agenda  
**Estimated Time:**  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:**  
**Vote Required:** Majority

**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Department Director: Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer  
Contact: Clare Tobin, Legislative Analyst  
**SUBJECT:** Adopt Support Position for Battery Energy Storage Systems Legislation: AB 1285 and SB 283

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**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Other Concurrence:**

As to form: No

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: No

**Recommended Actions:**

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Adopt a position to support Assembly Bill (AB) 1285 and Senate Bill (SB) 283, to increase community safety related to battery energy storage systems (BESS) per the recommendation of the Legislative Program Committee; and
- b) Find that the proposed action is an organizational or administrative activity that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment and is therefore not a project under CEQA Guidelines 14 CCR 15378(b)(5).

**Summary Text:**

Following several discussions at the Board of Supervisors and the Legislative Program Committee (Committee), the Committee recommends adopting a “support” position for AB 1285 and SB 283, two bills related to safety for battery energy storage systems (BESS) that are still progressing through the legislative process. Three other bills identified by the Committee related to BESS, including AB 303 (Addis), are no longer progressing. The County’s Legislative Platform supports transition to clean energy and notes the important role of BESS but is silent on matters of appropriate regulation to ensure community safety, hence the Committee has forwarded this item to the full Board for consideration.

**Background:**

At the March 11, 2025 meeting, the Board reviewed information regarding battery energy storage systems (BESS). At that time, staff reported that in 2022 the Governor signed AB 205, enabling certain size battery storage systems capable of storing 200 megawatt-hours (MWh) or more to forego the local land use approval process and instead opt-in to a state review and approval process under the auspices of the California Energy Commission. Staff also reported that Assemblymember Dawn Addis, D-Morro Bay, introduced AB 303 which proposed to restore local permitting authority, and establish setbacks of 3,200 feet from sensitive receptors, including schools, hospitals and agricultural land.

Following its deliberations, the Board approved a motion to forward AB 303 to the Legislative Program Committee, with direction to advocate for AB 303 (to increase local control).

The Committee considered this direction at its April 7 meeting, at which time it was reported that in addition to AB 303, multiple bills on this issue have been introduced in both the Senate and Assembly, as follows:

- [SB 283](#): This bill requires that the updated California Building Standards Code incorporate recommendations from the National Fire Protection Association's Standard for the Installation of Stationary Energy Storage Systems and that new applications to the California Energy Commission or local agencies for new energy storage facilities certify that they are consistent with such standards. Requires local agencies to certify compliance with these standards if a BESS is approved.
- [AB 434](#): In addition to requiring the State Fire Marshal to adopt guidelines and minimum construction standards for battery energy storage facilities, AB 434 bars a local agency from approving construction of such a facility until after January 1, 2028. After January 1, 2028, a local agency must require that a battery energy storage facility adhere to the guidelines and standards prepared by the State Fire Marshal.
- [AB 588](#): This measure would require the State Fire Marshal to convene a lithium battery working group to identify those safety issues associated with lithium batteries and associated charging infrastructure installed or used near or within residential or commercial occupancies and to recommend potential solutions that will enhance building safety. AB 588 specifies that the working group will be funded through the Building Standards Administration Special Revolving Fund.
- [AB 1285](#): Requires the State Fire Marshal, in consultation with the Office of Emergency Services, to develop fire prevention, response, and recovery measures for utility grade lithium-ion battery storage facilities, as specified.

At the May 6 Board meeting, the Board considered the Committee's request that the Board approve an action to "watch" these bills for further legislative developments, prior to taking a position on AB 303 or any of the others. The Board approved the motion and asked that the Committee continue evaluating these bills.

The Committee reconsidered the list of BESS bills at its meeting on June 2. The County's advocates noted that only AB 1285 and SB 283 are still active. They advised, and the Committee agreed, that both bills create additional safety measures related to these facilities without impinging on local control. The Committee voted to support both bills, pending approval from the full Board.

**Attachments:**

**Attachment A** – Draft AB 1285 Committee on Emergency Management

**Attachment B** – Draft SB 283 Laird

**Contact Information:**

Clare Tobin

Legislative Analyst

[ctobin@countyofsb.org](mailto:ctobin@countyofsb.org)