

Katherine Douglas

Public Comment

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From: Inge Cox <docoxie@gmail.com>
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To: sbcob
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Attachments: Comments Board of Supervisors 3-11-25.docx

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Please see attached comments.

Sincerely yours,

I. Cox MD, MPH

Departmental Agenda

Community Services Department

From: Ingeborg Cox MD, MPH

docoxie@gmail.com

To: The Board of Supervisors

sbcob@countyofsb.org

Agenda date: March 11, 2025

File Number 25-00171

Dear Sir/Madams:

This “Informational Report” should be reclassified as an Action Report.

According to staff the Moss Landing Battery Energy Storage System (**BESS**) located in Monterey County caught fire and resulted in the evacuation of approximately 1,200 residents. What is missing is the fact that this fire which ignited January 16, **burned for five days** and destroyed and estimated 80% of the batteries. It also affected the **Elkhorn Slough Reserve**, home to more than 700 species of plants, animals and marine life.

The Los Angeles Times reported on February 2, 2025 that Ivano Aiello, chair of San Jose State’s Moss Landing Marine Laboratories who has monitored conditions at the slough for more than a decade, was shocked by the large levels of heavy metals at the estuary. “Concentration of nickel, manganese and cobalt measured on the surface of the soil is hundreds to thousands of times as much as the levels in the surface soil prior to the fire or compared with levels measured deeper in the soil”.

The EPA did not plan to conduct soil and water testing. It appears that this is supposed to be done by state and local agencies.

The batteries of Moss Landing contained nickel, manganese and cobalt (NMC chemistry batteries). Newer stationery BESS applications contain lithium, iron,

phosphate (which have a higher thermal ignition onset temperature, less prone to thermal runaway).

In my opinion a fire at a BESS physically changes the environment. Consequently –the **recommendation c)** from staff needs to be changed-- to reflect the need for an EIR before further action.

Local permitting authorities should be the ones enforcing the setbacks, where BESS can be placed safely, and also making sure that there are enough local Fire Stations equipped to combat such an event.

For example the City of Goleta is still missing a Fire Station for the area of the Sandpiper, the Ellwood School, the Open Space and the Retirement Home.

According to the “2025 California’s Energy Code Fact Sheet” there is a reminder that states “ The CEC (California Energy Commission) does not mandate specific fuel types. California’s Energy Code is founded on the principle of enabling building designers to use a range of options for complying with energy requirements”.

The Board of Supervisors and City Councils of the area involved, should be the ones deciding where this facilities will be placed and should have a say which option is best for their County.