

**Subject:** BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE IN YOUR AREA?

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Hello, State reps and Councilmembers,

I am sending this to you because you may, one day, be called upon to approve a battery energy storage facility (BESS) in your community.

I saw an article on MSN that 10 BESS facilities were being proposed or built in wildfire-prone areas like the ones in Escondido, Valley Center, and Otay Mesa, and a few others, that caught fire. In fact, the SDGE facility in Escondido caught fire despite smoke and heat detectors. Technology by itself won't save us. They should have thought of these things first, but the small risks they advertise are rapidly becoming huge risks.

You know the risks and the community best. Please don't give in to the legal or other manipulation.

And by the way, since I live in one of the 10 areas, it's now personal.

My latest issue with lithium-ion batteries is the danger to all of us with our normal ways of life:

I wrote a few months ago: "The weather has been noticeably cooler for a few days. You would think that this would help the wildfire control. Yet this morning, the 14th, the three big fires near LA and OC, are still raging virtually uncontained: the Bridge fire at 53K acres, 3% containment; the Airport fire at 23K acres, 9% containment; the Line fire at 38K acres, 25% containment. I think the huge Park fire, which we know was started by an EV, was still burning too.

Temperatures for 9/11 in San Dimas (Bridge fire) got down to the upper 50's; San Bernardino (Line fire) and Rancho Santa Margarita (Airport fire) got down to the 60's.

These fires should be on the way out. It is time, maybe past time, to study whether EV's and battery storage facilities (BESS) are contributing to the fires' staying power, especially with lithium's ability to spontaneously combust multiple times.

AND THESE FIRES ARE STILL GOING! Depleting our water, costing money, using firefighter resources and lives.

Also, the EV truck fire on Aug. 19 in Placer County took 50K gallons of water to put out – about 4 times what a family of 4 uses each month. So in a water-poor area, flammable EV's and battery storage (BESS) do not make sense.

Pretty much all batteries are flammable to some degree as is gasoline or hydrogen or even donkey crap if handled wrong. What makes lithium-ion batteries so dangerous is their ability to combust spontaneously and at relatively low temperature 248 degrees F (unlike gasoline at 495 degrees F) and the difficulty in putting out these fires.

Another thing that really alarms me is that the BESS companies seem to care about economics more than safety. I saw a KGTV 10 news interview on 11/24/2024 where Jason Anderson, the President of Clean Tech San Diego (a non-profit helping to 'advance' BESS tech) says that despite all the BESS fires at 'older tech' facilities, there are no plans to upgrade or replace them – it would be economically unfeasible (nothing about safety.)

I do not see why these facilities cannot be placed in non-wildfire prone areas like Borrego Springs, Ranchita (I believe) or Ocotillo Wells, or zones like near the Salton Sea, the nearby desert areas (maybe even crossing County lines.)

Another reason to reject BESS placement outside of the coastal zone is that roads in the back-country are not developed enough to handle mass evacuations. Many areas have tiny roads or just one access road which can easily be blocked and trap people and animals. Smaller communities also tend to lack shelter-in-place facilities.

In addition, the insurance cost of homeowners near a BESS facility stands to be canceled or increased in that area, which is fairly discriminatory, especially if you have livestock or agribusiness. Are we all going to have to import our food at a higher price?

Thanks to Jim Desmond at the Board of Supervisors for recognizing the need for BESS safety standards. Hope the measure gets re-introduced ASAP, so we can control these fires BEFORE they happen and not waste resources on controlling them after.

Here's what I wrote about BESS earlier:

BESS in a wildfire zone is the silliest idea I've heard of for a while. Here are some of my thoughts on this:

Lithium – used in EV batteries – unstable metal – causes spontaneous fires, repeat, spontaneous, you can't put out, toxic fumes, mass evacuations, oh, and the fire just reignited draining fire department resources. And the response from the Big-BESS-Biz: 'We got better technology now.' Isn't that what they said about the Titanic?

I would recommend an enhancement or judicial recommendation for those who start BESS wildfires, to include those who knowledgeably situate a BESS facility in a high-risk area (including near civilization) with inadequate precautions. This should be an extra year for each death and an extra fine to make up for firefighter time and resources.

The Battery Storage (BESS) fire in Otay Mesa burned for about a week. Firemen were monitoring it even longer instead of being elsewhere, and they evacuated people within a mile.

There are proposals for larger BESS facilities in San Marcos and Poway near a major hospital, school, and residences, within a few hundred yards in San Marcos and 1/2 mile in Poway. Lithium ion batteries put out toxic fumes like phosphorous pentafluoride and are a huge wildfire hazard and would draw away fire dept resources to monitor fire for weeks.

Whoever approves these things (The Board of Supervisors has approved a lot of them) should designate safe areas for these away from houses, schools, and hospitals and wildfire zones, environmentally sensitive areas or water sources which they would pollute.

I doubt, for instance, that the EPA and all would take it too kindly if the toxics from a BESS fire fell on a national monument after all the years and effort to plan it.

If, as I suspect the moneyed and persuasive BESS guys do get a nearby storage site, the Fire People need to get a supply of "F-500 Encapsulator Agent" to help extinguish BESS lithium fires, which cools the fire and interrupts the chemical reaction involved in the lithium battery combustion.

And for smaller BESS or EV fires, you want a supply of aqueous vermiculite dispersion (AVD) or a foam extinguisher containing powdered graphite or sodium carbonate.

And it might help to put Chickenwire or other mesh over BESS facilities to reduce the danger from floating embers or burning airborne leaves in a wildfire.

Regards,

Paul Henkin