

From: David Donnenfield [REDACTED]

Date: Wed, Sep 27, 2023 at 2:44 PM

Subject: Latest Reason to Require EIRs for BESS Projects

To: McDonnell, Kevin <kmcdonnell@cityofpetaluma.org>, Barnacle, Brian

<bbarnacle@cityofpetaluma.org>, Janice Cader Thompson <janicecader@gmail.com>, Pocekay, Dennis

<dpocekay@cityofpetaluma.org>, John Shribbs <jshribbs@comcast.net>, Karen Nau

<knau@cityofpetaluma.org>, Healy, Mike <mhealy@cityofpetaluma.org>

Cc: <PFlynn@cityofpetaluma.org>

Dear City Council Members,

We submit for your consideration the latest fire incident that engulfed a Li-ion battery storage enclosure, this time in San Diego. It happened just last week and resulted in a 1/4-mile evacuation and 1/2-mile shelter-in-place order for residents. Here is the link:

<https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2023/09/19/lithium-ion-battery-fire-in-california-energy-storage-facility/>

Please note that a quarter-mile corresponds to the closest houses at Adobe Creek and Cross Creek to the Bolero BESS, while a half-mile would encircle most of our neighborhood here at Adobe Creek and a good portion of Cross Creek. Ask your Emergency Services Coordinator just how big of a deal are these critical orders. We can assure you they are not a mere inconvenience to those having to respond.

The good thing is that that's as far as the incident went. The next one, and there will be a next one, may not wind up being merely an amplified fire drill.

At the end of July, we sent you an email recounting the recent BESS fires in New York state. One of them resulted in a shelter-in-place order which got the serious attention of governor Kathy Hochul.

"Following multiple fire safety incidents across New York, I've directed State agencies to immediately form the Inter-Agency Fire Safety Working Group to mobilize the personnel and resources necessary to keep New Yorkers safe," Hochul said.

These are just more examples of state officials putting their energy mandates above the safety of their citizens. At least NY state has a document reflecting siting criteria that was either inadequate or they chose to ignore it. California, on the other hand, doesn't even have a published set of siting criteria or regulations. According to a Pacific Northwest National Laboratory study (2021),

"Power plants with a capacity of 50 MW or greater in California are licensed by the California Energy Commission (CEC). CEC's power plant permitting process is regulated under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which directs

the Commission to conduct an environmental impact review process and solicit public comments. "Energy storage systems" are explicitly included under the CEC's regulatory jurisdiction in the California Code of Regulations, but specific siting requirements for energy storage systems are not outlined in the text of those regulations."

How many of these incidents or how severe an incident will it take for all of you to appreciate the real risks these projects represent? What if Petaluma were to become the unfortunate disaster site that finally puts an end to locating BESS installations so close to neighborhoods. Won't happen, you say? Scare tactics. Alarmist hysteria. Then you dismiss our legitimate concerns at our peril. Residents of Petaluma, of Sonoma County deserve what a project of this potential consequence requires — an EIR for each project. Please take our safety seriously and pass a resolution to make sure that the County requires these EIRS.

David Donnenfield
Joe Petrillo
Citizens for Battery Transparency

David Donnenfield
[REDACTED]
Petaluma, CA 94954
[REDACTED]

"We need a planet where human life and natural life is the default. We do not jeopardize other living species' ability to be on the planet.
— Ken Holmen, International Director, Norwegian Polar Institute