

APRIL 04, 2024

ATA's RUTH BROCK'S EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE WITH CALIFORNIA ASSEMBLYMAN TOM LACKEY ASKING HIM THAT, AS OUR ASSEMBLYMAN, STAND WITH OUR ACTON COMMUNITY AND PLEASE PROVIDE A LETTER OF SUPPORT AS WE STRONGLY OPPOSE THE SITING OF ANY AND ALL LITHIUM-ION BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS IN PROXIMITY TO THE RESIDENTS OF ACTON.

FROM: Ruth Brock <actontakesaction@att.net>  
TO: Tom Lackey

SUBJECT: Please provide a letter of support as we strongly oppose the siting of any and all lithium-ion battery energy storage systems in proximity to the residents of Acton

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Dear Assemblyman Lackey,

Acton is staring down the barrel of a potential 2,285 MegaWatts of Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) projects proposing to develop in the east Acton area. To put this in perspective, 2,285 MW of power storage is greater than the capacity of the Diablo Canyon Power Plant as well as the San Onofre Power Plant, and it's all going to be concentrated in our small, rural community.

While we understand the need to develop renewable energy to expand our grid and do not oppose green energy, we DO oppose the siting of multiple huge battery storage facilities near our homes. These BESS are all proposed in close proximity to the Vincent Substation claiming that it is a necessity for "greater flexibility in serving the grid," but there is actually no reason that battery storage must be sited near a substation other than a connection cost savings to the developer.

East Acton is a designated Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. It has become very expensive and in some cases very difficult for residents in this area to obtain fire insurance for their homes. The presence of even one BESS will surely increase the perceived risk to insurance companies and may soon make it nearly impossible to obtain affordable coverage for these residents.

Many property owners in the east Acton area also have dog kennels and animal rescues. It is standard protocol for a BESS fire incident response to include a 1/4 mile radius evacuation order and a 1/2 mile radius shelter in place order. How will it be even possible for these residents to quickly respond to such orders?

These BESS will utilize dangerous, fire-prone and highly toxic lithium-ion batteries putting all residents in proximity to them at great risk. Hydrogen Fluoride, Hydrogen Chloride, Hydrogen Cyanide and Carbon Monoxide are among the dangerous gases these batteries produce during a fire or thermal runaway event. Thermal runaway is an overheating reaction that begins at the cellular level. Once it starts it cannot be stopped and will propagate from battery cell to battery cell while spewing the super-heated, highly flammable and extremely toxic and deadly gases, posing a direct risk to first responders and residents.

One project of imminent concern is the Hecate Humidor 400MW BESS which has been given initial approval through a ministerial review by L.A. County Regional Planning, but all necessary approvals have not yet been obtained. If this project is allowed to proceed it will open the door to two others — the Flea Flicker and Maathai — by the same developer, Hecate, and another huge project by developer

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Avantus. The Avantus "Angeleno" is a 1,150 MW BESS which will sprawl across 68 acres — winding in and out of residential properties — and span more than one mile!

The location of the Humidor BESS is adjacent to several critical 500kV overhead transmission lines which are part of the southern terminus of the Pacific AC Intertie. According to three transmission experts who have given professional opinions on the location of this BESS being dangerous, if there was a fire incident at Humidor, the smoke and super-heated gases would cause the insulators on electric circuits to flashover which results in a transmission line fault. Because several 500kV transmission lines all connect at the Vincent Substation and are in close proximity of one another, a catastrophic event at Humidor or any of the other nearby proposed BESS could result in a potential loss of the all of these lines that comprise the Pacific Intertie. This is a huge concern for the Southern California power grid.

Rep. Garcia recently participated in a hearing on Feb. 29th for the Homeland Security subcommittee of 'Science, Space and Technology', which was focused on "Examining the Risk: the Dangers of EV's for First Responders." Rep. Garcia was able to ask questions of the invited expert, San Bernardino County Fire Chief Dan Munsey, and pivot the focus to lithium-ion batteries as they pertain to being utilized in BESS. Rep. Garcia is introduced at time marker 44:55.

[https://www.youtube.com/live/d8l8AsN5suA?si=T\\_vRokegKvuBUB6l](https://www.youtube.com/live/d8l8AsN5suA?si=T_vRokegKvuBUB6l)

So Congress is now starting to become aware of the dangers associated with lithium-ion batteries. Even the much smaller batteries that are used in e-bikes and e-scooters pose a threat as sadly 18 people lost their lives in NY in 2023 from fires caused by e-bikes and scooters. They did not perish from the flames, but instead died from the very toxic off-gassing and smoke.

The CEC is also becoming aware of the dangers that lithium-ion batteries pose to communities being asked to host BESS facilities and are trying to develop safe siting standards through their AB 205 Opt-In Approval process. Our local government, LA County, blindly approved the Humidor BESS without any knowledge of the dangers it represents for our residents and did it by a simple ministerial review. We have unfortunately been forced to litigate their decision in an upcoming Superior Court case.

**We ask that you, as our Assemblyman, stand with our Acton community and please provide a letter of support as we strongly oppose the siting of any and all lithium-ion battery energy storage systems in proximity to the residents of Acton.**

Our County officials need to know that our state and federal government elected representatives will protect us as their constituents — even when LA County won't.

With gratitude,

Ruthie Brock

Acton Takes Action Community Task Force