



June 7, 2023

The Honorable Scott Wilk
Senator, 21st California Senate District
1021 O Street, Room 7140
Sacramento, CA 95814
senator.wilk@senate.ca.gov

Subject: Acton Town Council Request for Assistance.

Dear Senator Wilk;

For more than a decade, the State of California has advanced extensive new legislation to reduce wildfire risks and increase the safety and security of residents in high fire hazard severity zones; SB99, SB 1241, AB2911, AB 747, and AB 1409 are just some of the bills that have been adopted. At the same time, the State has advanced new legislation to increase the deployment of renewable energy resources to achieve “Carbon Neutrality” by 2045; these efforts have culminated in the “California Clean Energy Transition Plan” that was just released by Governor Newsom two weeks ago. The “Clean Energy Transition Plan” properly calls for the substantial expansion of battery storage facilities to “capture the state’s abundant renewable resources” (page 6) and it imposes no directive regarding where such battery facilities should be located; instead, it wisely supports the efforts of the “Tracking Energy Development Task Force” to “provide electric resource development assistance, as appropriate, for new electric generation and battery storage projects, with a priority on contracted projects needed for summer electric grid reliability” (page 16).

Despite the fact that utility scale battery storage systems are susceptible to deflagration¹, the risks they pose can perhaps be reasonably managed if they are properly located in areas with minimum wildfire potential; however, when utility scale battery facilities are placed in the middle of wildfire-prone communities, it is a certainty that a localized deflagration event will rapidly expand into a conflagration event that endangers the entire community. In other words, unless they are properly tempered, California’s carbon neutrality objectives will conflict with, and utterly undermine, California’s wildfire protection objectives.

It is these concerns which have prompted us to write to you. The only solution perceived by the Acton Town Council to address these concerns is to restrict the placement of transmission grid connected utility scale battery storage facilities to locations outside of high fire hazard severity

¹ https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Wade-Allison/publication/352158070_Safety_of_Grid_Scale_Lithium-ion_Battery_Energy_Storage_Systems/links/60bbaa59299bf10dff9c66f9/Safety-of-Grid-Scale-Lithium-ion-Battery-Energy-Storage-Systems.pdf.

zones. Accordingly, we respectfully request that you work with other legislators in a bi-partisan effort to secure legislation which imposes such restrictions and thereby ensures that California's carbon neutrality goals and California's wildfire protection goals are fully advanced. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this request in more detail, please contact us at atc@actontowncouncil.org.

Thank you in advance for your time and assistance.

Sincerely;

Jeremiah Owen, President
The Acton Town Council

Cc: Field Representative Brandon Roque [Brandon.Roque@sen.ca.gov]