



Acton residents concerned about multiple battery-storage projects

© PERRY SMITH(HTTPS://SIGNALSCV.COM/AUTHOR/PERRYSMITH/) 📅 JUNE 6, 2023 ⌚ 5:28 PM



[Share](#) [Tweet](#) [Email](#)

Concerns over a number of battery energy storage system, or BESS, projects in Acton drew a standing-room only crowd to the Acton Town Council meeting Monday.

Residents of the rural community have been rankled by reports of the storage facilities, an increasingly popular energy solution with capacity that's expected to double this year alone nationally, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

LATEST NEWS



(<https://signalscv.com/2023/06/oversight-suggestion-upsets-lasd-union-contract-cities/>)

Oversight suggestion upsets LASD union, contract cities
(<https://signalscv.com/2023/06/oversight-suggestion-upsets-lasd-union-contract-cities/>)
JUNE 19, 2023

Black bear struck, 14 killed
(<https://signalscv.com/2023/06/black-bear-struck-killed-on-highway-14/>)
JUNE 19, 2023



Town Council President Jeremiah Owen said the council’s regular meeting usually draws about 10 to 15 residents, but Monday night more than 200 showed up to the library that hosts the advisory council.

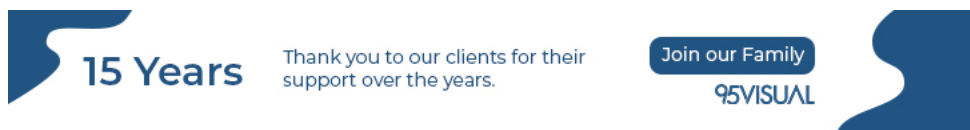
“Our official position is: ‘Don’t put BESS in Acton – it’s not the right place for it,’” Owen said Tuesday in a phone interview.

He said part of his concern, in addition to any potential fire hazard or flood hazard that could result from building in such an area, has been with the lack of outreach and transparency around the projects’ efforts. To that end, he also thanked L.A. County Supervisor Kathryn Barger, who represents the 5th District, which includes the SCV, for the help from her office.

A spokesman for Hecate Energy, which previously had permission to start developing its Humidor BESS project, a 300-megawatt “utility-scale battery energy storage facility,” did not respond to a request for comment Tuesday.

“The Humidor BESS will be a versatile resource that supports the efficient use of renewable electricity and will make the CAISO (California Independent System Operator) grid a more resilient and reliable system,” said Gabe Wapner, Hecate Grid’s VP of business development, according to a statement issued in September on the grid’s milestones. “Energy storage packs a one-two punch. It supports wide-scale deployment of renewable energy while mitigating energy costs for consumers.”

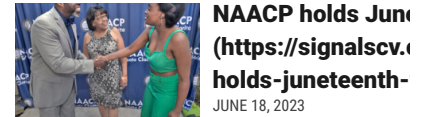
Owen said he had little information from Hecate or Humidor and wasn’t able to find out much about the speculation until he started digging around on CalISO.com, the state’s website set up for the California Independent System Operator, which maintains the power grid.



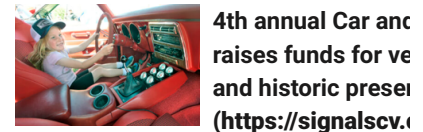
He said he was nearly brought to tears when Barger’s office was able to slow down a BESS project days before the board was expected to grant the operator a 35-year license.

When the Town Council first learned of the Hecate project was approved through a county site-plan review, a letter was sent the morning of Feb. 9 on behalf of the Acton Town Council. Samuel Dea, supervising planner for the Department of Regional Planning’s North County division, responded that evening.

“The facility as proposed cannot be approved through the site-plan review process,” Dea’s letter noted. “As a result, the approval previously granted under RPPL2022008009 has been rescinded and the applicant has been informed that the facility as currently proposed is subject to a conditional use permit.”



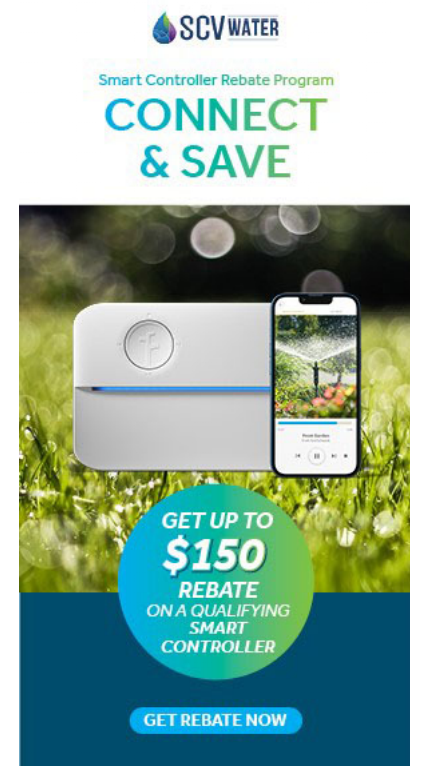
(<https://signalscv.com/2023/06/naacp-holds-juneteenth-fundraiser/>)



(<https://signalscv.com/2023/06/4th-annual-car-and-motorcycle-show-raises-funds-for-veteran-community-and-historic-preservation/>)



(<https://signalscv.com/2023/06/brush-fire-reported-in-newhall-3/>)



There has not yet been a hearing for that permit, Owen said, but he said the council is working with community members, including a local coalition called Acton Takes Action, to try to make sure the community stays informed of all future projects, and has a chance to weigh in.

Ruthie Brock said she formed Acton Takes Action to fight potential industrial blight to the area about six years ago. After only learning of the BESS projects through a casual conversation with a friend, she realized she would need to get the group back together.

“My job has just been to disseminate information out there,” Brock said, likening the close-knit community to a “mushroom.”

“You know, we live in the dark, and unless you’re on social media, you hear nothing,” she lamented.

An ATA rally over the weekend drew more than 100 to Acton Park, which is not a small crowd for a town of about 7,000.

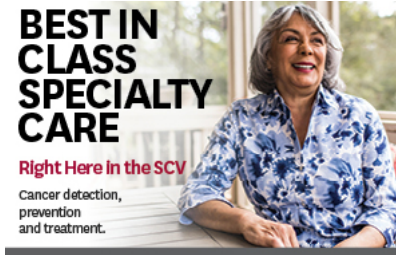
Barger said Tuesday she’ll been continuing to keep a close eye on the situation, which includes **a motion she successfully introduced** (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hNREoRKxFyP88enh886wLTz6RVVwIErO/view?usp=sharing>), calling for county staff to report back to the board with information on: the current procedures for approval of such projects; all of the BESS projects seeking approval in L.A. County; Edison’s forecast for power needs; and how the county can bolster its position in terms of its jurisdictional authority.

Part of the challenge Barger and county officials are facing is changing energy regulations from Sacramento, as well as legislators’ support for “Building the Electricity Grid of the Future: California’s Clean Energy Transition Plan,” which was unveiled by Gov. Gavin Newsom on May 25.

“The plan emphasizes the need for a diverse range of clean energy resources, including batteries, clean hydrogen, and long-duration storage, to meet the growing demand for electricity at all times of the day and throughout the year,” according to a summary of the plan in Barger’s agenda item.

More troubling for the county is that under Assembly Bill 205, which Newsom signed into law last June, the California Energy Commission has “exclusive authority, superseding the county of Los Angeles, to certify a site and related facility and the associated environmental impact report, whether the application proposes a new site and related facility, or a change or addition to an existing facility,” if the facility can generate at least 50 megawatts.

“I hear my constituents’ concerns loud and clear,” Barger said in an emailed statement Tuesday. “New laws and policies grant the state authority to select sites and environmentally clear the development of clean energy solutions – like battery energy storage systems – without local government and community input.



Keck Medicine of USC and Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital

"I support pursuing sustainable energy solutions. However, I believe the development of these solutions should balance community impact and concerns with energy infrastructure hardening goals."



**BEST IN CLASS
SPECIALTY CARE**
Right Here in the SCV

Cancer detection,
prevention and
treatment.



Perry Smith

RELATED TO THIS STORY



(<https://signalscv.com/2023/06/oversight-suggestion-upsets-lasd-union-contract-cities/>)

Oversight suggestion upsets LASD union, contract cities
(<https://signalscv.com/2023/06/oversight-suggestion-upsets-lasd-union-contract-cities/>)

JUNE 19, 2023



(<https://signalscv.com/2023/06/black-bear-struck-killed-on-highway-14/>)

Black bear struck, killed on Highway 14
(<https://signalscv.com/2023/06/black-bear-struck-killed-on-highway-14/>)

JUNE 19, 2023



(<https://signalscv.com/2023/06/naacp-holds-juneteenth-fundraiser/>)

NAACP holds Juneteenth fundraiser
(<https://signalscv.com/2023/06/naacp-holds-juneteenth-fundraiser/>)

JUNE 18, 2023



(<https://signalscv.com/2023/06/4th-annual-car-and-motorcycle-show-raises-funds-for-veteran-community-and-historic-preservation/>)

4th annual Car and Motorcycle Show raises funds for veteran community and historic



(<https://signalscv.com/2023/06/brush-fire-reported-in-newhall-3/>)

Brush fire reported in Newhall
(<https://signalscv.com/2023/06/brush-fire-reported-in->



(<https://signalscv.com/2023/06/celebrate-peru-draws-large-crowds/>)

Celebrate Peru draws large crowds
(<https://signalscv.com/2023/06/celebrate-peru-draws->