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Air quality reports are normal for Moss Landing after battery plant flare-up

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The County of Monterey has sent out an alert to residents that smoke was seen coming from the Moss Landing area on Tuesday evening. North Monterey County firefighters say that a group of batteries smoldered and reignited.

The alert sent at around 8:40 p.m. reads, "Light smoke observed at Vistra Battery Facility North County Fire is on scene investigating what appears to be smoke coming from the previously burned area within the Vistra Moss Landing lithium-ion battery facility."

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A second alert was sent at 10 p.m. saying that public safety agencies were in unified command due to the light smoke. Community air particulate matter and metals monitoring is currently ongoing.

"Out of an abundance of caution, safety agencies urge residents to close windows and doors overnight. Updates will be forthcoming," said the county.

Chief Juan Mendoza with North Monterey County Fire says a group of batteries reignited. The new fire is burning in the part of the facility that burned earlier in the year and has not gotten into the undamaged area.

The new fire is considerably smaller than the one in January. County officials say the flare-up lasted until about 3 a.m. and died down.

"Monterey Bay Area Resource District has been reviewing the concentrations from their smoke sensor monitoring system. Over the past 24 hours, air quality has been in the 'good' or 'green' range according to EPA's Air Quality Index," per a county update sent around noon.

This fire comes a little over a month after the Vista battery facility first caught fire in the year resulting in over 70% of the facility being destroyed.

Right now, it is unclear how the battery facility reignited.

The Elkhorn Slough Reserve announced it is closed until further notice due to the light smoke.

North Monterey County Unified School District said its schools are open today.

Vistra Energy released the following statement on the latest flare-up:

"We are monitoring conditions at our Moss 300 battery building after smoke was observed coming from the previously burned section of the building on Tuesday evening. Vistra personnel notified North County Fire Protection District, which arrived and launched a drone to further investigate. Fire officials have confirmed the presence of flames, and we are monitoring

the situation and consulting with NCFPD, U.S. EPA, and the independent fire brigade that we engaged after the initial event to be on site 24/7 on appropriate response steps.

"Continuous air quality monitoring is ongoing, and no hazardous air conditions have been detected. CTEH previously installed permanent monitors around the plant site's perimeter and others at locations in the surrounding community that are continuously operating.

"All battery facilities at the site remain offline."

Flames can be seen coming from Moss Landing battery facility on Feb. 18 at 11 p.m.



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