

AUGUST 01, 2023 AT 2.05 PM

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RUTH BROCK'S CONTINUING EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE WITH LACoFD  
(via the LACoFD Portal)

FROM: Ruthie Brock <actontakesaction@att.net>  
TO: Dennis Canchola <Dennis.Canchola@fire.lacounty.gov>  
CC: Albert Yanagisawa <Albert.Yanagisawa@fire.lacounty.gov>;  
Bostwick, Charles <CBostwick@bos.lacounty.gov>;  
Samuel Dea <sdea@planning.lacounty.gov>;  
Acton Town Council <atc@actontowncouncil.org>;

SUBJECT: Hecate Humidor project— RPPL2023000687

Hello Mr. Canchola,

My name is Ruthie Brock and I represent the residents of Acton through our community task force, Acton Takes Action.

We are inquiring as to the progress of the application by Hecate on the Humidor Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) project proposed for Acton. This project had ministerial approval back in February but it was then rescinded due to part of the project being on A-2 zoning. The project was then asked to go through a CUP process. The developer has since modified their project and has reapplied to Planning and has been allowed to return to a ministerial review. (RPPL2023000687)

According to Christina Carlon in Planning, there have been no permits applied for or approved as of yet, but it shows in the system that the developer applied with LACoFire back in April. May I please know the status of that contact/application filing?

Our community is deeply concerned that this project will be utilizing large capacity Lithium-ion batteries which are known for overheating and thermal runaway events, and that this project is proposed for a designated Very High Fire Hazard Area in east Acton.

There are many ranch homes in close proximity to this proposed project. Can you please let me know how the Fire Dept. would respond to a brush fire in this area that ignites the BESS? In past cases when there has been a overheating or thermal runaway event at other operational BESS facilities, there has been a "Shelter in Place" order due to the superheated and highly toxic hydrogen fluoride gases that are emitted during an incident. Nearby highways, freeways, roads and rail service are also shut down. But in the event the BESS fire is caused by a brush fire rather than an internal malfunction of components, how can you ask residents to "shelter in place" with an encroaching fire?

The dangers associated with lithium-ion batteries, even in small capacities associated with EVs or e-bikes is well known. The Energy Industry has not yet conquered the fire risks posed by these Li-io batteries even on a small scale application. The internal fire suppression systems with aerosolized clean agents that are standard use in the large capacity BESS applications have not proven to successfully stop nor prevent thermal runaway.

Since this is the very first BESS project to come before the County for siting approval, we ask that you set the bar high enough to make sure these types of projects are located away from residents and certainly not in a Very High Fire Hazard Area. Since this project is the only the FIRST of 6 potential

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BESS projects that have targeted development in Acton and connect to the Vincent Substation, our concern is warranted. Our community is greatly opposed to any projects of this type and thus far we have 1,766 signatures to support that position of opposition.

Thank you Mr. Canchola, and we would appreciate any updates regarding the progress of this project that you can provide.

Thank you for your time,

Ruthie Brock  
Chair | Acton Takes Action

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RUTH BROCK'S CONTINUING EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE WITH LACoFD  
LACoFD CHIEF ALBERT YANAGISAWA'S RESPONSE TO RUTH BROCK'S EMAIL

FROM: Albert Yanagisawa <Albert.Yanagisawa@fire.lacounty.gov>

TO: Ruthie Brock <actontakesaction@att.net>

SUBJECT: Hecate Humidor project— RPPL2023000687

*On Tuesday, August 1, 2023, 2:22 PM, Albert Yanagisawa <Albert.Yanagisawa@fire.lacounty.gov> wrote:*

Dear Ruthie Brock,

Thank you for reaching out on behalf of Acton Takes Action. We appreciate your detailed message and understand the concerns expressed by your community regarding the proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) by Hecate in Acton.

Regarding the application filed by the developer with the LA County Fire Department, a basic site plan has been submitted. We are waiting for a detailed plan submission. I can assure you that any application that we receive undergoes a thorough review to ensure compliance with fire safety regulations and to mitigate potential risks.

The concerns about the fire risks associated with lithium-ion batteries are indeed valid. Our team is constantly reviewing and updating our fire safety procedures, and we work very closely with developers to ensure all the necessary precautions are taken to prevent such incidents.

In the event of a brush fire, our department employs a multi-faceted response, involving multiple fire engines, helicopters, hand crews, dozers, and fixed-wing aircraft to suppress the fire and to ensure public safety. Regarding your specific query about a fire starting within a BESS due to a brush fire, our protocols involve immediate assessment and response to secure the area, contain the fire, and

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LACoFD, Chief Albert Yanagisawa response continued...

prevent any further escalation. We work closely with other emergency services and local authorities to evacuate people if necessary, while also fighting the fire.

Your point about the "Shelter in Place" order is well taken. It's a complex situation that would be handled on a case-by-case basis, depending on the specific circumstances at the time. Safety of the residents is always our primary concern. Our standard operating procedures for a Haz Mat incident with fire would be implemented to mitigate this scenario.

The Los Angeles County Fire Department is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of our communities. We appreciate the proactive stance that your community has taken and we echo your sentiment that safety standards for these projects must be high, especially in areas designated as Very High Fire Hazard Areas. Your petition will definitely form a significant part of the conversation in our ongoing discussions about this project.

Thank you for your advocacy and for bringing your concerns to our attention. As the project progresses, we will ensure to keep your community informed and engaged. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any further questions or concerns.

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AUGUST 01, 2023 AT 3.52 PM

RUTH BROCK'S CONTINUING EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE WITH LACoFD

RUTH BROCK'S RESPONSE TO LACoFD CHIEF ALBERT YANAGISAWA'S RESPONSE

FROM: Ruthie Brock <actontakesaction@att.net>

TO: Albert Yanagisawa <Albert.Yanagisawa@fire.lacounty.gov>

SUBJECT: Hecate Humidor project— RPPL2023000687

*On Tuesday, August 1, 2023, 3:52 PM, Ruth Brock <actontakesaction@att.net> wrote:*

Dear Chief Yanagisawa,

Thank you so much for your prompt and detailed reply.

Our residents are seeking the answers you have provided in your response.

Our fears are that these energy projects are being given rubber-stamped approvals under pressure by our state officials to meet green energy goals. If these projects were to go through the CA Energy Commission's new fast-tracked Opt-In program in lieu of local approvals, the CEC would put the projects through a far more stringent process than a mere ministerial review! They would still need to undergo an environmental review and the project would have to meet the requirements of the statute within the Warren-Alquist Act. Ultimately, the statute requires that the project must conform with the area General Plan

Ruthie Brock, Chair | Acton Takes Action response continued...

and in the Antelope Valley General Plan it states that any commercial development on M-1 zoning must be "community serving."

None of these BESS projects will serve the community of Acton.

A ministerial review as compared to the CEC Opt-In process is equivalent to a "interview" instead of an "investigation." The processes are nowhere near the same. And they should be.

Thank you again for your time,

Ruthie Brock  
Chair | Acton Takes Action

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