

June 15, 2023

RUTH BROCK'S FIRST EMAIL CONTACT WITH MR. FRANK CASTELLON, CHIEF SAFETY OFFICER OF METROLINK

Dear Mr. Castellon,

I am writing today representing the residents of Acton. We have extreme concerns regarding multiple high capacity Lithium-ion Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) being proposed for the east Acton area. These are planned to be on parcels that run alongside the Metrolink tracks in close proximity to the SCE Vincent Substation. Our Acton Town Council is aware of at least 5 that are proposed for connection to the Vincent, one of which, if developed, will be the largest operational BESS in the world! The Avantus "Angeleno" alone has a capacity of 1,150 MegaWatts/4,600 MegaWattHours. The Hecate "Humidor" which boasts being only 3,500ft from the Vincent distribution substation, adds another 300+MegaWatts to the total in the east corridor. All total, the 5 proposed BESS will have a storage capacity of 2,250 MegaWatts... enough to power 2,250,000 homes in the greater Los Angeles area.

There is a known high fire risk associated with these lithium-ion batteries. The batteries are prone to overheating which progresses into "thermal runaway" incidents. These events often result in catastrophic fires from the superheated, highly flammable and toxic gases produced during escalation of the event. These are extremely difficult and dangerous fires to extinguish. Due to the release of toxic gases and fire volatility during a thermal runaway event, it would most likely result in the closing of the 14Fwy and a shelter-in-place order for area residents but would most certainly necessitate the closure of the Metrolink line as well.

There was a fire involving a lithium-ion BESS facility in Chandler, AZ that required a week to fully extinguish. Another thermal runaway incident at a BESS in Surprise, AZ resulted in 8 firefighters being taken to the hospital after a battery pod exploded. Two of the HazMat firefighters were critically injured after being blown 70 feet from the explosion. Their injuries included traumatic brain injuries, multiple broken bones, spinal injury, chemical and heat burns, lung injuries, missing teeth, and lacerations (including a liver laceration). This violent explosion happened nearly 3 hours AFTER the internal fire suppression system had deployed and was operating properly in response to the fire.

These BESS facilities do not belong near residents, especially in designated Very High Fire Hazard areas where they pose a great safety and health risk. This east Acton location most certainly poses a threat of freeway and rail service closure which would affect thousands of commuters. The east Acton corridor is prone to high winds which would only add to the already catastrophic results in the event there is a thermal runaway incident or a brush fire that ignites the facilities.

While our community recognizes that renewable energy is a valuable addition in the Green Energy plan to meet California's relentless power demand, we do not feel that a location is deemed suitable simply because it is in proximity to a distribution substation. There needs to be careful attention and consideration given to placement—not only to avoid where there is limited ingress and egress but where travel corridors would be disrupted. This disruption could potentially be for an extended period of time while the incident is stabilized and the "stranded energy" is carefully drained from the affected lithium-ion batteries.

With these dangers at the forefront of our opposition to these multiple lithium-ion BESS projects proposed for development in the east Acton area, we ask that Metrolink also question the safety of such locations and send a letter of opposition to Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.

I am attaching maps below that show proximity to your rail tracks. If you require more information on these projects please contact the Acton Town Council at: [www.actontowncouncil.org](http://www.actontowncouncil.org)

Thank you for your time and I welcome your comments.

Ruthie Brock  
Chair, Acton Takes Action-Community Task Force

31-year resident of Acton  
Proud wife of a retired 30-year LACOFD Firefighter Specialist – HazMat

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