

July 14, 2023

Dear Supervisor Barger,

I represent Acton Takes Action, a community task force formed in response to the concerns of the residents of Acton. I am writing today to voice our united opposition to as many as 6 large capacity Lithium-ion Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) projects that are planned for development in or in close proximity to our community.

These projects have seemingly remained cloaked in secrecy until they emerge from the CAISO queue, and even then there is little transparency. Other than planned MegaWatt capacity they will store and that they will connect to the Vincent Substation, it seems our community is not privy to the actual project locations until they are already entering the approval process with either Regional Planning or the CEC.

One project, the Avantus "Angeleno", if approved, will be the largest operational BESS in the WORLD, with a capacity of 1,415 Megawatts. The more than one mile long "Angeleno" will exceed the present world's largest BESS ("Vistra" in Moss Landing, CA, capacity of 750 MW) by a staggering 665 MW. Bear in mind that "Angeleno" is only one of six BESS projects proposed for the Acton area. If all are approved, that would make Acton the location of the highest concentrations of Bess projects in the world.

There are four projects for which we actually have confirmation, "Angeleno", "Humidor", "Flea Flicker" and "Maathai" -- and two more, "Juniper" and "Quercus" spotted and waiting in the CAISO queue that will all connect to the Vincent Substation. The four confirmed have a potential combined 2,515 MW of lithium-ion battery storage; enough to power approximately 2,000,000 homes. And NONE of them in Acton.

The known risk with the BESS lithium-ion batteries is overheating and thermal runaway. These battery fires burn much hotter and with greater intensity than a normal fire, making them very difficult to bring under control. Even internal fire suppression systems within the battery pods that deploy an aerosolized "clean agent" are ineffective in preventing and stopping thermal runaway. This was proven in a detailed UK study done by two Professors of Physics and a Fellow from the Institute of Physics (which I provided to you through Assistant Field Deputy Charles Bostwick). Firefighters will have to put copious amounts of water on a BESS fire at the same time putting themselves in harms way if the container was to explode from the superheated, highly flammable, hydrogen-based toxic gases.

Supervisor Barger, we know you are fully aware of the Acton area and it's designation as a known Very High Fire Hazard area. This eastern Acton corridor that has been targeted by the BESS developers is alongside the busy State Route 14, the Metrolink rail tracks and amongst many ranch homes. These residents have already been punished by insurance companies with drastic increases in their fire insurance premiums and in many cases have received notices of non-renewal. Three large insurance companies will no longer write policies in our area due to the risk of wildfires. What impact will the additional risk of the BESS in this area do to these residents and their ability to insure their homes? And what will these homes be worth if these dangerous projects are approved?

In addition, most of the homes in this area are on wells. These BESS are proposed right over the Acton Water Basin. In the event there is a battery fire thermal runaway event, the water used to extinguish the fire would soak into the soil with potential to now contaminate the groundwater. Do we need to risk becoming another Hinkley?

The absolute bottom line concerning the Avantus Angeleno project is that it would require that the 68 acres targeted for this development undergo a zone change from A-2 to M-1. This is in complete contradiction to our Antelope Valley General Plan, therefore requiring an amendment to even make a change in zoning possible.

The provisions in AB 205 (§25545.8), and in reference to the statute in the Warren-Alquist Act §25523(d), the CEC while acting as a lead agency, must still follow the General Plan for the area in which a project is being considered. If the project site is found to be non-conforming to the local plan, then according to §25525 of the Act it must then; 1) go through a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) process and 2) must be found that there are no other suitable alternatives. Unless it can be proven that there is absolute necessity to approve siting of a project in the developer's preferred location, then the GENERAL PLAN MUST BE FOLLOWED. So while the CEC is indeed acting as the lead agency for projects that have applied through the "Opt In Program" option, the adopted LA County Antelope Valley General Plan still ultimately is the last word.

As the head of our community task force I can tell you with absolute confidence that the residents of Acton do not want these projects in or in proximity to our community! In response to the outcry by residents, a formal petition of protest to any BESS projects being sited in or near Acton was drafted and at the time of my writing this email we have exceeded 1600 signatures.

Therefore no local church, social, civic, or sports group, nor our Acton-Agua Dulce School District, would be interested in accepting a donation and becoming part of the developer's CBO requirement- AND we urge the County not to enter into any agreements on our behalf!

The residents of Acton are happy to support green energy projects that are *responsibly sited*.

Therefore because we feel it would *not* be responsible to allow any projects of this type to develop in the Acton area due to extreme fire danger and proximity to homes, the Metrolink railway, the State Route 14, and our vulnerable groundwater basin, we strongly oppose these BESS projects and urge LACounty to:

- 1) not amend the Antelope Valley General Plan,
- 2) not allow any requested zone changes, and
- 3) not approve any battery storage projects for Acton.

Respectfully,
Ruthie Brock
Acton Takes Action