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## Acton residents push battery storage site suit

By SOPHIA LESSEOS Special to the Valley Press

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This is an aerial view of the proposed site for the 12-acre lithium-ion battery storage facility in Acton, where residents continue to voice concerns over safety and environmental impacts.

SOPHIA LESSEOS/Special to the Valley Press

**ACTON** — The ongoing controversy over a proposed battery storage facility in Acton has intensified as residents continue to push forward with a lawsuit against Los Angeles County and the project developer, Hecate Grid.

During a recent Acton Town Council meeting, community members expressed their frustrations and concerns, particularly concerning past safety incidents involving similar facilities.

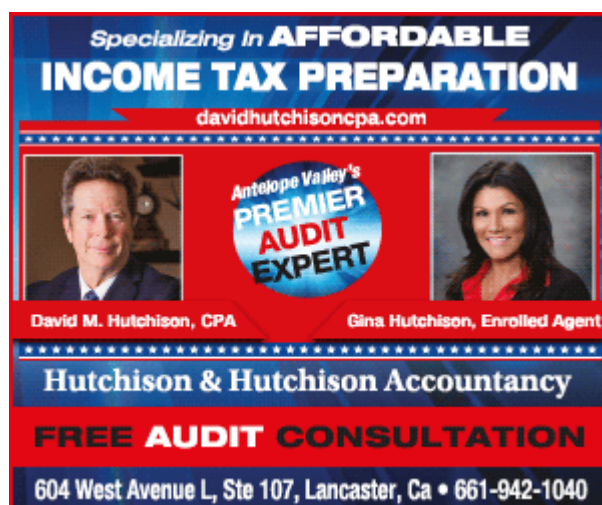
The lawsuit, led by local advocacy group Save Our Rural Town, challenges the approval process of the proposed 12-acre lithium-ion battery energy storage system facility, which would store 400 megawatts of energy.

Residents argue that the facility, planned for a region designated as a “Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone,” poses significant safety risks.

Save Our Rural Town, an advocacy group supporting rural communities in the Antelope Valley, has filed a lawsuit against the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to halt the proposed 12-acre battery facility by Chicago-based Hecate Energy.

The unincorporated community of Acton, with about 7,300 residents, has seen several community members donate thousands of dollars to cover legal fees for the potentially long legal battle.

Ruthie Brock, a representative of Acton Takes Action and a vocal opponent of the project, highlighted parallels between the Acton proposal and the recent fire at the Moss Landing Vistra battery storage facility, which broke out on Jan. 16 and quickly spread, prompting evacuations and road closures.



“Moss Landing, we knew it was a pivotal incident,” said Brock during the meeting. “The energy industry has been trying in vain to repaint that picture and try to create the illusion that it was an anomaly, like, ‘Oh, we don’t do battery storage in one big building anymore.’ ”

Brock emphasized that the risk associated with the Acton facility is not hypothetical but inevitable.

“It’s not just a question of if, it’s a question of when,” she added, underlining the community’s concerns over potential fires and hazardous material leaks.

In July 2024, Ruthie Brock, chair of the Acton Takes Action Community Task Force, released an update emphasizing the ongoing legal battle and the delays caused by the county's inaction on the transmission line franchise agreement.

Brock highlighted the county's tactics to delay the case, including failing to provide necessary documents despite formal requests. She noted that the county has requested multiple deadline extensions and has not scheduled a hearing to adopt the agreement, keeping the community in limbo.

The controversy has sparked a broader debate over the placement of battery storage facilities in rural areas, particularly those prone to wildfires.

Acton residents remain determined to block the project, hoping to set a precedent for greater community involvement in future energy infrastructure decisions.



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