

From: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
To: [Jesseka Rodriguez](#)
Subject: FW: Prohibit BESS Facilities in Santa Cruz County
Date: Monday, May 19, 2025 3:06:32 PM

From: Kathy Campbell [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, May 17, 2025 6:42 PM
To: Board Of Supervisors <boardofsupervisors@santacruzcountyca.gov>
Cc: Kathy Campbell <tanoboytoo@gmail.com>
Subject: Prohibit BESS Facilities in Santa Cruz County

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Dear Supervisors:

I am writing to you because I am deeply concerned about BESS facilities in Santa Cruz County. Apparently New Leaf Energy Inc/Sequoia Energy Storage LLC has proposed a lithium ion battery storage facility under the project name of Seahawk to be situated at 90 Minto Rd in Watsonville (Santa Cruz County - application #241473)). I am asking you to PLEASE do whatever is necessary to halt the forward movement of this project. Although I agree that we need to move towards more sustainable energy sources and reduce our carbon footprint, this BESS project is NOT the way to go about it.

In light of the recent disastrous fire at Moss Landing in Monterey County (which is not very far from this proposed Seahawk project), it is evident that the safety standards of BESS facilities are not yet where they need to be for them to be placed in highly populated residential areas, such as the Minto Rd site in Watsonville. As I am sure you are aware, Minto Rd is surrounded by multiple elementary schools, hospitals, senior living facilities, community centers, and more. This is NOT the place to put a BESS facility that does not yet have a proven safety record! If there were another fire or explosion, the health impacts to the community could be catastrophic.

In addition, BESS facilities should NOT be placed in prime agricultural areas. Both the Moss Landing site and the Minto Rd site are surrounded by vegetable and berry fields and fruit orchards where hardworking farmers produce our food. What if there were another fire that would send heavy metals and other toxins into the air, water and soil? Not only would our local food supply be forever polluted, but both our local and state-

wide economy would take a huge hit. Who would want to buy produce laden with heavy metals and toxins?

Thirdly, a BESS facility should NOT be placed in or near pristine natural habitats. Both Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties are world renown for their beautiful coastline. It is a travesty that the Moss Landing fire has spewed toxic smoke into the air, water and soil of the Elkhorn Slough Reserve and the Monterey Bay! We are supposed to be stewards of the ocean and these ecosystems, protecting all the birds, fish, dolphins, otters, seals, and other wildlife who call this area home!

While I sit here writing you this letter, the studies assessing the damage done by the Moss Landing fire are far from complete, yet more BESS facilities are being proposed nearby??? This is completely unacceptable. Until BESS facilities have a PROVEN safety record, they do NOT belong in Santa Cruz or Monterey Counties or anywhere where people and the surrounding environment can be irrevocably harmed.

Finally, I'd like to comment on one more thing. Supposedly the BESS facility being proposed at Minto Rd in Watsonville is being touted as safer than the Moss Landing facility because it would use LFP (lithium, iron phosphate) batteries rather than NMC (nickel, manganese, cobalt) ones. But I don't believe LFP batteries are safer. They are just trading one potential disaster for another. It seems LFP batteries do have a lower risk of fire and thermal runaway than NMC batteries. This is good. However, they can still catch fire. And if they do, the LFP batteries have a much higher chance of exploding. Then not only would fire fighters have to deal with a fire that they can't put out, but they would be put in extreme danger from potential explosions.

Do we really want to put our community under such a threat? PLEASE take a moment and slow this whole thing down!! I am confident that in the future we will find a way to store clean, safe energy. But PLEASE do not put these BESS facilities in our communities UNTIL they have a long, clean safety record.

Thank you for your time,

Kathleen Campbell

[REDACTED]

Watsonville, CA 95076