



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: Board of Supervisors - Fourth District and Fifth District

Subject: Support for Senate Bill 283 - Energy Storage Systems

Meeting Date: May 6, 2025

Formal Title: Direct the Chair of the Board to send a letter of support to the author of Senate Bill 283, and take related actions

Recommended Actions

Direct the Chair of the Board to write a letter of support to the author of Senate Bill 283 (Laird), and share the letter with the legislative committee scheduled to hear the bill and the County's legislative delegation and advocates.

Executive Summary

On February 5, 2025, Senator John Laird introduced Senate Bill 283-Energy Storage Systems, which has also become known as the "Clean Energy Safety Act of 2025." If passed, this legislation would strengthen safety standards for battery energy storage systems (BESS). In light of the recent fire at the Moss Landing Energy Storage Facility, it is imperative that the County support efforts to bolster safeguards for battery energy storage systems.

Discussion

Senate Bill 283 (SB 283) enhances statewide safety standards for battery energy storage systems (BESS) and ensures collaboration with local fire authorities, including required inspection at key stages prior to a project becoming operational. The bill also requires BESS to comply with the National Fire Protection Association 855 standards, which are widely regarded as the most robust guidelines for ensuring safety and minimizing hazards.

Under SB 283, developers must first consult with local fire authorities before submitting a BESS project for approval, whether through the local permitting process or the California Energy Commission's AB 205 Opt-In Certification Program. This engagement must cover facility design, evaluate potential risks, and incorporate emergency response strategies, including those mandated by SB 38 (Laird, 2023).

In addition, before the BESS facility can go online, it will be also required to undergo a safety inspection by local fire officials, or by the State Fire Marshal if the local jurisdiction defers its authority. SB 283 requires that the facility owner covers the cost of these inspections, reinforcing accountability in the permitting process.

The passage of this legislation will improve the safety of battery energy storage systems throughout the State, as well as help guide the development of a local energy storage Ordinance, which will further aid in protecting our community.

Financial Impact

The recommended action does not have any financial impact.

Strategic Initiatives

Operational Plan - Comprehensive Health & Safety, Sustainable Environment

Submitted By:

Felipe Hernandez, Fourth District Supervisor and Monica Martinez, Fifth District Supervisor

Recommended By:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Executive Officer

Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) did not significantly contribute to the development of this agenda item.