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*Comment Received From: Lisa Edwards*  
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## **BESS OPPOSITION**

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed BESS (Battery Energy Storage System) facility in Solano County, Vacaville, CA and to bring attention to the significant ethical concerns that such a project raises, especially in terms of its impact on marginalized communities.

As an advocate for environmental justice, I believe that the push to install BESS plants in already disadvantaged areas represents a gross disregard for the health and well-being of the communities that will bear the brunt of its negative consequences. These projects are being justified under the guise of supporting California's clean energy goals, but at what cost?

### **Environmental Racism and Disproportionate Burden:**

The disproportionate placement of BESS storage facilities in communities that are already burdened by environmental pollution, low-income residents, and communities of color is a stark example of environmental racism.

The residents of these communities, already facing challenges related to air quality, water contamination, and other health hazards, should not be forced to carry the burden of toxic exposure from BESS plants, which have been associated with fire hazards, chemical leakage, and pollution. These issues are well-documented and pose significant risks to public health, including respiratory issues, contamination of groundwater, and long-term disease.

These projects, while often located in rural or economically disadvantaged regions, primarily benefit wealthier areas, including those with more political clout. For example, Gavin Newsom and other political elites in affluent counties benefit from the energy generated by these facilities, but they do not have to endure the health risks and quality of life detriments that BESS plants impose on the communities who host them.

This disparity only deepens the inequality and adds to the burden of marginalized populations who already suffer the most.

### **Health Risks: A Threat to Vulnerable Populations:**

Battery storage systems, particularly those using lithium-ion technology, can be highly volatile. In the event of a fire or failure, the release of toxic chemicals such as lithium, cobalt, and nickel into the air and water can have catastrophic consequences for residents' health, particularly children, the elderly, and those with existing health conditions. The health disparities in vulnerable communities, which are often already

impacted by higher rates of respiratory conditions and cardiovascular diseases, will only be worsened by the proximity to these facilities.

The environmental and health concerns are too great to ignore, yet this project seems to be pushing forward with little regard for the public safety of those most at risk. It's unconscionable that marginalized communities should shoulder the environmental cost of California's green energy agenda, while wealthier areas, including those near the homes of influential political leaders, remain insulated from these dangers.

The Need for Equitable Energy Transitions:

California has long prided itself on being a leader in the fight against climate change, but a truly just transition to renewable energy cannot come at the expense of vulnerable communities. Clean energy solutions must prioritize equity, ensuring that the benefits of energy storage and renewable energy generation are shared equally, and that the burdens are not unfairly distributed. The health and welfare of our communities should not be sacrificed to meet state energy goals, especially when the very people who benefit the most from these projects are the least affected by the consequences.

I urge you to reconsider the placement of this BESS facility in Vacaville, CA.

The health and safety of vulnerable populations should not be sacrificed in the pursuit of energy goals.

I respectfully ask that you engage with the community to explore alternatives that do not place the disproportionate environmental burden on those who are already suffering the consequences of historical disinvestment and environmental degradation.

The future of our state's energy grid should not be built on the backs of marginalized communities.

Instead, let's work together to ensure that California's renewable energy transition is not only sustainable, but also just, where everyone benefits and no one is left behind.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. I look forward to hearing how you plan to address the concerns raised and to finding a solution that prioritizes the health and well-being of all Californians.