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November 19, 2025

Renee Longman, Project Manager
California Energy Commission
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
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Re: Scoping Comments for Draft Environmental Impact Report - Corby Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Project (Docket 24-OPT-05)

Dear Ms. Longman:

The County of Solano ("County") hereby submits these scoping comments to identify specific topics, methodologies, and areas of environmental analysis that must be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) for the Corby Battery Energy Storage System Project ("Project"). The County reserves its right to submit additional comments as the environmental review process proceeds.

1. *Project Description and Local Context*

As part of the project description and local setting, the Draft EIR must fully disclose the Project's permit application history with Solano County, including the pre-application meeting held on April 18, 2023, the incomplete Conditional Use Permit application submitted June 16, 2023, and deficiencies identified by County staff regarding emergency response planning, agricultural mitigation, and road and drainage impacts. The Draft EIR must analyze how the Project addresses environmental and safety concerns that motivated approval of Solano County Ordinance No. 2024-1853-U-E (February 27, 2024), which established a two-year moratorium on new front-of-the-meter BESS facilities due to fire safety concerns and thermal runaway impacts.

The Draft EIR must also discuss Solano County's permanent ordinance, ZT-25-02, recently adopted by the Board of Supervisors on November 4, 2025, which regulates front-of-the-meter BESS in the unincorporated area of Solano County. This ordinance is the local regulatory framework governing the siting of these facilities in the County in a manner that protects public health, public safety, natural resources, and the environment from the complex risks these facilities pose.

The Draft EIR must also provide a complete description of the project and its operational characteristics including precise locations, dimensions, and operational parameters for all BESS enclosures, inverters, transformers, substation equipment, and gen-tie structures. The

description must include detailed specifications for operational noise sources (cooling systems, inverters, transformers), lighting requirements (number, location, intensity, hours of operation), and water usage for landscaping establishment and long-term maintenance. The Draft EIR must critically evaluate whether stated Project objectives (proximity to Vaca-Dixon Substation, 300 MW capacity, 4-hour duration) are absolute requirements or could be modified to reduce environmental impacts.

2. *Alternatives Analysis*

The Draft EIR must provide a comprehensive alternatives analysis that includes a complete range and detailed evaluation of alternative sites, reduced project size, and alternative technologies. For alternative sites, the Draft EIR must fully analyze "Site 2" referenced in the Application, which was rejected due to distance from the Vaca-Dixon Substation and site control challenges. The comparative environmental analysis must address, among other things, impacts to Prime and Non-Prime Farmland, distance from sensitive receptors, visual impacts, biological resources, and emergency services access. It should also look at and balance the environmental impacts of a longer gen-tie line.

A good faith, proper alternatives analysis will inevitably include alternatives that are more costly to the project proponent. The Draft EIR must not reject alternatives as infeasible based on conclusory statements of economic infeasibility, cost to the project proponent, or impacts on the proponent's contractual obligations to third parties. Any economic considerations must be balanced with environmental concerns, and cost or contractual obligations alone shall not form the basis for excluding environmentally superior alternative sites or technologies.

The Draft EIR must analyze the Lambie Industrial Park (approximately 1,461 acres with Industrial Land Use designation and Manufacturing General zoning) as an alternative site. This location has been identified by the Solano County Board of Supervisors as potentially suitable for BESS facilities during public meetings on August 12, 2025 and August 26, 2025. The analysis must address distance from sensitive receptors compared to the proposed site, with modeling of potential thermal runaway air quality impacts at actual distances to residences and schools; distance from Travis Air Force Base and potential conflicts with flight operations; length of required gen-tie line (approximately 13 miles) and associated environmental impacts including land disturbance, biological resources impacts, visual impacts, and agricultural land conversion along the transmission route; and comparative analysis of Important Farmland designations.

The Draft EIR must analyze a site within the Montezuma Wind Energy Center as an alternative location, addressing site characteristics including rolling hills topography (ranging from 210 to 280 feet above mean sea level); required grading and associated air quality, greenhouse gas, and biological resources impacts; distance from Vaca-Dixon Substation (approximately 19.5 miles) and environmental impacts of the required gen-tie line; and biological resources considerations including natural grassland habitat quality, CNDDB records of special-status species within the vicinity, and potential conflicts with active raptor nests in existing transmission structures.

The Draft EIR must analyze a reduced capacity alternative (such as 200 MW or 225 MW) that would reduce overall site disturbance and Prime Farmland conversion while analyzing whether

Project objectives could be substantially met with reduced capacity. For alternative technologies, the Draft EIR must provide detailed analysis of flow battery technology (vanadium redox or zinc-bromine), sodium-ion battery technology, and iron-air battery technology as alternatives to lithium-ion batteries. The iron-air analysis must specifically address the Sacramento Municipal Utility District precedent (200 MW and 2 GWh system) and the East Road Storage Project in Redwood Valley, California (5 MW capacity, 100-hour duration facility awarded $30 million CEC grant). The analysis must compare fire safety profiles, land area requirements, and environmental impacts, recognizing that iron-air batteries present significantly lower thermal runaway risk than lithium-ion technology but may require larger footprints. The Draft EIR must also analyze Compressed Air Energy Storage (CAES) and thermal energy storage technologies, which the Application acknowledges may present "potentially fewer overall environmental impacts."

The Draft EIR must provide transparent screening criteria for alternatives that evaluate feasibility based primarily on whether alternatives would meet Project objectives and whether environmental or technical factors would preclude implementation. Alternatives that would avoid or substantially reduce significant environmental impacts must be retained for detailed analysis even if they present greater challenges. The alternatives analysis must give appropriate weight to permanent conversion of Prime Farmland and risks to public safety when evaluating environmental tradeoffs.

3. *Hazards and Hazardous Materials- Thermal Runaway Analysis*

The Draft EIR must provide comprehensive analysis of thermal runaway scenarios and associated environmental and safety impacts. This is the most critical gap in the current Application materials. The analysis must include detailed modeling of potential thermal runaway scenarios including single-cell, module-level, and unit-level failures, with analysis of propagation potential and fire suppression effectiveness. Duration estimates must be based on CATL EnerC+ battery technology specifications, with consideration of real-world incidents including the Gateway Energy Storage facility (Otay Mesa, San Diego) which experienced a 17-day thermal runaway fire in May 2024, and the Escondido BESS facility (San Diego) which experienced thermal runaway on September 5, 2024, resulting in 2-day evacuations and school closures.

The Draft EIR must provide comprehensive air quality analysis for thermal runaway scenarios including emission rates for all criteria pollutants and toxic air contaminants that could be released during battery combustion (PM10, PM2.5, CO, NOx, SO2, VOCs, hydrogen fluoride, hydrogen chloride, hydrogen cyanide, and heavy metals). Dispersion modeling using AERMOD or equivalent approved air quality model must predict ground-level concentrations at all sensitive receptors. Modeled concentrations must be compared to California and National Ambient Air Quality Standards, OEHHA acute and chronic Reference Exposure Levels, and IDLH values. A health risk assessment for acute exposures must calculate cancer risks for carcinogenic compounds, non-cancer hazard indices, and impacts to sensitive populations. The analysis must geographically delineate areas where air quality standards or health-based thresholds would be exceeded, requiring evacuation or shelter-in-place orders.

The Draft EIR must analyze impacts to surrounding agricultural operations from thermal runaway scenarios, including deposition of particulate matter, heavy metals, and toxic

compounds on food crops (almonds, prunes, walnuts, processing tomatoes, sunflowers), forage crops, irrigation water supplies including Solano Irrigation District canals, and agricultural soils. The analysis must evaluate whether deposited compounds would exceed maximum contaminant levels for food safety, require destruction of affected crops, render agricultural land temporarily or permanently unsuitable for food production, or affect organic certification status. The analysis must address duration of impacts, land restoration requirements, and impacts to livestock operations including potential toxic exposures and feed contamination.

The Draft EIR must analyze water quality impacts from thermal runaway fire suppression and runoff, including volume and composition of contaminated water; pathways for contaminated runoff including onsite stormwater management systems, surface water flow paths to adjacent properties, proximity to Solano Irrigation District canals, and groundwater infiltration potential given shallow depth to groundwater in the project area; water quality impacts analysis including concentrations of contaminants compared to water quality objectives; and requirements for runoff containment, treatment, and disposal. The Draft EIR should require comprehensive baseline sampling of all constituents of concern, including per and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) that may be present in firefighting foams and suppression media used for battery energy storage system thermal runaway events, to establish pre-project conditions and enable accurate impact assessment.

The Draft EIR must provide detailed analysis of thermal runaway impacts on Travis Air Force Base operations. Plume modeling specifically focused on Travis AFB airspace must analyze frequency and duration of thermal runaway plumes that would intersect flight paths under varying meteorological conditions; maximum plume heights compared to air traffic control zones and approach/departure corridors; visibility impacts from smoke plumes that could necessitate flight path alterations; and duration of flight path obstructions under various thermal runaway scenarios (single unit versus multiple unit involvement). The analysis must evaluate interference with cargo and passenger operations (Travis AFB is the busiest military air terminal in the United States for handling cargo and passengers) and impacts to aeromedical evacuation aircraft operations (Travis AFB is the West Coast terminal for aeromedical evacuation aircraft returning sick and injured patients from the Pacific Area). The Draft EIR must discuss the status of the Department of Defense Siting Clearinghouse Informal Review Request submitted October 17, 2024, and requirements for Federal Aviation Administration "Determination of No Hazard to Air Navigation."

The Draft EIR must analyze evacuation requirements and emergency response capabilities for thermal runaway scenarios, including geographic extent of potential evacuation zones based on air quality modeling and hazard analysis; evacuation route analysis including road closure requirements during thermal runaway events (specifically addressing impacts to Kilkenny Road and Byrnes Road), alternative evacuation routes and capacity, duration of road closures and evacuations (Gateway facility event required 17-day closure; Escondido facility required 2-day closure), and access restrictions for agricultural operations; and emergency response capabilities assessment including fire station response times, specialized equipment and training requirements for BESS thermal runaway response, adequacy of local fire department resources, and communication protocols between Project operators, first responders, and affected residents and businesses.

The Draft EIR must analyze fire protection systems and their effectiveness, including fire detection system specifications; fire suppression system design including coverage area and activation mechanisms; passive fire protection measures including battery enclosure fire resistance ratings and spacing between battery enclosures; results of large-scale burn testing for CATL EnerC+ technology including DNV Large Scale Burn Test (January 2025) results demonstrating whether thermal runaway in one enclosure would propagate to adjacent enclosures; and analysis of UL 9540A test results for cell, module, and unit level thermal runaway propagation. The Draft EIR must analyze wildfire risks including ignition risk from the Project serving as an ignition source during wildfire-conducive weather conditions and whether a BESS thermal runaway event could ignite wildfire in surrounding grasslands or agricultural vegetation.

4. *Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions*

The Draft EIR must provide detailed construction air quality analysis including emissions quantification for all construction phases (ROG, NOx, CO, PM10, PM2.5, SOx); comparison to Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District significance thresholds; modeling of construction-phase air quality impacts at sensitive receptors; diesel particulate matter health risk assessment for construction equipment and truck traffic emissions including cancer risk and non-cancer health impacts; and analysis of consistency with YSAQMD's air quality planning for the Sacramento Valley Air Basin (nonattainment for ozone and PM2.5 under both state and federal standards, and nonattainment for PM10 under state standards). Mitigation measures must be identified to reduce construction air quality impacts including fugitive dust control measures, use of Tier 4 Final construction equipment, equipment idling limitations, and other emission reduction strategies.

The Draft EIR must provide comprehensive greenhouse gas analysis including quantification of construction GHG emissions from all sources with amortization over Project lifetime; quantification of operational GHG emissions including round-trip efficiency losses and associated emissions, direct emissions from backup generator operation, and vehicle trips for maintenance and operations; analysis of net GHG impact considering GHG reductions from integration of renewable energy; and analysis of Project consistency with California's GHG reduction targets under AB 32, SB 32, Executive Order B-55-18, and the 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality. The analysis must evaluate whether alternative technologies would result in lower lifecycle GHG emissions given different round-trip efficiency profiles.

5. *Land Use and Agriculture*

The Draft EIR must provide detailed analysis of Important Farmland conversion including precise acreage of each category affected (Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland) with maps depicting classifications using California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program data. The analysis must address temporary versus permanent conversion and analyze Important Farmland conversions for alternative sites. Agricultural productivity analysis must describe current and historical agricultural use including crops grown and productivity levels, soil capability classification, and whether Prime Farmland soils could be restored to agricultural productivity after Project decommissioning or whether conversion would be permanent. The analysis must evaluate

whether Project site or gen-tie corridor areas are under Williamson Act contract and requirements for contract cancellation if applicable.

The Draft EIR must analyze agricultural land mitigation requirements including Solano County Agricultural Mitigation Ordinance requirements and mitigation ratios. Solano County's minimum General Plan requirement is 1.5:1 mitigation ratio, but County staff has recommended 3:1 mitigation ratio for BESS projects on Prime Farmland based on permanence of conversion and limited employment generation compared to ongoing agricultural operations. The Draft EIR must identify potential agricultural mitigation land sources and analyze whether alternative sites would require lower agricultural mitigation ratios due to lower-quality farmland classification.

The Draft EIR must analyze impacts to ongoing agricultural operations on adjacent properties during construction including dust generation and potential for dust deposition on adjacent crops affecting processing quality; construction noise impacts; traffic impacts including conflicts with agricultural equipment, road damage, and access restrictions during critical periods; and water supply impacts. Operational phase impacts analysis must address ongoing dust generation, operational noise impacts on adjacent agricultural activities, night lighting impacts including light trespass onto adjacent properties, drainage pattern alterations affecting adjacent agricultural lands, and access impacts. Thermal runaway impacts to agriculture are addressed in Section 3 above.

The Draft EIR must analyze cumulative impacts to agricultural resources including consideration of other approved and proposed renewable energy projects in eastern Solano County, cumulative conversion of Prime Farmland in the region, and consistency with Solano County's agricultural preservation policies and California's 30x30 land conservation initiative. The Draft EIR must analyze Project consistency with Exclusive Agriculture (A-40) zoning designation; discuss Solano County Ordinance Zone Text Amendment ZT-25-02, establishing standards for BESS in unincorporated Solano County, including a prohibition on front-of-the-meter BESS in agricultural zoning districts (including A-40); analyze consistency with Solano County General Plan agricultural policies; and analyze Project location within Travis Air Force Base Airport Influence Area including applicable policies, compatibility criteria, height restrictions for 130-foot gen-tie structures, and safety policies related to facilities that could generate smoke affecting aviation.

6. *Noise and Visual Impacts*

The Draft EIR must provide comprehensive construction noise analysis including identification of all major construction equipment types, quantities, and usage factors; noise modeling at all sensitive receptors including nearest residence at 275 meters to north and second nearest residence at approximately 400 meters to northwest; noise level predictions for each construction phase; and comparison to Solano County noise standards. The Draft EIR must provide detailed operational noise analysis including identification of all operational noise sources (BESS cooling systems, inverters, transformers); manufacturer specifications for sound power levels; noise modeling at all sensitive receptors showing worst-case operational scenario; analysis of tonal, impulsive, and low-frequency noise characteristics; and comparison to Solano County's standard of 65 dBA at any property line. Feasible noise mitigation measures must be identified including construction hour limitations, equipment

specifications, acoustic enclosures, and sound barrier requirements. The analysis must evaluate whether the proposed 15-foot-high by 785-foot-long sound barrier is adequate or whether additional barriers are needed.

The Draft EIR must use established visual impact assessment methods including identification of applicable viewsheds, classification of viewer sensitivity, visual quality assessment of existing conditions, and selection of representative Key Viewpoints including views from nearest residences, Kilkenny Road, Byrnes Road, I-80 corridor, and other public vantage points. Accurate visual simulations must show existing conditions photography from each Key Viewpoint and accurately scaled Project components including BESS enclosures, gen-tie structures (heights from 90 to 130 feet), project substation equipment including 70-foot-tall shield poles, 15-foot-high by 785-foot-long sound barrier, 24,000-gallon water storage tank, storage containers, perimeter fencing, stormwater basins, and proposed landscaping at maturity. Simulations must show Project at various times of day and include nighttime simulations showing security and operational lighting.

The Draft EIR must analyze impacts to visual character and quality including analysis of existing rural agricultural visual character (open agricultural fields, rural residential development patterns, lack of industrial development); assessment of Project contrast with existing visual character considering introduction of industrial-scale structures in agricultural setting; and analysis of Project impacts on visual quality including degradation of scenic quality and permanence of visual changes. The analysis must specifically address whether the Project would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings given that the project is in a non-urbanized area.

The Draft EIR must provide detailed analysis of nighttime lighting impacts including inventory of all proposed lighting (security lighting, operational lighting, navigational lighting if required); lighting design specifications including downlighting requirements, shielding and directional control, light intensity, color temperature, and motion sensors or control systems; lighting impact modeling showing light trespass onto adjacent properties, sky glow contributions, and glare impacts; and comparison to existing nighttime lighting conditions in this rural area with minimal existing lighting. Comprehensive visual mitigation measures must be identified including dense perimeter landscaping of ample height, spacing and leaf density to provide total visual screening from all public roads (County requirement); color and materials standards using non-reflective, earth-tone colors for all structures; and lighting design standards including full cutoff fixtures, shielding to prevent light trespass, and prohibition on upward-directed lighting.

7. *Hydrology and Water Quality*

The Draft EIR must include a complete water quality and hydrology assessment consistent with state and local stormwater requirements. The Project shall obtain coverage under the Statewide Construction General Permit (CGP), prepare a SWPPP with a Risk Level determination, and implement appropriate wet-season protocols (REAP) and monitoring. Post-construction stormwater controls must comply with the County standards, including low-impact development (LID) measures, hydromodification management where required, and clear O&M responsibilities.

Hydrologic modeling shall compare pre- and post-project runoff for 10 and 100-year storms using current climate-adjusted rainfall data. The analysis must prove no increase in downstream peak flows, volume, or duration. The applicant shall provide technical documents showing the on-site retention basin is properly sized to accommodate all new impervious areas over the Project's full lifespan. The Draft EIR must also address how changes in existing drainage patterns will be mitigated to prevent off-site impacts.

The EIR must also include a site-specific erosion and sediment control plan, groundwater dewatering measures (if needed), and permit strategies for any work involving jurisdictional waters. A long-term Operations & Maintenance plan for all stormwater facilities must be included, with defined roles, inspection schedules, and training.

8. Transportation and Traffic

The Draft EIR must establish baseline traffic conditions including traffic counts on all affected roadways (Kilkenny Road and Byrnes Road), Level of Service analysis at key intersections, and identification of roadway characteristics. The Draft EIR must provide comprehensive construction traffic analysis including daily and peak hour trip generation for each construction phase (worker commute trips, delivery trucks, concrete trucks, equipment transport including oversized/overweight loads); identification of exact route to be taken by all vehicles associated with construction including access from I-80 to Project site and use of local roads; analysis of peak construction traffic period and worst-case traffic day; and truck size and weight distributions to assess potential road damage. All construction traffic (workers, delivery trucks, concrete, oversize/overweight loads) shall use County-designated truck routes. A restricted road route needs to be approved by PW.

Level of Service analysis must show existing conditions and existing plus Project construction at key intersections, with analysis of whether Project construction traffic would cause any intersections to fall below acceptable LOS standards. The analysis must evaluate whether local roadways have adequate capacity for construction traffic considering narrow roads, lack of shoulders, limited sight distance, and conflicts between large trucks and agricultural equipment. Traffic safety analysis must address potential for increased accident rates, speed differentials, and pedestrian and bicycle safety.

The Draft EIR must analyze potential road damage from construction traffic including Equivalent Single Axle Load (ESAL) analysis to quantify pavement damage from construction truck traffic, estimated pavement life reduction, and commitment to pre-construction and post-construction pavement condition assessment with video documentation of roads showing existing pavement conditions (County request). In addition to temporary construction traffic impacts, the Draft EIR shall evaluate the full life-cycle impacts on affected local roadways associated with Project construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning phases. Mitigation measures must address road damage including repair standards, cost allocation methodology, and financial guarantee mechanism. Construction Traffic Management Plan must include designated truck routes, restrictions on hours of construction-related truck traffic through residential areas, protocols for oversized load movements, on-site parking for construction workers, coordination with local agricultural operations to minimize conflicts during critical periods, and emergency vehicle access maintenance.

The Draft EIR must analyze emergency vehicle access including response times from nearest fire stations to Project site, adequacy of access road width and turning radii for fire apparatus, on-site water supply for firefighting (analysis must confirm whether 24,000-gallon tank is adequate), and secondary emergency access if primary access is blocked. The Draft EIR must analyze evacuation route adequacy for potential thermal runaway scenarios including capacity of Kilkenny Road and Byrnes Road to accommodate evacuating traffic from nearby residences, identification of alternative evacuation routes, and traffic management protocols during evacuations including coordination with Solano County Office of Emergency Services. The analysis must address traffic impacts from gen-tie line construction including traffic control requirements for work within Kilkenny Road right-of-way (if Underground Route Option #2 is selected), lane closures or detours required on I-80 for transmission line crossing, and coordination with Caltrans for I-80 work.

9. Public Services, Utilities and Worker Safety

The Draft EIR must analyze impacts to fire protection services including identification of fire protection service provider (Dixon Fire Protection District or other agency), analysis of fire district staffing, equipment, and training levels for BESS thermal runaway response, adequacy of existing fire protection resources to respond to Project emergencies without degrading service to other areas, fire department response time analysis, and water supply adequacy for firefighting including whether 24,000-gallon on-site tank is sufficient for various fire scenarios. The analysis must evaluate fire department preparedness requirements including pre-incident planning requirements (site familiarization for all responding fire departments, pre-incident plans documenting facility layout and hazards); training requirements for BESS thermal runaway response provided by equipment manufacturer as frequently as requested by emergency services; and specialized equipment requirements for BESS response.

The Draft EIR must analyze Emergency Response and Action Plan (ERAP) requirements under Senate Bill 38 (Health and Safety Code section 25270.6), which requires comprehensive ERAP filing with local government prior to commissioning, coordinated with local responding jurisdictions. The analysis must address gaps in the December 2023 ERAP previously submitted to County, which was found to have serious issues with many sections left unfilled and incomplete. Required ERAP content must include facility description; hazard identification and analysis including thermal runaway scenarios and toxic gas dispersion modeling; emergency notification procedures; Incident Command Structure; tactical response procedures (active suppression vs. "let-it-burn" strategies); evacuation procedures including geographic extent of evacuation zones, notification methods, evacuation routes, and re-entry criteria; air quality monitoring during incident; runoff containment during incident; and post-incident procedures including environmental cleanup and restoration. The Draft EIR must identify coordination requirements with Dixon Fire Protection District and other responding fire departments, Solano County Office of Emergency Services, Solano County Division of Environmental Health, Solano County Sheriff's Office, and other agencies, along with ERAP review and approval process.

The Draft EIR must analyze setback requirements to protect public health and safety based on thermal runaway plume modeling, fire radiant heat levels at various distances, emergency responder safety zones, and needs for emergency vehicle staging and command post setup. The analysis must evaluate appropriate setbacks from property lines, public roads (Kilkenny

Road and Byrnes Road), and adjacent land uses, with comparison to setbacks required by other jurisdictions and analysis of alternative Project configurations that could provide greater setbacks while maintaining Project capacity.

The Draft EIR must provide comprehensive water supply analysis including total water demand for construction activities (up to 30 acre-feet per Application), peak construction water demand periods, water demand for landscape establishment (up to 2 acre-feet per year for first five years per Application), long-term landscape irrigation requirements, and other operational water uses. Analysis of proposed water supply sources must address groundwater from optional on-site well or Solano Irrigation District water if available. Groundwater analysis must evaluate groundwater availability, depth to groundwater, groundwater basin characteristics and available yield, potential groundwater level declines from Project pumping, analysis of whether Project pumping would deplete groundwater in local subbasin (County concern given shallow groundwater in area), cumulative groundwater impacts considering other users, and coordination with groundwater sustainability agencies. The Draft EIR should include provisions requiring coordination with the Solano Groundwater Sustainability Agency and the Solano Subbasin GSA Collaborative, including mandatory groundwater analysis and reporting protocols to ensure consistency with the approved Groundwater Sustainability Plan and sustainable yield objectives. The Draft EIR must provide detailed stormwater management analysis including existing drainage patterns, pre-project and post-project hydrologic modeling for various storm return periods, impervious surface area impacts (Application states up to 14.2 acres of new impervious surface), analysis of increased runoff and potential downstream impacts, stormwater detention basin design including required detention volume, number and size of basins (two basins shown in preliminary plans), and adequacy to contain fire suppression runoff in addition to stormwater, and compliance with State Water Resources Control Board Construction General Permit requirements.

10. Decommissioning and Site Restoration

The Draft EIR must provide comprehensive decommissioning analysis including detailed decommissioning plan with Project lifespan (20-30 years), decommissioning triggers, removal of all above-ground and below-ground infrastructure, restoration of site to agricultural use, soil amendments to restore productivity if needed, timeline for decommissioning activities, and procedures for battery module disposal and other hazardous waste management. The analysis must evaluate whether Prime Farmland soils can be restored to agricultural productivity after Project removal including soil compaction impacts from Project infrastructure, soil amendments required to restore soil health and productivity, duration for soil recovery after decommissioning, and monitoring to verify restoration success. This analysis is critical to determining whether conversion of Prime Farmland should be considered temporary or permanent.

The Draft EIR must include detailed cost estimate for decommissioning including labor costs for dismantling and removal, transportation and disposal costs, hazardous waste disposal costs, site restoration costs, and salvage value of materials and equipment to be deducted, with inflation adjustments over Project life. The Draft EIR must analyze financial assurance mechanisms to ensure adequate funding for decommissioning including financial assurance options (decommissioning bond, letter of credit, cash deposit, or other mechanisms), amount of financial assurance equal to decommissioning cost estimate minus salvage value, timing for

posting financial assurance (before start of operations), periodic updates to financial assurance amount based on updated cost estimates, and conditions for release of financial assurance after successful decommissioning.

11. Cumulative Impacts and CEQA Required Analyses

The Draft EIR must provide comprehensive cumulative impacts analysis pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15130, including identification of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts (other BESS projects, solar energy projects, wind energy projects, transmission projects, residential and commercial development, agricultural processing facilities, and transportation projects in eastern Solano County). For each environmental resource area analyzed in the Draft EIR, cumulative impacts analysis must include combined impacts of this Project and cumulative projects, whether Project's incremental contribution to cumulative impact is cumulatively considerable, and mitigation measures to reduce Project's contribution to cumulative impacts. Specific cumulative impacts of particular concern include cumulative conversion of Important Farmland from renewable energy development in eastern Solano County, cumulative traffic impacts on rural roads from construction of multiple energy projects, cumulative visual impacts from proliferation of industrial energy facilities in agricultural landscape, cumulative impacts to Travis Air Force Base operations from multiple projects that could generate smoke plumes affecting airspace, cumulative air quality impacts in Sacramento Valley Air Basin (nonattainment area), and cumulative demand on emergency response resources from multiple energy projects requiring specialized BESS response capabilities.

The Draft EIR must analyze irreversible environmental changes pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15126.2, including conversion of Prime Farmland and whether restoration to agricultural productivity after decommissioning is feasible (if not feasible, this constitutes irreversible commitment of agricultural resource), consumption of nonrenewable resources during construction, energy consumption over Project lifetime including round-trip efficiency losses, and whether alternatives would reduce irreversible environmental changes. The Draft EIR must analyze growth-inducing impacts pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15126.2(d), including whether Project would remove obstacles to growth, encourage or facilitate development in undeveloped areas, or establish precedent for conversion of agricultural lands in eastern Solano County to energy development. The Draft EIR must analyze energy conservation pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Appendix F, including energy consumed during construction and operations, energy benefits from renewable energy integration, net energy balance over Project lifetime, and whether alternative technologies would provide better energy efficiency.

The Draft EIR must include comprehensive Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21081.6, with complete text of each mitigation measure, timing of implementation, responsible party for implementation, monitoring party responsible for ensuring compliance, monitoring frequency and methodology, performance standards or success criteria, reporting requirements, enforcement mechanisms for non-compliance, and coordination with other agency permit conditions.

Conclusion

The County of Solano appreciates the opportunity to provide these scoping comments for the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Corby Battery Energy Storage System Project. These comments identify specific topics, methodologies, and areas of analysis that must be addressed to ensure the Draft EIR complies with CEQA and provides decision-makers and the public with adequate information to evaluate the Project's environmental impacts.

The County emphasizes the critical importance of comprehensive analysis of thermal runaway impacts including air quality, public health, agricultural contamination, water quality, and Travis Air Force Base operational impacts. This is the most significant gap in the current Application. The County also emphasizes the importance of analyzing alternative sites and technologies that could avoid or substantially reduce impacts to Prime Farmland, sensitive receptors, and agricultural operations; developing an adequate Emergency Response and Action Plan that addresses public safety; analyzing agricultural impacts including permanent conversion of Prime Farmland, impacts to adjacent agricultural operations, and adequate mitigation at appropriate ratios; analyzing traffic and transportation including construction impacts to local roads, road damage mitigation, and emergency access; analyzing noise and visual impacts with adequate mitigation including dense perimeter landscaping to screen views from public roads; and providing adequate fire department preparedness including specialized equipment, training, and coordination.

The County reserves its right to submit additional comments on the Draft EIR once published, and on any other Project documents or proceedings. The County looks forward to continued coordination with the CEC throughout the environmental review process to ensure that potential environmental impacts are thoroughly analyzed and adequately mitigated.

Please keep Solano County apprised as the project proceeds and ensure that County departments are included in agency coordination. If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at jmbezek@solanocounty.gov.

Sincerely,

James Bezek, Director
Department of Resource Management

CC: Ian Goldberg, County Administrator
Debbie Vaughn, Assistant County Administrator
Allan Calder, Planning Manager
Erik Hagstrom, Associate Planner

Attachment: December 4, 2024 Solano County Department of Resource Management comment letter (incorporated by reference)