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Prairie Song Reliability Project

I am an Acton resident and strongly oppose the proposed Prairie Song Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) project.

My primary concern is public safety. Acton is located within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone and has a long history of wildfires fueled by dry vegetation, rugged terrain, and powerful Santa Ana wind events. The recent brush fire in the vicinity of the proposed project site serves as a reminder of how quickly a fire can ignite and spread in our community.

I am particularly concerned about the proximity of the project to nearby homes and to High Desert Middle School. In the event of a battery fire, thermal runaway incident, or wildfire impacting the facility, students, school staff, and residents could face emergency evacuation under rapidly changing conditions. During Santa Ana wind events, fires can spread rapidly, leaving little time for evacuation and creating significant challenges for emergency responders.

I am also concerned about the project's location in a seismically active region near the San Andreas Fault. Any major earthquake could potentially damage critical infrastructure, increase the risk of fire, complicate emergency response efforts, and create cascading safety concerns. Given the combination of seismic risk, wildfire risk, and the nature of battery storage facilities, the potential consequences of an incident warrant the highest level of scrutiny.

The Prairie Song project would introduce a large industrial-scale energy facility into a rural residential community. Many residents chose to live in Acton because of its rural character, open space, equestrian lifestyle, and distance from industrial development. This project is incompatible with the character of our community and places additional risks on residents who live nearby.

Before any approval is considered, the California Energy Commission should thoroughly evaluate the cumulative impacts of wildfire hazards, Santa Ana wind events, seismic activity, emergency evacuation capabilities, proximity to schools and homes, and the ability of local emergency services to respond to a battery-related incident.

For these reasons, I urge the California Energy Commission to deny the Prairie Song BESS project or require an alternative location that does not place residents, students, and the broader Acton community at increased risk.

Thank you for your consideration.