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*Comment Received From: David F Betz
Submitted On: 6/28/2026
Docket Number: 26-OPT-02*

Deny Seahawk Battery Project

Dear California Energy Commission,

My name is David Betz, and I reside at:

107 Paulsen Road
Watsonville, CA

I am a public school teacher, Santa Cruz County landowner, longtime resident, and part of a fourth-generation Watsonville family. My wife is a registered nurse who serves our community, and together we are raising our children here because we believe in protecting the agricultural heritage, rural neighborhoods, and natural resources that make this region unique.

I respectfully urge the California Energy Commission to deny the proposed Seahawk Battery Energy Storage Project at 90 Minto Road.

This project is proposed in the heart of one of Santa Cruz County's most valuable agricultural regions. It is surrounded by productive farmland, rural neighborhoods, family homes, waterways, and businesses that depend on clean water and healthy soil. This is simply the wrong location for a large industrial battery storage facility.

Santa Cruz County voters approved Measure J because they believed farmland should remain farmland. Approving this project would undermine that commitment and establish a precedent that industrial development can replace productive agricultural land.

As a public school teacher, I think every day about the community we are leaving to our children. As the husband of a registered nurse, I understand the importance of protecting public health. As parents, we want our children—and every child in our community—to inherit clean air, safe neighborhoods, protected farmland, and reliable water.

The surrounding neighborhood would bear the burden of increased industrial activity, truck traffic, noise, visual impacts, and ongoing concerns about public safety. Agriculture is the backbone of the Pajaro Valley, and any threat to groundwater, irrigation systems, soil quality, or public confidence in our agricultural products could have lasting consequences.

No company proposes a battery storage facility expecting a fire or emergency. Every developer presents engineering plans, safety systems, and operating procedures

designed to prevent such events. Yet the recent Moss Landing battery fire demonstrated that, despite those intentions and safety measures, a significant incident can still occur. When a project is located in the middle of productive farmland and established rural neighborhoods, the consequences of even a low-probability event can be enormous.

A battery fire or release of hazardous materials could jeopardize nearby neighborhoods, agricultural operations, groundwater, irrigation systems, and public confidence in the safety of locally grown food. Santa Cruz County has invested millions of public dollars in the College Lake Project to strengthen long-term water reliability for agriculture. It is unacceptable to place those public investments and vital water resources at unnecessary risk. If a future incident were ever to compromise groundwater, irrigation water, or agricultural production, local families, farmers, and taxpayers should not bear the financial or environmental costs. These potential consequences are simply too significant to justify placing an industrial battery storage facility in the heart of one of the county's most productive agricultural regions.

For my family, my students, my neighbors, and future generations of Watsonville families, I respectfully ask the California Energy Commission to deny the Seahawk Battery Energy Storage Project.

Respectfully,

David Betz
107 Paulsen Road
Watsonville, CA
Public School Teacher
Santa Cruz County Landowner
Fourth-Generation Watsonville Family