

DOCKETED	
Docket Number:	26-OPT-02
Project Title:	Seahawk Battery Energy Storage System
TN #:	271286
Document Title:	Linda Aron (Phoenix Artemisia) Comments - The deadly nature of an HF fire makes one wonder how this application can be considered at all
Description:	N/A
Filer:	System
Organization:	Linda Aron (Phoenix Artemisia)
Submitter Role:	Public
Submission Date:	7/6/2026 4:48:32 PM
Docketed Date:	7/6/2026

Comment Received From: Linda Aron (Phoenix Artemisia)
Submitted On: 7/6/2026
Docket Number: 26-OPT-02

The deadly nature of an HF fire makes one wonder how this application can be considered at all

People living near Minto Road will die if there is a battery fire. We do not trust New Leaf / Sequoia's request for confidentiality for their fire and plume studies. To hide findings about the flammability of their batteries is severely lacking in transparency and respect for the people they wish to force to host their for-profit nightmare. In the case of a hydrogen fluoride emitting battery fire, shelter in place does not work and is not a sufficient emergency protocol to survive a lithium fire. Nanoparticles from HF gas can get through windows and doorjams. To place a BESS in settings like Minto Road is morally irresponsible at the highest level. That the discussion about a deadly BESS next to so many wonderful and fragile people exists still after months, is morally reprehensible and revealing of the deep deficit of conscience in our times, as juxtaposed to the grab-for-profit disguised as serving rural people's electricity needs by energy contractors like New Leaf / Sequoia.

Please find attached a further submission detailing the effects of an HF fire on exposed people. Thank you!

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

California Energy Commissioners
1516 9th St.
Sacramento, CA 95814

July 6, 2026

Dear Commissioners,

With over 9,000 people living within 1 mile of Minto Road, and 4,000 seeking to cross town **every day** between Green Valley and East Lake / 152 over Paulsen Road to get from the west to east side of Watsonville for work, school, and other necessities - a BESS buildout would stop traffic for many months and create obstacles for parents trying to reach their children at three schools which are within one mile of the proposed site, 19 schools within two miles. A BESS buildout will delay people getting to their jobs on time, compromising businesses and job security, will reduce the effectiveness of critical emergency response to and from rural neighborhoods, will lower property values and make homes impossible to sell, and will raise or render home insurance to levels that are extremely hard to pay for.

Any (God-forbid) lithium toxic fire-driven mass evacuation in our area would simply not work. Many residents have more than the average number of cars, due to larger numbers of people crammed into homes trying to make having a home work out financially. It is not atypical to find 5 cars for 8 people living in one small home on Paulsen Road or Meidl Road! This scenario is the norm, not the exception - where people have larger and extended families, are dealing with poverty, and live in close quarters. There would be no way out.

Detection of HF gas is impossible because it has no scent and exposure happens before people are aware they need to leave. Hydrogen fluoride gas exposure leads to lung damage, heart attack, and, once inhaled or absorbed through the skin, the fluoride ions rapidly penetrate deep tissues and scavenge calcium and magnesium directly from the body.

The gas easily dissolves into any existing moisture or firefighting water, to create hydrofluoric acid. Standard firefighter turnout gear only resists this acid for about one minute before it penetrates to the skin.

In addition to HF, lithium fires emit other deadly gases like carbon monoxide (CO) and hydrogen cyanide (HCN).

People living near Minto Road will die if there is a battery fire. We do not trust New Leaf / Sequoia's request for confidentiality for their fire and plume studies. To hide findings about the flammability of their batteries is severely lacking in transparency and respect for the people they wish to force to host their for-profit nightmare. In the case of a hydrogen fluoride emitting battery fire, shelter in place does not work and is not a sufficient emergency protocol to survive a lithium fire. Nanoparticles from HF gas can get through windows and doorjams. To place a BESS in settings like Minto Road is morally irresponsible at the highest level. That the discussion about a deadly BESS next to so many wonderful and fragile people exists still after all of these months, is morally reprehensible and revealing of the deep deficit of conscience in our times as juxtaposed to the grab-for-profit by energy contractors.

The County's siting needs to include more places than just unincorporated Santa Cruz. It needs to consider the minimal amount of risk to the smallest number of people near any proposed BESS siting. Santa Cruz County is fond of calling this BESS plan as it may happen, in "unincorporated Santa Cruz". That name sanitizes and misleads, and takes away the face, economics, multicultural diversity and personality of WATSONVILLE, which is the only "unincorporated Santa Cruz" they are referring to at this time. We are very different socioeconomically, environmentally and demographically than other areas of Santa Cruz County.

Our area is already tremendously burdened by toxic industrial agricultural practices. Over a million pounds of pesticides are used here on the fields each year. Chemical fertilizers are then used to get the soil productive, then insecticides are used on the food crops. Plastics are everywhere. Children and elderly suffer from respiratory illness, teratogenic deformities and health effects from these industrial ag practices at a very disproportionate rate. According to the healthyplaces index, Watsonville is 34% as healthy as the general population of California whereas Santa Cruz is 85% as healthy as the general population of California!

In making its' Ordinance, the County should consider these Alternative sites that have substations:

Big Basin Substation, which is located 3 miles outside of Boulder Creek in unincorporated Santa Cruz County,

Burns Substation, which is located 2 miles outside of Boulder Creek off of Empire Grade Road,

Crusher Substation, off Highway 1, about three miles north of the Santa Cruz city limits.

Point Moretti Substation, located in unincorporated Santa Cruz County near Davenport

Camp Evers Substation, located near Mt. Hermon Road, in Scotts Valley.

Please deny the Seahawk application: NO LITHIUM BESS at 90 Minto Road!
This plan is using antiquated and proven-disastrous technology, and the hubris of this out-of-State developer trying to push it down our throats should really be seen as a criminality of predatory siting, completely lacking in dignity as a project that would help our community in any way.

Green sustainability does not include trading harm for harm!

Sincerely,

Linda Aron / Phoenix Artemisia