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Vacaville Firefighters Association Response to Corby BESS Project

October 30, 2025

To the Honorable Members of the California Energy Commission,

The Vacaville Firefighters Association, in our capacity as first responders, has carefully evaluated the proposed Corby Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Project and the associated public safety risks. We are submitting this updated letter to advocate for a solution that balances renewable energy goals with critical public safety and first responder security.

Based on our analysis of recent incidents, we remain acutely aware of the documented dangers of lithium-ion BESS fires, including the release of highly toxic gases, heavy metals, and the extreme resource-intensity of managing a “thermal runaway” event. However, Solano County and various local agencies have identified a vastly superior location that directly addresses the fatal flaws of the current proposal.

We strongly urge the California Energy Commission to work with the applicant to move the Corby Project to the Lambie Industrial Park.

Moving the project to Lambie Industrial Park provides key advantages that minimize and manage the risks:

Elimination of Critical Infrastructure Threats: Locating the facility at Lambie removes the immediate, direct threat to Interstate 80 and other critical transportation corridors. A thermal runaway event at Lambie would not necessitate closing major traffic corridors.

Greatly Increased Buffers: Lambie Industrial Park offers significant separation from dense residential subdivisions and schools. This is a crucial safety enhancement that allows our firefighters more options for containment without the imminent, complex challenges of large-scale public evacuations.

Use of Appropriate Industrial Zoning: The Lambie location is explicitly zoned for industrial use and is the County’s preferred path for BESS projects. It eliminates the conflict with agricultural and local funding mechanisms that we previously noted as increasing risk.

Operational Feasibility and Reduced Impact: While a BESS fire will always be complex, responding to one in a properly designated and isolated industrial zone dramatically reduces the multi-agency strain and resource-sharing conflicts that are a core concern.

By prioritizing the selection of a scientifically and operationally appropriate site like Lambie Industrial Park, the CEC can ensure that the health of our residents and the safety of our first responders are not compromised. The current site, in contrast, remains an unnecessary risk.

We formally request that the CEC direct the applicant to resubmit its proposal based on the use of Lambie Industrial Park.

Sincerely,

Matt Moreno President Vacaville Firefighters Local 3501