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Comment Received From: Cara Valentino
Submitted On: 9/13/2026
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Farming Agriculture vs Short Lived Construction Jobs

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to express my concern about the proposed Corby BESS project at the Kilkenny Road/Byrnes Road location in Vacaville and, specifically, the potential risks this location may create for Solano County's agricultural industry and agricultural workforce.

I recognize that the proposed project would provide construction employment and economic activity. However, those benefits need to be considered alongside the economic value of the agricultural industry that already exists in Solano County and the potential consequences if a significant battery fire, thermal runaway event, or other incident were to affect nearby agricultural operations.

I have reviewed many of the comments submitted in support of the project, and I understand that some of that support comes from organized labor and workers interested in the construction employment that the project could provide. Those are legitimate economic interests. However, the CEC should also consider the economic interests of the thousands of people whose existing livelihoods depend upon Solano County's agricultural industry. I would like to point out that the majority of those letter in support are from people who do not even reside in Solano County.

Solano County's agricultural economy is an established and essential part of our local economy. Approximately 6,160 farm workers are employed by or connected to approximately 700 farms in the county, including people working in food processing, distribution, and other agricultural-related businesses. In 2024, Solano County agriculture reportedly generated approximately \$476 million in agricultural production. Solano County produces 37% of the States fruit and nuts, 23% of the vegetable crops including the processing of tomatoes, 22% of the animal production, and 10% of field crops to include alfalfa, corn, wheat.

These are not temporary jobs. They represent an established economic sector that contributes to feeding California, the nation, and markets beyond our borders.

The proposed Corby location places a large battery energy storage facility in close proximity to agricultural operations. That raises questions that deserve careful evaluation before the CEC approves this particular site.

Potential consequences of a battery fire or thermal runaway event

One of my primary concerns is what could happen to surrounding agricultural operations in the event of a significant battery fire or thermal runaway event.

The CEC should clearly evaluate and explain:

- What contaminants could be released into the air during a large battery fire?
- What contaminants could be present in fire-suppression water or runoff?
- Could contaminated runoff reach adjacent agricultural land, irrigation systems, drainage systems, or groundwater?
- What procedures would be used to prevent contamination of neighboring agricultural properties?
- What would happen to crops or agricultural land if contamination occurred?

- Who would be responsible for testing, cleanup, remediation, and financial losses resulting from such an event?
- What protections are proposed specifically for the agricultural operations immediately surrounding the site?

These questions are particularly important because agricultural land cannot simply be treated like an industrial property. Contamination affecting crops, soil, irrigation water, or agricultural production could have consequences extending well beyond the project property itself.

Noise, vibration, and pollination

I am also concerned about the potential effects of the facility's ongoing operation on nearby agricultural activities.

Fruit and nut production depends heavily upon pollination. Almond orchards are located in close proximity to the proposed project site.

The CEC should evaluate whether the operational noise, vibration, equipment cycling, cooling systems, and other activities associated with the BESS could affect nearby pollinators or agricultural operations.

I am not asserting that the project will necessarily harm bee colonies. I am asking that this question be properly evaluated rather than assumed away.

If the CEC determines that there is no meaningful risk, the basis for that determination should be clearly identified. If a potential impact exists, the project should include enforceable mitigation measures.

Existing agricultural jobs versus temporary construction employment

The proposed project is expected to create approximately 200 temporary construction-related jobs.

Good-paying construction jobs are important to our local economy. However, those jobs could be created whether the project is located at the proposed Kilkenny/Byrnes site in Vacaville or at the Lambie Industrial site in Fairfield, approximately 14 miles away.

This creates an important question for the CEC:

Why should Solano County accept additional risk to established agricultural operations when a potential alternative industrial location could provide the same construction and energy-storage benefits while reducing conflicts with surrounding agriculture?

The agricultural workers who could potentially be affected are already among the more economically vulnerable members of our workforce. The loss or disruption of agricultural production could therefore have consequences for workers and families who have no connection to the proposed BESS project and would receive no direct benefit from its construction.

The Lambie Industrial site should be meaningfully considered

For these reasons, I believe the Lambie Industrial site in Fairfield deserves serious and meaningful consideration as an alternative location.

The question before the CEC should not simply be whether a battery storage facility can be constructed at Kilkenny/Byrnes. The question should also be whether it is responsible to place a large BESS facility at this particular location when an alternative industrial site may be available.

If Lambie can accommodate the project while reducing potential conflicts with agricultural land, agricultural workers, nearby farming operations, and food production, then the CEC should carefully compare the two locations before approving the Corby site.

The state has important energy-storage goals. I support the need for reliable energy infrastructure. But meeting those goals does not require ignoring the value of existing industries and communities.

The CEC has an opportunity to select a location that supports energy-storage objectives while minimizing unnecessary risks to homeowners, farmland, agricultural operations, and the people whose livelihoods depend upon them.

I respectfully ask the Commission to:

1. Fully evaluate the potential consequences of a major BESS fire or thermal runaway event on surrounding agricultural operations.
2. Evaluate potential air, soil, surface-water, groundwater, and irrigation impacts from such an event.
3. Evaluate whether operational noise and vibration could affect nearby agricultural activities and pollinators.
4. Identify who would bear responsibility for agricultural losses and remediation costs following a contamination or fire event.
5. Conduct a meaningful comparison of the Kilkenny/Byrnes location with the Lambie Industrial site in Fairfield.
6. Give appropriate consideration to the economic value of Solano County's existing agricultural industry and workforce when evaluating the location of this project.

Good jobs matter. But we should not create temporary jobs by unnecessarily increasing the risk to an established agricultural economy that provides thousands of existing jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars in annual production.

No on the Kilkenny/Byrnes site. Yes on Lambie.

Thank you for your consideration and for carefully evaluating the long-term interests of Solano County's residents, agricultural workers, farmers, and businesses.

Sincerely,

Cara Valentino, Vacaville Resident