

DOCKETED

Docket Number:	24-OPT-05
Project Title:	Corby Battery Energy Storage System Project
TN #:	272706
Document Title:	Michael Geller Comments - My View From 30,00 Feet
Description:	N/A
Filer:	System
Organization:	Michael Geller
Submitter Role:	Public
Submission Date:	9/14/2026 9:47:52 AM
Docketed Date:	9/14/2026

*Comment Received From: Michael Geller
Submitted On: 9/14/2026
Docket Number: 24-OPT-05*

My View From 30,00 Feet

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

September 14, 2026

California Energy Commission

Re: Corby Battery Energy Storage System – Final Personal Comments

Commissioners and Staff:

Over the past several months, I have submitted comments addressing individual portions of the Staff Assessment for the proposed Corby Battery Energy Storage System. Those comments discuss transportation, public health, land use, agriculture, visual impacts, fire safety, transmission lines, alternatives, and other subjects.

I do not intend to repeat those comments here.

Instead, as today's deadline approaches, I would like to step back from the individual sections of the Staff Assessment and explain what this project looks like from the other side of the administrative record—from the perspective of a person who actually lives here.

My wife and I moved to Kilkenny Road in May 1990. I was 35 years old.

Our home, known as the Catherine Kilkenny House, is a rural Victorian built in 1900. Over the past 36 years, we have devoted an extraordinary amount of time, effort, money and patience to preserving the house and creating a property appropriate to its rural and historic setting. We added a barn and tankhouse designed to replicate structures that existed here a century ago to complement that setting. My wife planted the gardens. And I planted trees.

Lots of trees. Nearly 100 different species, including more than 50 species of oaks. That makes it one of the largest private collections of oaks anywhere. How does that compare with the larger public plant collections? The Santa Barbara Botanic Garden has 27 species, the University of California Botanical Garden in Berkely has 62 species and the University of California at Davis Arboretum has 90 species of oaks. Those are obviously large public plant collections with way more land and resources available to them.

So long story short, at 35, you have the luxury of planting things you know you may not fully enjoy for decades.

I am now 71 years old.

The little trees I planted when I was 35 are no longer little trees. Most are magnificent, mature specimens. They shade the grounds during Vacaville's hot summers. They create habitat. They cool the property.

This is the part that is difficult to communicate in an environmental document.

When I was 35, I had an idea of what this place might someday become. I imagined what it would be like when the trees were mature, the gardens established, the projects completed, and I had the time in retirement to enjoy what we had spent decades creating.

For the past two years, I have been living that retired life and enjoying my arboretum.

And now the State of California is considering placing a massive industrial battery storage facility in this rural agricultural setting.

There is an extraordinary irony in this.

California takes energy efficiency very seriously. The State regulates the efficiency of appliances and lighting. It establishes building energy standards. The California Energy Commission has even developed efficiency standards for replacement tires because relatively small improvements in rolling

resistance, multiplied across millions of vehicles and billions of miles, can conserve meaningful amounts of energy.

I understand the reasoning. Wasted energy matters.

Yet when we turn to a facility designed specifically to store and return enormous quantities of electricity, where is the comparable efficiency standard?

The Corby facility is expected to have round-trip efficiency of approximately 85 percent when new, declining toward approximately 80 percent later in its operating life. Put another way, roughly 15 percent of the electricity put into this enormous facility can be lost in the storage cycle even when the batteries are new, with losses approaching 20 percent as they age.

Those percentages represent very large quantities of electricity.

And even those figures do not tell the entire story.

What is the facility's real-world availability factor? What state of charge must be maintained for operational and safety purposes? How much electricity will be consumed by cooling and other auxiliary systems? How will battery degradation affect useful output? What happens during prolonged periods of extreme heat?

Those are not academic questions in Vacaville.

Anyone who lives here knows what our summers are like. Temperatures routinely climb into the triple digits, and heat waves can persist for days. Batteries and their cooling systems do not operate in a climatic vacuum. Yet California is considering a massive energy-storage installation without an enforceable minimum round-trip efficiency requirement that protects the public interest over the facility's operating life.

I find that difficult to reconcile with a State that worries about the energy lost through inefficient tires and light bulbs.

There is another kind of efficiency that deserves consideration as well: land-use efficiency.

If California needs battery storage—and I understand that it does—why put an industrial facility of this magnitude in an agricultural and rural residential area when industrially appropriate alternatives exist?

That question has never made sense to me.

The proposed location is not an empty spot on a map. People live here. Agriculture exists here. Families have invested here. There are narrow rural roads, irrigation facilities, homes, farms, mature landscapes, and a way of life that existed long before anyone drew a rectangle around these parcels and decided they were convenient because they are close to the Vaca-Dixon Substation.

Convenience to a transmission connection should not automatically outweigh everything surrounding it.

My own financial exposure illustrates the problem.

I easily have well over seven figures invested in my home and property. It represents decades of work and a significant portion of my family's financial security.

I find it impossible to believe that placing a 300-megawatt, 1,200-megawatt-hour battery energy storage facility, associated electrical infrastructure, transmission structures, security lighting, and other industrial features nearby will have no meaningful effect on the desirability or value of a rural residential property such as mine. That loss could easily approach \$500k--a remarkably similar figure

to the Applicants Community Benefit Contribution to the Solano Community Foundation. And we are just one of the families that live here

There is also uncertainty about what facilities of this magnitude may ultimately mean for the cost and availability of homeowners' insurance for nearby properties. But that uncertainty itself becomes another risk transferred to the people who already live here.

And that points to something fundamental about this project:

I bear those risks. The applicant does not.

If my property loses substantial value, the CEC is saying that loss is mine.

If insurance becomes more expensive or difficult to obtain, the CEC is saying that burden is mine.

If the rural environment we spent 36 years creating and preserving becomes an industrial energy landscape, as Corby has already purchased adjacent property for expansion, the CEC says my family will need to live with that result every day.

If the Commission approves the project and years later concludes that this was not an appropriate location for a BESS of this magnitude, the CEC can modify its policies for the next project.

I cannot get those years back.

I cannot move 36 years of mature trees.

I cannot transplant the history of our home.

And at 71 years old, I cannot simply start over somewhere else, plant another arboretum, and wait another 30 years for it to mature.

That is why the alternatives question is so important to me.

Keep Vacaville Safe has repeatedly pointed to the Lambie Industrial Center as a more appropriate location for battery storage. Solano County has likewise recognized the appropriateness of locating BESS facilities in industrial areas. Whether Lambie ultimately proves to be the precise location is less important than the principle involved.

Industrial-scale infrastructure should be located in industrially appropriate places whenever a reasonable alternative exists.

That seems neither radical nor anti-renewable. It seems like responsible planning.

I am not asking California to abandon energy storage.

I am asking California to do it intelligently.

The energy transition will require infrastructure. But "necessary infrastructure" cannot become a phrase that excuses poor siting decisions. If every project is placed wherever it is cheapest or most convenient for the developer to connect to the grid, while surrounding residents are expected to absorb the consequences, public support for the energy transition will inevitably suffer.

California can do better than that.

There is one final thought I would ask the Commission to consider.

When I planted those first trees in 1990, I was making a decision whose benefits I knew I might not see for decades. In a very small way, that is what environmental stewardship is supposed to be about: making decisions today with some consideration for the world that will exist tomorrow.

California asks its citizens to think that way all the time.

Use less energy. Conserve water. Plant trees. Protect agricultural land. Reduce emissions. Preserve habitat. Think about the next generation.

For 36 years, that is essentially what we have done with this little piece of Solano County.

It would be a bitter irony if, after spending more than half my adult life creating and preserving this place, the greatest threat to it came not from uncontrolled private development, but from a California Energy Commission decision made in the name of protecting the environment.

There must be room in California's clean-energy future for recognizing that a project may serve a legitimate statewide purpose and still be proposed in the wrong place.

I believe Corby is such a project.

I respectfully ask the California Energy Commission not to approve the Corby Battery Energy Storage System at the proposed Kilkenny Road location and instead require that a project of this industrial magnitude be directed to an appropriate industrial setting where its impacts do not require an existing rural community to sacrifice its safety, landscape, property values, agricultural setting, and quality of life.

California needs energy storage.

It does not need to be here.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Geller
Kilkenny Road
Solano County, California