

DOCKETED	
Docket Number:	25-OPT-02
Project Title:	Prairie Song Reliability Project
TN #:	272961
Document Title:	Ruthie Brock Comments - LA Times article highlights how lithium-ion battery storage fires are a major disruption to communities
Description:	N/A
Filer:	System
Organization:	Ruthie Brock
Submitter Role:	Public
Submission Date:	9/28/2026 6:35:44 PM
Docketed Date:	9/29/2026

*Comment Received From: Ruthie Brock
Submitted On: 9/28/2026
Docket Number: 25-OPT-02*

LA Times article highlights how lithium-ion battery storage fires are a major disruption to communities

CEC Staff,

The following news article from the Los Angeles Times puts a spotlight on the disruption to communities from even a small lithium-ion battery storage fire and how every new incident makes us question the safety of these facilities. Despite the efforts to improve safety through constant updating of fire protections and UL 9540 certification and testing standards, there have been multiple failed legislative efforts to regulate the siting of these grid scale energy storage facilities. And not enough emphasis is put on protecting communities through safe siting considerations. Safe, responsible project siting alone is the only truly effective, method to mitigate the associated risks of lithium-ion batteries. If approved, the Prairie Song Reliability Project will be yet another storage facility with the potential to cause great disruption and health risks to both residents and commuters. The mere size of this facility and the plan to utilize a lithium-ion battery technology should be enough reason for its denial in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone like rural Acton.

This project should be sited with safety at the forefront, not interconnection convenience.

Therefore I am imploring the CEC staff to please recommend denying this project to our Energy Commissioners.

Thank you,
Ruthie Brock
Acton Takes Action, Acton CA
Californians for Safe Energy Storageâ€”LA County

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

CALIFORNIA

Lithium-ion battery fire disrupts another California community, raising questions about storage, safety



Crews fight a lithium-ion battery fire Wednesday at a Metropolitan Water District facility in La Verne. (Myung J. Chun/Los Angeles Times)



By Clara Harter
Staff Writer | Follow

Published Sept. 24, 2026 | Updated Sept. 25, 2026
7:22 AM PT



See more from the L.A. Times in
Google Search. [Set us as preferred](#) >



For more than three days, fire crews have worked to address a [lithium-ion battery fire](#) in La Verne that has forced the evacuation of hundreds of residents and raised questions about the safety of California's rapidly expanding energy storage systems.

The state has [invested heavily in battery storage](#) — which holds on to energy captured by solar panels during the day so it can be used when electricity demand peaks in the evening — as it pushes to meet its ambitious goal of 100% clean-energy usage by 2045.

But these sites also come with dangers, as demonstrated by the massive [Moss Landing battery fire](#) in January 2025, which prompted the evacuation of about 1,500

residents and [deposited heavy metals](#) ► in a nearby estuary.

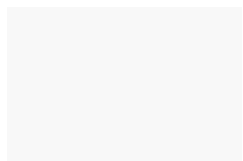
The La Verne battery fire is much smaller in scale but nonetheless alarming for those who had to leave their homes or deal with the closure of schools due to the potential of hazardous fumes.

“It’s really disheartening that our schoolchildren continue to be put at risk like this over and over,” said Assemblymember Dawn Addis (D-Morro Bay), who pushed for stricter safety regulations around battery storage in the aftermath of the Moss Landing fire.

The La Verne blaze began shortly before noon Tuesday inside one of four 250-kilowatt-battery containers at the Metropolitan Water District’s facility on Wheeler Avenue, according to the La Verne Fire Department. As crews successfully stabilized the initial container, an adjacent 250-kilowatt container then started to overheat.

The facility's battery storage system, which was brought on line in June, stores energy captured at the water treatment plant's solar farm.

Battery fires are challenging to combat because, when a battery is damaged, a self-sustaining chemical reaction called thermal runaway can occur and easily spread to adjacent batteries.



CALIFORNIA

Smoldering legacy: A toxic fire prompts new safety rules as California's green-power shift speeds ahead

May 22, 2026

When thermal runaway starts, the process can continue for days, with the potential for batteries to release toxic gases such as hydrogen fluoride, hydrogen chloride and carbon monoxide.

In La Verne, air quality monitoring had not detected any hazardous emissions Thursday, but the unstable nature of the batteries and potential risk of toxic fumes led officials to keep evacuations in place in the immediate area around the site, Fire Department Battalion Chief Mark Savage said.

Crews were able to stabilize the temperature of the second storage box by Thursday afternoon, enabling first responders to begin the process of de-energizing the individual batteries, with the hope of resolving the incident soon and enabling investigators to begin probing the cause of the fire.

On Friday morning, La Verne police officials announced the batteries had been removed and evacuation orders were lifted and residents could return to their homes. A local elementary school remained closed,

however.

The fire would be discussed in further detail by the City Council on Tuesday.

The La Verne fire comes just days after [another battery fire](#) erupted at Moss Landing, reigniting concerns at one of the state's largest battery storage sites. About 55,000 batteries were damaged in the initial incident, the cause of which remains under investigation.

CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

California is ground zero for growing battery opposition

April 23, 2026

The initial Moss Landing fire sparked a [flurry of legislative proposals](#) to bolster California's energy storage safety.

State Senate Bill 283, authored by Sen. John Laird (D-Santa Cruz), was signed into law in October and requires battery storage developers to consult with local fire authorities and undergo fire inspection

before going on line. It also requires that they adhere to safety standards established by the National Fire Protection Assn.

Other proposals that would have created stricter requirements around the approval process for new storage sites did not advance through the Legislature this session.

They include [Assembly Bill 303](#), which would have required local authorities to be part of the permitting process for facilities and would have established a 3,200-foot setback requirement from sensitive areas such as schools, homes, hospitals and environmentally sensitive habitat.

Bill author Addis said she was disappointed the bill never received a committee hearing, and plans on reintroducing new safety legislation in the next legislative cycle.

“We do need to transition off of oil and gas,” she said. “And as we transition, we cannot keep making these mistakes and treating people really with the disrespect that dirty

energy has treated our communities with.”

Independent of the Legislature, the California Public Utilities Commission, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the California Energy Commission have made regulatory changes around battery energy storage sites in recent years.

Best practices around battery storage, and the technology of batteries themselves, have improved since the Moss Landing storage facility began construction in 2020.

New large-scale facilities typically use more stable lithium-iron-phosphate batteries that are stored in outdoor containers configured to limit the spread of a potential fire, according to the California Energy Commission. They are also subject to more robust testing and emergency response requirements.

Most of these improvements have focused on larger utility-scale storage sites such as Moss Landing.

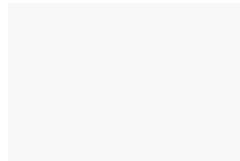
The incident at La Verne took place at a smaller facility where solar energy is captured and stored for internal use as opposed to being sent into the broader electrical grid.

“The safety conversation has been focused on the utility-scale stuff,” said Dustin Mulvaney, professor of environmental studies at San Jose State. “The fact that there was an evacuation and need for an emergency response for this facility makes me wonder if there now needs to be some more attention on the small battery sites.”

More to Read

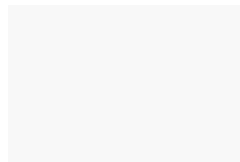
As the coast begins to crumble, the clock ticks on moving San Onofre’s radioactive waste

Sept. 12, 2026



Big batteries meant to stabilize the grid are stuck in limbo

Aug. 17, 2026



Not everyone is leaving California. A new commercial battery maker just landed in Sacramento

July 8, 2026



Sign up for Essential California

The most important California stories and recommendations in your inbox every morning.

By continuing, you agree to our [Terms of Service](#), which include arbitration and a class action waiver. You agree that we and our third-party vendors may collect and use your information, including through cookies, pixels and similar technologies, for the purposes set forth in our [Privacy Policy](#) such as personalizing your experience and ads.

Login or register with email

Agree & Continue



Clara Harter

Clara Harter is a breaking news reporter at the Los Angeles Times. Previously, she covered politics and education for the L.A. Daily News. She majored in political science and

Middle Eastern studies at Columbia
University.

Copyright © 2026, Los Angeles Times | [Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [CA Notice of Collection](#) | [Do Not Sell or Share My Personal Information](#)