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## No Lithium BESS in Santa Cruz

I strongly oppose the proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) facility near our agricultural lands and residential communities. This project poses unacceptable risks to public safety, our environment, our local economy, and our long-term food security.

We have already witnessed the devastating potential of battery storage fires at Moss Landing. These incidents have raised serious concerns about toxic emissions, environmental contamination, and the safety of surrounding communities. Why would we consider placing another potentially hazardous facility near our homes, wildlife, and valuable farmland?

Our region is also seismically active, with multiple fault systems, including the San Andreas Fault. Combined with our limited evacuation routes and the apparent absence of a comprehensive evacuation plan, this raises serious questions about how residents would be protected during a major fire or earthquake.

The economic consequences are equally concerning. According to the 2025 Santa Cruz County Crop Report, our agricultural industry generated approximately $763 million, including nearly $144 million in organic production. Agriculture is one of our county's most valuable resources and a foundation of our future food security. Tourism also depends on our region's natural beauty, including the scenic Hecker Pass corridor. An industrial facility of this scale threatens the character of the landscape and raises legitimate concerns about property values and the livelihoods of local residents.

I am deeply troubled by the apparent lack of transparency surrounding this project's approval and the limited public awareness of its development. Residents deserve meaningful opportunities to participate in decisions that could profoundly affect their safety, homes, and livelihoods.

Environmental justice must also be considered. Lower-income and historically underserved communities should not bear disproportionate risks simply because they have fewer financial resources to challenge industrial development.

If additional energy storage is necessary, less hazardous battery technologies and alternative locations must be seriously explored. Our agricultural lands and residential communities should not be treated as expendable.

I urge you to reject this location, require full public transparency and independent safety assessments, and prioritize the protection of our residents, farmland, and environment.

Our crops, our homes, and our natural resources are the foundation of this community's

future. Please do not allow this BESS project to jeopardize them.
-Larinda