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Public Concerns Are Being Ignored Regarding Location of BESS Facilities

I am very concerned about the placement of BESS facilities and the lack of discussion on this topic at the Staff Workshop on BESS Safety On February 23. The subject of State Actions/Tools Available to Accelerate Project Deployment makes it appear that the CEC is only interested in rubber stamping these facilities and not take into consideration the extremely valid concerns of residents that have to live right next door to them.

There is currently a proposed BESS facility that will be the second largest in the world that will have the nearest battery only 20 feet from my property and the stable my horse lives in. This facility will be COMPLETELY surrounded by houses. Any fire (and we are already in a high risk fire area, so that makes this location doubly ridiculous) and the fumes will not only consume all the livestock in our valley, but ourselves as well. There is no side where there are not homes. We are not NIMBYs and understand the need for clean energy, but there needs to be rules and regulations where it is suitable to put these facilities such as industrial zoned areas or remote areas where the potential hazards posed by these facilities have the least chance of harming residents. That should be number one on any State agenda.

The company, AES, that is proposing this facility has already incurred tens of millions of dollars in environment fines and has had fires at their already established facilities. This does nothing to assure the nearby residents that these facilities are safe and the agenda for the workshop will not assuage these concerns either.

The State and local jurisdictions should be concerned about placing these BESS facilities in low social economic areas and rural agricultural areas where land is cheap as that is indicative of encouraging Sacrifice Zones.

The CEC should also consider that the State and any local jurisdictions will be liable for:

1. The lives of any person or animal that is affected by these facilities.
2. Reimbursing any resident affected by the fires at these facilities as it will be impossible for the current residents to obtain fire insurance.
3. Reimburse residents for the loss in property value when these facilities go in. This is currently projected at a 40% loss for my property alone, and one resident already had to take a 10% reduction in the sale of his home just on the POSSIBILITY of the BESS being built.

These facilities are not to be taken lightly. The workshop topics are only 4 hours long. How is that long enough to address every issue?

And if the Expected Outcome is to “Establish a community of engaged stakeholders” how are the concerned residents that have to live with the noise, lights, fires (really chemical reactions) and toxic fumes being involved and included? The answer is: we’re not, we’re being IGNORED.

The CEC should be representing us, not putting our lives at risk for clean energy and developer fees.