

DOCKETED	
Docket Number:	24-OPT-05
Project Title:	Corby Battery Energy Storage System Project
TN #:	261291
Document Title:	Derek Johnson Comments - A Lesson to be Learned from Moss Landing
Description:	N/A
Filer:	System
Organization:	Derek Johnson
Submitter Role:	Public
Submission Date:	1/26/2025 7:09:32 AM
Docketed Date:	1/27/2025

*Comment Received From: Derek Johnson
Submitted On: 1/26/2025
Docket Number: 24-OPT-05*

A Lesson to be Learned from Moss Landing

Please see attached letter.

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

January 26, 2025

California Energy Commission
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Corby Battery Energy Storage System
Docket: 24-OPT-05

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Derek Johnson and I'm a resident of Vacaville in beautiful Solano County. I've been a resident of the community for over 25 years. I write to strongly encourage the CEC to halt further permitting consideration of NextEra's Corby BESS project in rural Solano County.

Given the nature of the Commission, you are no doubt familiar with the latest fire at Vistra Energy's Moss Landing BESS location that started Thursday afternoon, January 16. As reported through various news outlets, and extensively by the San Jose Mercury News, this is the fourth BESS fire in the area since 2019 and the third within the last four years. Though staggering to have such a recurring problem, this latest fire highlights sobering community and economic impacts:

- Road closures, particularly State Route 1 in both directions near the site.
- Shelter in place, sealing doors and windows only to be turned into an evacuation notice for 1200 area residents and school closures.
- Although residents were allowed to come back to their homes Friday night, four days elapsed before roads would reopen.
- More than a week has passed, yet still no root cause of what started or contributed to this latest fire other than systems in place to address the situation failed.
- Air and water quality concerns, particularly with particulate fallout and potential economic impact (aka loss) to food crops in the area.
- 80% of the site out of commission.

Imagine if the same disaster occurred at the Corby site:

- The closure of Interstates 80 and 505 would cut off major commute and commerce arteries between the Bay Area and Sacramento and parts beyond the Sacramento Valley.
- Surface streets, frontage roads, and State Routes 113 and 12 would be unable to accommodate the volume of traffic timely or safely – State Route 12 is known as “Blood Alley” for the number of severe and fatal accidents that have occurred.
- In the event other emergencies may be inflight like a wildfire, the two main arteries in the area to move first responders and equipment would be virtually cut off. As we well know, these situations aren't scheduled; in fact, they're 100% guaranteed to be inconvenient.

Setting aside air, water, land, and health concerns that many others' comments have expressed to the Commission, and has been expressed more recently by officials and residents in Moss Landing, the impact from a Corby BESS fire would be staggering for the surrounding community and county:

- With over 100K people in Vacaville, and over 19K people in Dixon, shelter in place, or potential evacuation could be massive depending on the wind direction at the time.
- Depending on wind patterns at the time, threats to Fairfield and Travis AFB and other parts of Solano County.
- Fallout impacting area farms and livestock as the Corby site not only takes out prime farmland from agriculture use, but also sits surrounded by it.
- Multiple school districts and students impacted.
- Two area hospitals, one of which is a trauma center at the split of Interstates 80 and 505 may be unable to receive or treat patients.

Out of state companies like NextEra keep pushing the safety and reliability narrative of lithium-ion technology for these sites because it's the easiest to acquire, the fastest to build, and the quickest to operationalize. And all of those add up to a better ROI for them and their shareholders, not the surrounding community. I suspect Vistra pushed the same narrative multiple times and we see the outcome – a smoldering site surrounded by a frightened and frustrated community.

I implore the Commission to halt any further action on NextEra's Corby application and place the matter back in the hands of Solano County – where it all started. Solano County's moratorium isn't a "no" to energy resiliency, but it is a "yes" to ensuring the local community's best interests are met through prudent, pragmatic considerations. The latest Moss Landing fire is a wake-up call; we don't want this kind of wake-up call in our community. Future BESS construction needs to be done right, not right now, and certainly not because NextEra made promises well in advance of permit considerations to supply surplus energy to a San Francisco utility. The burden on Solano County, its cities, and its residents is too high not to be done right.

Sincerely,

Derek Johnson