



Public Comment Form

Name*: Aryanne Andrade

Organization*: Student

Email*: krystel090707@gmail.com

Phone*: 661-289-2369

Meeting: Santa Clara River (SCR) Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC) meeting

Date: 3.20.2025

LA County Public Works may contact me for clarification about my comments

*Per Brown Act, completing this information is optional. At a minimum, please include an identifier so that you may be called upon to speak.

Phone participants and the public are encouraged to submit public comments (or a request to make a public comment) to SafeCleanWaterLA@dpw.lacounty.gov. All public comments will become part of the official record.

Please complete this form and email to SafeCleanWaterLA@dpw.lacounty.gov by at least 5:00pm the day prior to the meeting with the following subject line: "Public Comment: [Watershed Area] [Meeting Date]" (ex. "Public Comment: USGR 4/8/20").

Comments:

I am Aryanne Andrade, a current high school senior at Academy of the Canyons. We were recently tasked to create a project that can address a community need, and I have noticed an issue in Castaic. I currently live on Hillcrest Parkway, and I have noticed that when walking along Hillcrest, it is common to see dog waste and waste bags left along the hills. There are 2 schools on Hillcrest, Castaic Middle and Elementary School, with many students walking to and from home daily. Many people go on walks along Hillcrest, and many do so with their pets. Dog waste can be harmful, potentially spreading bacteria, parasites, contamination, and harming wildlife.

I believe that this should be addressed and we should aim to fix this situation. I have a proposed solution for this problem, and I hope that you are willing to consider this solution. I think that this situation can be reduced through the installation of dog waste stations throughout Hillcrest. These stations would consist of dog bags for owners who may have forgotten to bring some on their walks, and trash cans to properly dispose of any waste or trash any walkers could have.

My goal for this project is to create a safer, cleaner community in Hillcrest. And, if it is applicable, I hope that more stations can be installed throughout the city as well.



Public Comment Form

Name:* TONY MALDONADO Organization*: _____
Email*: TONY.MALDONADO@LIVE.COM Phone*: +1.917.346.1535
Meeting: SANTA CLARA RIVER WATERSHED -WASC Date: 3/20/2025

LA County Public Works may contact me for clarification about my comments

*Per Brown Act, completing this information is optional. At a minimum, please include an identifier so that you may be called upon to speak.

Phone participants and the public are encouraged to submit public comments (or a request to make a public comment) to SafeCleanWaterLA@dpw.lacounty.gov. All public comments will become part of the official record.

Please complete this form and email to SafeCleanWaterLA@dpw.lacounty.gov by at least 5:00pm the day prior to the meeting with the following subject line: "Public Comment: [Watershed Area] [Meeting Date]" (ex. "Public Comment: USGR 4/8/20").

Comments

Please see attached public comments.

TONY MALDONADO
27520 Sierra Highway
Apartment T-104
Santa Clarita, CA 91351-3051

March 20, 2025
via EMAIL

**Santa Clara River Watershed
Safe, Clean Water Program –
Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)**
City Hall
City of Santa Clarita
23920 Valencia Blvd
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

Public Comment:

To the LA County – Santa Clara River Watershed - Safe, Clean Water Program Watershed Area Steering Committee,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the risks associated with Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) located near residential areas and water bodies, particularly in the context of the Santa Clara River watershed. The recent approval and construction of a BESS in Santa Clarita, near residential homes and the Santa Clara River, has raised significant concerns among residents. This facility poses a direct threat to our water resources and community safety.

The recent fire at the Vistra Moss Landing Energy Storage Facility on January 16, 2025, highlights the dangers of BESS fires. This incident led to evacuations, school closures, and significant environmental concerns, underscoring the risks associated with BESS fires (1). Residents in nearby areas reported symptoms such as respiratory issues, headaches, and eye irritation, emphasizing the potential health risks associated with such incidents (2).

In Monterey County, the Moss Landing fire has raised concerns about contamination in the Monterey Bay area. Researchers at San Jose State University's Moss Landing Marine Laboratories found high concentrations of heavy metals like nickel, manganese, and cobalt in soil samples at the Elkhorn Slough Reserve, which is adjacent to the facility and connects to Monterey Bay (3). These heavy metals threaten to disrupt the delicate ecosystem of the bay, which is home to numerous endangered species and plays a crucial role in sequestering carbon emissions and protecting the coastline from sea level rise.

The risks associated with BESS fires are not limited to Monterey Bay. Here in Los Angeles County, the Santa Clara River, which flows through both Los Angeles and Ventura counties and empties into the Pacific Ocean, is equally vulnerable. If a fire were to occur at the Santa Clarita BESS, the potential for contamination could be catastrophic. Firefighting water contaminated with toxic chemicals

could enter the Santa Clara River, posing risks to aquatic life and human health (4). The river's path from Los Angeles County to Ventura County means that any pollution could have far-reaching impacts, affecting not only local ecosystems but also the Pacific Ocean and its marine life.

Risks Associated with BESS Near Water Bodies:

- **Firefighting Water Contamination:**
 - **Toxic Chemicals:** Firefighting water from BESS fires can contain toxic chemicals like hydrofluoric acid and heavy metals, posing significant risks to water quality and human health if it enters rivers or aquifers.
 - **Environmental Impact:** These chemicals can cause immense environmental damage, affecting aquatic ecosystems and biodiversity.
- **Aquifer and Well Water Contamination:**
 - **Groundwater Risks:** Contaminated fire water run-off can infiltrate aquifers, threatening local water supplies and posing long-term risks to human health (5).
 - **Decontamination Challenges:** Decontaminating an aquifer is costly and complex, highlighting the need for preventive measures.
- **River and Stream Pollution:**
 - **Toxic Run-off:** Rivers like the Santa Clara River are vulnerable to pollution from nearby industrial activities, including potential BESS fires.
 - **Environmental Impacts:** Contamination could impact both aquatic life and human health if water is used for irrigation or drinking.

Mitigation Strategies:

- **Location Guidelines:**
 - **Industrial Zones Only:** BESS should be limited to industrial zones away from residential areas, rivers, and water bodies (6).
 - **Distance Requirements:** Establishing minimum distance requirements from sensitive areas can help mitigate risks, but it is crucial that BESS are not located near water bodies at all.
- **Safety Measures:**
 - **Fire Safety Systems:** Implementing robust fire detection and suppression systems can reduce the risk of fires spreading.
 - **Emergency Response Plans:** Developing comprehensive emergency response plans with local fire departments is essential.
- **Regulatory Frameworks:**
 - **Environmental Permitting:** Integrating BESS into Environmental Permitting Regulations can ensure compliance with safety standards.
 - **Statutory Consultations:** Mandating consultations with fire services and environmental agencies during planning stages can enhance safety.

To effectively mitigate these risks, it is essential that we adopt a multi-faceted approach. This includes not only implementing robust safety measures but also ensuring that BESS are located in areas that minimize the risk of environmental damage. The lack of transparency in the approval process for the Santa Clarita BESS has eroded trust among residents. It is crucial that we engage in open and inclusive community consultations to ensure that the concerns of local residents are heard and addressed. This includes providing clear information about the risks associated with BESS and involving local communities in decision-making processes (7).

In conclusion, while BESS are crucial for our transition to renewable energy, it is imperative that we prioritize public safety and environmental protection. The recent Vistra Moss Landing fire and the concerns in Santa Clarita underscore the importance of keeping BESS away from residential areas and water bodies. I urge you to take a proactive stance in safeguarding our communities and water resources, ensuring that our actions today protect the Santa Clara River watershed and other sensitive ecosystems like Monterey Bay for generations to come.

We must not compromise on safety. We must not risk the health of our communities or the integrity of our ecosystems. It is our responsibility to ensure that our pursuit of renewable energy does not come at the cost of our environment or public health. I urge you to support policies that restrict BESS locations to areas away from residential communities and water bodies, and to work towards creating a safer, more sustainable future for all.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,



TONY MALDONADO

T: +1.917.346.1535

E: TONY.MALDONADO@LIVE.COM

References:

1. <https://www.thefpa.co.uk/news/huge-fire-at-california-battery-facility-leads-to-evacuation-and-pollution> Vistra Moss Landing Fire Report: Details the incident and its environmental impacts.
2. <https://www.singletonschreiber.com/theblog/community-risks-from-the-battery-fire-at-moss-landing-energy-facility> Health Impact Study: Documents health issues reported by residents following the fire.
3. <https://www.kqed.org/news/12024233/monterey-county-battery-fire-linked-surge-heavy-metals-nature-reserves-soil> San Jose State University Study: Finds high concentrations of heavy metals in soil samples near Monterey Bay.
4. https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/rwqcb4/water_issues/programs/regional_program/Water_Quality_and_Watersheds/water_report/santa_clara/scr-w2003.pdf Santa Clara River Watershed Report: Highlights the river's vulnerability to pollution.
5. <https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-08/documents/mgwc-gwc1.pdf> Aquifer Contamination Study: Examines the risks and challenges of aquifer decontamination.
6. <https://www.kmbdg.com/news/bess-site-requirements/> Industrial Zone Guidelines: Recommends limiting BESS to industrial zones.
7. <https://www.singletonschreiber.com/theblog/community-risks-from-the-battery-fire-at-moss-landing-energy-facility> Community Engagement Report: Emphasizes the importance of transparent community consultations.

Submitted by:

Diane Zimmerman-Homeowner

Valencia, 91355

zdiane34@yahoo.com

818-625-329

Public Comment:

To the LA County Safe, Clean Water Program Watershed Area Steering Committee,

We are deeply concerned about the placement of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) near residential areas and water bodies, such as the Santa Clara River. The recent approval of a BESS facility in Canyon Country, despite strong community opposition, highlights the need for careful consideration of these projects. Residents in Santa Clarita have raised valid concerns about the potential environmental and safety risks associated with large-scale battery storage facilities in their neighborhoods.

The Santa Clara River is a vital ecosystem that supports a diverse range of wildlife and provides critical habitat for migratory birds and native fish. It is essential for maintaining biodiversity and ecological balance in the region. Any contamination from a BESS fire could have devastating impacts on local ecosystems, exacerbating existing environmental challenges and threatening the health of wildlife.

The risks of BESS fires are well-documented. Incidents like the Vistra Moss Landing fire demonstrate the potential for toxic chemical releases and environmental damage. Lithium-ion batteries can experience thermal runaway, leading to uncontrolled fires that cannot be extinguished with water, which can exacerbate the situation by causing explosions or spreading the fire. These fires pose significant threats to public health and safety, as well as to local wildlife and ecosystems.

Furthermore, firefighting water from BESS fires can be contaminated with highly corrosive hydrofluoric acid and other hazardous chemicals, posing risks to human health if it enters water bodies (1)(5). This contaminated water can lead to soil and groundwater pollution, affecting both aquatic life and human health. Drinking water contamination from battery leakage or firefighting runoff can pose significant risks, requiring costly treatments to ensure water safety (3)(5).

The lack of transparency in the approval process for the Canyon Country BESS has eroded trust among residents. It is crucial that we engage in open and inclusive community consultations to ensure that local concerns are heard and addressed.

To address these concerns, we strongly encourage the adoption of policies that prevent the placement of BESS near residential neighborhoods or environmentally sensitive areas like rivers and streams. It is critical to ensure these facilities are located in areas where their risks can be effectively managed without jeopardizing public health or ecosystems. Comprehensive safety protocols, including advanced fire detection systems and coordinated

emergency response plans, should be mandatory for all BESS installations. Furthermore, regulatory oversight must be strengthened by incorporating BESS projects into environmental permitting processes to safeguard against unforeseen hazards.

We also advocate for the decommissioning of the existing BESS facility in Canyon Country, given the significant risks it poses to the community and the environment. It is our responsibility to ensure that our pursuit of renewable energy does not compromise public safety or environmental integrity.

Thank you.

DIANE ZIMMERMAN

Citations:

1. <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN010131/EN010131-000734-Roy%20Clegg%20-%20Gate%20Burton%20Energy%20Park%20-%20Environmental%20&%20Safety%20Risk%20from%20Batteries%20rev%2011072023.pdf>
2. <https://pubs.rsc.org/en/content/articlehtml/2021/ee/d1ee00691f>
3. <https://www.dunmowgroup.com/blog/the-impact-of-batteries-in-skips-an-environmental-and-safety-perspective>
4. <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN010133/EN010133-000906-7000%20Acres%20-%20Written%20Representations%20and%20summaries%20for%20any%20that%20exceed%201500%20words%202.pdf>
5. <https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/GetDocument.aspx?tn=260428>
6. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10061927/>
7. <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/01022025/moss-landing-battery-fire-contamination-health-fears/>
8. <https://www.pib-insurance.com/news/environmental-impact-of-bess-from-fire>