



# County of Santa Cruz

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## COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

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### MINUTES

Special Meeting – Wednesday, Aug 20, 2025

Time: 5:00 – 8:00 pm

Technical Workshop – Battery Energy Storage Systems

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors Chambers

701 Ocean Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor

#### I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

##### A. Call to Order

*The meeting was called to order at approximately 5:15pm*

##### B. Roll Call

*Commissioners Weiss, Woonink, Hunt, Perez, Damhorst*

*Absent: Commissioners Ramon, Nakahara, Culbertson, Burns*

##### C. Overview of workshop purpose, future workshop meeting dates/topics and time management for tonight's workshop (Chair Damhorst)

*This item was tabled and the meeting moved directly to Workshop Topics*

#### II. Tonight's Workshop Topics

##### **A. Presentation from Khalida Sarwari – Policy Analyst for Senator John Laird in Santa Cruz (10 min)**

*Ms Sarwari gave a brief presentation on SB 283 – the Clean Energy Safety Act of 2025, focuses on enhancing safety standards for battery energy storage systems (BESS) in California. The bill, authored by Senator John Laird, aims to ensure these facilities are designed, constructed, and operated with increased safety measures and local coordination, including inspections by fire officials.*

*No action taken*

##### **B. Presentation from Matthew Paiss – Retired Technical Advisor in the Battery Materials & Systems group for Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (45 minutes)**

*Mr Paiss was unable to attend the meeting and present. However, Chair Damhorst read into the record a recent article Mr Paiss wrote that was published in Lookout Santa Cruz titled Do battery energy storage systems belong in our communities?*

*No action taken*

**C. Discuss Formation of Ad Hoc Committee for Creation of Informational Letter to Board of Supervisors**

*Chair Damhorst presented a document that summarizes all of the technical workshop presenters and presentations in the form of "frequently asked questions" and presented a series of slides summarizing the technical workshop information*

*The Commission received comments from approximately 15 members of the public Motion by Commissioner Woonink, seconded by Commissioner Weiss to form an ad hoc committee of up to 4 Commissioners to draft an informational letter to the Board of Supervisors summarizing the information and comments presented during the workshop series.*

*Ayes: Commissioners Weiss, Hunt, Perez, Damhorst, Woonink*

*Noes: None*

**III. PUBLIC INPUT/ORAL COMMUNICATION ON MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

*Two members of the public addressed the Commission*

**IV. ADJOURNMENT**

*The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:00pm*