



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

701 OCEAN STREET, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4073
(831) 454-2000 WWW.SANTACRUZCOUNTY.US

CARLOS J. PALACIOS, COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICER

NEWS RELEASE



Date: June 16, 2025

Contact: Jason Hoppin

Jason.Hoppin@santacruzcounty.us

ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION TO HOST BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS TECHNICAL REVIEW WORKSHOPS

As California transitions toward a clean energy future, the Santa Cruz County Commission on the Environment (CoE) is convening a series of public technical workshops to examine the role and risks of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) in modernizing the energy grid.

The workshops, scheduled for June 25, July 30, and August 27, will be held from 5–8 p.m. in the Board Chambers of the Santa Cruz County Governmental Center, 701 Ocean Street, 5th Floor, Santa Cruz, with remote participation available via Zoom.

BESS facilities are a critical component of California's shift away from fossil fuels, allowing excess energy — especially solar and wind — to be stored for use when renewable generation is unavailable. These systems can enhance grid stability and help utilities meet peak demand while reducing dependence on fossil fuels. However, as interest in BESS projects grows, so do community concerns about public safety, emergency response readiness, and long-term environmental impacts.

The June 25 workshop will feature presentations on the climate change context for energy storage and the role of BESS in the regional power grid. Key speakers include Dr. Mark Jacobson, Director of Stanford University's Atmosphere/Energy Program and a leading expert on clean energy systems, and a representative from Central Coast Community Energy (3CE), which has committed to achieving 100 percent renewable energy by 2030. Additional experts will be featured as part of the review.

"These workshops are a chance for the community to engage with world-class experts and better understand the opportunities and risks associated with large-scale energy storage," said Kris Damhorst, Chair of the Commission on the Environment. "As we respond to the climate crisis, it's essential that we examine how new technologies align with our values, safety needs, and long-term environmental goals."

Subsequent workshops will explore battery technology innovations, fire prevention and emergency response, and evolving best practices. While technical in nature, the sessions are designed to be accessible to the general public. The workshops will not address land use planning, zoning decisions, or specific project proposals.

Community members, environmental stakeholders, and energy professionals are encouraged to attend. To join via Zoom, visit <https://santacruzcounty-us.zoomgov.com/j/1614371967>.