



# 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



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**Contact:** Jason Hoppin

[Jason.Hoppin@santacruzcounty.us](mailto:Jason.Hoppin@santacruzcounty.us)

### ENVIRO COMMISSION NAMES ADDITIONAL TECHNICAL EXPERTS FEATURED IN UPCOMING BATTERY STORAGE WORKSHOPS

The Santa Cruz County Commission on the Environment has identified additional expert testimony to be included in upcoming workshops focusing on Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) technologies and safety issues.

On July 30<sup>th</sup>, the Commission welcomes Scott Murtishaw, Executive Director of the California Energy Storage Alliance, who will examine the future and function of current and emerging battery technology innovations. Mike Nichols, an Energy Storage Specialist and Fire Consultant with Hiller Companies, will follow with a presentation on safety considerations including fire prevention, suppression strategies and emergency response planning.

"With the second of three workshops on Battery Energy Storage Systems, the Commission on the Environment is continuing its community outreach and education on this very important topic," Commission Chair Kris Damhorst said. "We are very lucky to have industry experts donate their time to help our community understand and answer some of the most important questions regarding this technology."

The workshop is scheduled for July 30<sup>th</sup> from 5 to 8 p.m. in the Board Chambers of the Santa Cruz County Governmental Center, 701 Ocean St., 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Santa Cruz. Community members, environmental stakeholders, and energy professionals are encouraged to attend. Remote participation available at <https://santacruzcounty-us.zoomgov.com/j/1610056959>.

BESS facilities are a critical component of California's shift away from fossil fuels with the potential to enhance grid stability and help utilities meet peak demand while reducing dependence on fossil fuels. Some community members have also raised concerns about safety, emergency response and long-term environmental impacts.

The final August 20, 2025 workshop will address questions and issues that have emerged from the June 25<sup>th</sup> and July 30<sup>th</sup> sessions. The featured expert will be Matt Paiss, a nationally recognized BESS expert with a focus on safety standards, risk mitigation, and regulatory compliance for utility-scale and distributed energy projects.

While technical in nature, the sessions are intended to be accessible to the general public. The workshops will not address land use planning, zoning decisions or specific project proposals. Sessions will be posted at [youtube.com/@countyofsantacruzca](https://youtube.com/@countyofsantacruzca).