



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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DRAFT BESS ORDINANCE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

The County of Santa Cruz has released a draft ordinance regulating the siting and development of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) for public review. The proposed ordinance is designed maintain local control over the siting, design and operation of such systems to maximize public safety, enhance environmental protection and assure community compatibility.

Members of the public are invited to review the draft ordinance and learn more about the proposal through a new informational website created by the County's Community Development and Infrastructure Department. The site includes background materials, project documents, and a detailed Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section to help residents understand the purpose and scope of the ordinance.

"Transparency and public engagement are essential to this process," said Board of Supervisors Chair Felipe Hernandez . "We encourage residents to review the materials, learn more about the proposed ordinance, and share their feedback as we look for ways to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and build a better future for ourselves and the next generation."

The website can be accessed at:

<https://cdi.santacruzcountyca.gov/UPC/GetInvolved/MajorProjectApplications/BatteryEnergyStorageSystemsOrdinance.aspx>

The draft ordinance seeks to balance the need for renewable energy storage infrastructure to meet the County's green energy goals, improve grid resiliency, reduce blackouts and address climate change with the County's commitment to public safety, land use compatibility, and environmental stewardship. Public input will help inform staff recommendations and guide the Board of Supervisors' consideration of the final ordinance at a future public hearing.

If authorized by the Board on November 18, the ordinance would undergo environmental review and be reviewed by the Board of Supervisors and several advisory bodies including the Planning Commission, providing ample opportunity for public input. Finalization of the ordinance is expected to take up to a year.

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