



County of Monterey

Item No.

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Legistar File Number: 26-091

August 11, 2026

Introduced: 1/27/2026

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Matter Type: General Agenda Item

- a. Receive a presentation from Department of Emergency Management regarding the implementation of new guidelines for Battery Emergency Storage System Facility Emergency Action Planning; and
- b. Receive an update regarding the MOSS 300 site clean-up at the Moss Landing Battery Energy Storage System facility.

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SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

The development of lithium-ion battery technology and the installation of large Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) has added important new capabilities to electric grids, improving reliability, load balancing, and renewable integration. These benefits are accompanied by safety risks, notably thermal runaway, gas release, and potential fire or explosion hazards. As BESS facilities increase in scale and geographic reach, guidance on comprehensive emergency planning is essential.

In partnership with Monterey County Health Department - Environmental Health Bureau, Monterey County Housing and Community Development Department, North County Fire Protection District, Salinas Fire Department Hazardous Materials Team, and Monterey County Sheriff's Office, Department of Emergency Management (DEM) conducted a 12 month planning effort to develop a new document intended to support Independent System Operators (ISOs), generating assets, facility owners, first responders, and emergency planning personnel in preparing a site-specific Emergency Action Plan (EAP). The "Guidelines for Battery Energy Storage System Facility Safety Emergency Action Planning," establishes a standardized framework for the development of Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) for Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) facilities located in Monterey County, California. These guidelines incorporate established industry standards, best practices, lessons learned from past incidents, and the latest regulatory developments. This guidance is not prescriptive, nor does it supersede approved regulations, but serves as a baseline to ensure critical elements are considered in developing a comprehensive BESS EAP.

The document provides emergency response planning recommendations intended to support consistent, comprehensive, and coordinated planning among facility operators, emergency

responders, emergency management authorities, and regulatory agencies. Developed in alignment with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) modified General Order (GO) 167-C requirements and California Senate Bill (SB) 38 (Public Utilities Code Section 761.3), the guidelines support the development of BESS facility emergency plans for generating assets and energy storage systems greater than 1 megawatt (MW). Key objectives of the guidelines include:

- Establish a standardized framework for developing Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Facility Emergency Action Plans.
- Promote comprehensive and consistent emergency planning across all BESS facilities.
- Utilizes a uniform plan format to improve clarity, usability, and coordination among stakeholders.
- Ensure critical elements of emergency preparedness, response, recovery, and public safety are addressed in every plan.
- Provide clear guidance on emergency roles, responsibilities, communication protocols, and response actions to support effective incident management.
- Formalize plan submission, review, and approval processes to support regulatory compliance, accountability, and ongoing plan maintenance.
- Improve coordination among facility operators, emergency responders, local governments, and regulatory agencies before and during emergency events.
- Enhance community safety and emergency readiness through standardized planning requirements and advance coordination with public safety partners.

The guidelines introduce several key planning elements designed to strengthen preparedness, response coordination, and public safety for Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) facility emergencies. These elements include the establishment of radial Protective Action Zones and Public Education Zones to support risk-based emergency planning, public communication, and protective action decision-making. The guidelines also incorporate requirements for environmental monitoring and sampling plans, plume modeling, and standardized response flow charts to support informed decision-making during potential releases or hazardous conditions. Additional planning components include defined emergency response levels, clear escalation criteria, and expectations for training and exercises to ensure facility operators, emergency responders, and partner agencies are prepared to implement emergency procedures effectively. Together, these components provide a comprehensive framework to improve situational awareness, interagency coordination, and community safety during BESS-related incidents.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT/COMMITTEE ACTIONS:

Monterey County Health Department - Environmental Health Bureau, Monterey County Housing and Community Development Department, North County Fire Protection District, Salinas Fire Department Hazardous Materials Team, Monterey County Sheriff's Office, County Counsel, and County Administrative Office coordinated in the drafting of this presentation and update.

FINANCING: There will be no current financial impact with the receipt of presentation. A fee study may need to be conducted to determine appropriate costs for staff time to review Emergency Action Plans in the permit process.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS:

The guidelines establish clear expectations for Battery Energy Storage System facility owners and operators to plan for, coordinate, and effectively manage emergencies associated with their generating assets. By requiring comprehensive Emergency Action Plans, defined protective action zones, environmental monitoring, and coordinated training with public safety agencies, the guidelines ensure generating asset operators are accountable for minimizing risk to surrounding communities while supporting the reliable operation of critical energy infrastructure.

Mark a check to the related Board of Supervisors Strategic Plan Goals [Include one or two sentences referencing the Ordinance, Code, Board Order/Resolution, etc. in relation to this selection]:

- ☒ Well-Being and Quality of Life
- ☒ Sustainable Infrastructure for the Present and Future
- ☒ Safe and Resilient Communities
- ☐ Diverse and Thriving Economy

If does not fall under any of the above Board of Supervisors Strategic Plan Goals (Other):

☐ Administrative [Include one or two sentences referencing the Ordinance, Code, Board Order/Resolution, etc. in relation to this selection]

Link to the Strategic Plan:

<https://www.countyofmonterey.gov/home/showdocument?id=139569>

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