



County of Monterey

Item No.34

Board Report

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

Legistar File Number: 25-234

April 15, 2025

Introduced: 4/2/2025

Current Status: Scheduled AM

Version: 1

Matter Type: General Agenda Item

Consider recommendations from the Legislative Committee to adopt positions on Senate Bill (SB) 283 (Laird) Energy storage systems and Assembly Bill (AB) 303 (Addis) Battery energy storage facilities.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors consider recommendations from the Legislative Committee to adopt positions on Senate Bill (SB) 283 (Laird) Energy storage systems and Assembly Bill (AB) 303 (Addis) Battery energy storage facilities.

SUMMARY:

Senator John Laird introduced SB 283 Energy storage systems - also titled the "Clean Energy Safety Act of 2025". Through this legislation, Senator Laird aims to strengthen safety standards for Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS).

Assemblymember Dawn Addis introduced AB 303 Battery energy storage facilities - also titled the "Battery Energy Safety and Accountability Act". Through this legislation, Assemblymember Addis aims to create common-sense siting requirement for potentially hazardous BESS facilities.

The Legislative Committee has been tracking SB 283 and AB 303 and will receive reports on both bills at their April 14, 2025, meeting. Any recommended actions the Legislative Committee provides will be reported to the Board during the presentation of this item.

If the Board adopts positions on SB 283 and/or AB 303, letters conveying those positions will be transmitted from the Board to the legislators.

DISCUSSION:

Per the Fact Sheet provided by Senator Laird, "Senate Bill 283 strengthens statewide safety standards for battery storage energy systems (BESS) and ensures there is local fire authority consultation and inspection at various stages prior to a project going online.

SB 283 requires battery storage facilities to adhere to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 855 standards, which are widely recognized as the strongest standards for safety and hazard mitigation of BESS. Prior to submitting a BESS application through the local approval process or the California Energy Commission's AB 205 Opt-In Certification Program, developers are required to engage and confer with local fire authorities. This consultation must address facility design, assess potential risks, and integrate emergency response plans, such as those required under SB 38 (Laird, 2023).

A facility will be also required to undergo a safety inspection by local fire officials, or by the State Fire

Marshal if the local jurisdiction defers its authority, before the facility can go online. SB 283 ensures that the facility owner covers the cost of inspections, reinforcing accountability in the permitting process. SB 283 will be amended to limit BESS development in combustible buildings as the bill progresses.

SB 283 enables the safe development of BESS to protect California emergency responders, workers, and the community”.

SB 283 is sponsored by the California Professional Firefighters and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. The bill text and fact sheet for SB 283 are attached. As of this writing a bill analysis on SB 283 is not available, but if one becomes available before the Board hears this item it will be added as an attachment to this report.

Per the Fact Sheet provided by Assemblymember Addis, “AB 303, the Battery Energy Safety and Accountability Act, promotes climate justice by uplifting the voice of local Californians and creating common-sense siting requirements for potentially hazardous battery energy storage system (BESS) facilities.

AB 303 recognizes that utility-scale battery energy storage has played an important role in meeting California’s energy goals and solving the climate crisis. It ensures that we do not repeat mistakes of the past that allowed industry to bypass local communities to site energy projects in sensitive areas where they caused harm to human and environmental health. It also stands firm against the federal attacks on environmental regulation.

This bill does two simple things: 1) restores community input to the BESS permitting process, and 2) establishes reasonable setbacks for BESS facilities from areas such as schools, homes, and hospitals, and restrictions on siting these facilities in environmentally sensitive areas”.

The bill text and fact sheet for AB 303 are attached. As of this writing a bill analysis on AB 303 is not available, but if one becomes available before the Board hears this item it will be added as an attachment to this report.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The County Administrative Office - Intergovernmental & Legislative Affairs Division (CAO-IGLA) prepared this report. Information was provided Senator John Laird’s Office, Assemblymember Dawn Addis’ Office, and by Nossaman LLP (the County’s state legislative advocates).

FINANCING:

Approval of the recommended action has no impact on the General Fund.

Prepared by: Annette D’Adamo, Legislative Program Manager, x3045

Approved by: Nicholas E. Chiulos, Chief Assistant CAO, x5145

Attachments:

- SB 283 (Laird) Bill Text as of 4/09/25
- SB 283 (Laird) Fact Sheet as 3/18/25

- AB 303 (Addis) Bill Text as of 1/23/25
- AB 303 (Addis) Fact Sheet as of 2/6/25