



County of Monterey

Item No.

Board Report

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

Legistar File Number: RES 25-183

February 03, 2026

Introduced: 12/10/2025

Current Status: Agenda Ready

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Matter Type: BoS Resolution

Adopt a resolution continuing for an additional sixty (60) days, the Proclamation of Local Emergency in response to a structure fire and hazardous materials incident at the Moss Landing Lithium-Ion Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Power Plant that started on January 16, 2025.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

Adopt a resolution continuing for an additional sixty (60) days, the Proclamation of Local Emergency in response to a structure fire and hazardous materials incident at the Moss Landing Lithium-Ion Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Power Plant that started on January 16, 2025.

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

On January 16, 2025, shortly after 3:00 p.m. a fire began at the Vistra Energy (“Vistra”) 300-MW Phase I battery energy storage facility located at the Moss Landing Power Plant. A Local Emergency was Proclaimed by the County Administrative Officer on January 17, 2025, and ratified by the Board of Supervisors on January 21, 2025. The Board further ratified the continuance of the proclamation on March 18, 2025, May 13, 2025, July 8, 2025, August 26, 2025, October 21, 2025, and December 9, 2025.

The Vistra operation is one of the largest lithium battery storage facilities in the world and the fire caused the lithium batteries to burn. Local fire officials could not extinguish the fire due to the extreme heat from the multiple lithium batteries burning, and as of January 17th the fire continued burning. Evacuation orders for the surrounding community were lifted on January 18, 2025. The evacuation orders were issued as a precaution due to the ongoing fire and concerns of exposure to hazardous materials. Air monitoring conducted by the United state Environmental Protection Agency began on January 17, 2025, within and outside the fence line of the facility indicated that particulate matter posed no risk to public health.

A state led Health Assessment Team comprised of local, state, and federal agencies began soil, dust, and water sampling on January 24, 2025. County, State, and Federal regulatory agencies have and continue to conduct environmental testing for levels of toxic metals, such as nickel, manganese, and cobalt, in the surrounding area. Data from sampling conducted by the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) indicates there are not elevated metals associated with the fire in soil. DTSC obtained soil samples directly north from the location of the fire and up to four miles away, including at residences, schools, and community parks.

On February 18, 2025, a previously burned section of the Vistra Battery Facility in Moss Landing re-ignited resulting in conflagration and smoke; Unified Command indicated the fire was under control on February 19, 2025.

On February 22, 2025, Vistra Energy, under the direction of local, state, and federal regulatory agencies has initiated a lengthy and arduous hazardous material and structural debris removal process.

A Local Emergency was Proclaimed by the County Administrative Officer on January 17, 2025, and ratified by the Board of Supervisors on January 21, 2025.

Pursuant to California Government Code Section 8630, subdivision (a), and Monterey County Code section 2.68.025 the County Administrative Officer may proclaim the existence of a local emergency when the County is affected by or threatened to be affected by a public calamity. The Government Code requires that an emergency proclamation be ratified by the Board of Supervisors within 7 days of its issuance and be reviewed at least once every (60) days until the emergency is terminated.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT/COMMITTEE ACTIONS:

Numerous County departments and other state and federal agencies have participated in the response to the emergency including the Department of Emergency Management, Sheriff's Office, County Administrative Office, Public Works, Facilities, and Parks, and Housing and Community Development.

FINANCING:

The Finance Section of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated on January 17, 2025, and demobilized on January 24, 2025; Staff continues to compile costs associated with response and recovery related to this emergency. The costs and the impacts to the County will continue to be evaluated and presented under separate financial reports and request for funding augmentations to the Board by the EOC Finance Section. The County received reimbursement for response costs from January 16- April 15, 2025, from Vistra on August 11, 2025, in the amount of \$470,537.66.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS:

This report and resolution are in alignment with the Board of Supervisors Strategic Plan Goals regarding Safe and Resilient Communities. The Monterey County Code of Ordinances, Title 2 - Administration, Chapter 2.68- Emergency Procedures and Organization, Section 2.68.060 - Power and duties of the Director of Emergency Management includes the authority to Recommend the County Administrative Officer, or the Chair of the Board of Supervisors in the absence of the County Administrative Officer, proclaim the existence or threatened existence of a "local emergency".

- 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>

Prepared by: Maria Trujillo, Administrative Secretary, x1905

Approved by: Kelsey Scanlon, Director of Emergency Management, x1902

Approved by: Michael Beaton, Assistant County Administrative Officer, x3835

Attachments:

Attachment A: Draft Resolution