

Riley Rhodes

From: Donovan Arteaga
Sent: Monday, February 9, 2026 5:28 PM
To: Riley Rhodes
Subject: Fw: What is the Next Step for Commission Review of County Draft BESS Ordinance?

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Hey Riley, this email should be posted online sent to the commissioners and printed for the day of the hearing. It should be added as the last item (written communications). Since this is technically about something NOT on the 2/11 agenda.

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From: Becky Steinbruner <ki6tkb@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, February 9, 2026 5:59:15 PM
To: Donovan Arteaga <Donovan.Arteaga@santacruzcountyca.gov>
Cc: Becky Steinbruner <ki6tkb@yahoo.com>
Subject: What is the Next Step for Commission Review of County Draft BESS Ordinance?

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Dear Planning Commissioners,
I am troubled by reading the minutes of your January 14, 2026 meeting that CDI Director Machado informed you of the timeline for the Draft BESS Ordinance review. This level of information was not presented to the Board of Supervisors or the public the day previous to Mr. Machado's report to your Commission

I appreciate Commissioner Shephard requesting a Study Session.

What level of environmental review will actually occur? Supervisors themselves seem unclear on what the process will be, and what level of environmental review will occur. The public has been informed via the January 13, 2026 Staff Report (financial impacts) that the environmental review of the Draft BESS Ordinance will occur concurrently with the environmental review of the proposed Draft BESS project at 90 Minto Road, currently in permitting process.

This is not right. The environmental review should be separate, holding the project developer to conduct a full EIR. The public has been informed that the Draft Ordinance will likely receive only a Supplemental EIR level of review, and the 90 Minto Road project will likewise enjoy a Supplemental EIR level of review. The public has been informed that the 90 Minto Road developer will submit the Initial Study for the project's environmental review, which will determine what categories of environmental impacts are included in this Supplemental EIR.

Planning Staff is unclear as to who will pay for the environmental review of the Ordinance or the 90 Minto Road project. Staff is unclear whether the independent environmental consultant hired to conduct review of the Ordinance and the 90 Minto Road project will review the Initial Study that is being crafted by the 90 Minto Road project developer.

All of this is very disturbing to those who want an adequate EIR for the 90 Minto Road BESS project and also the Draft BESS Ordinance. As written, the Ordinance allows removing substantial prime agricultural land from production, and puts thousands of residents in a Disadvantaged Community adjacent to the 90 Minto Road project at risk of flammable and explosive disasters unnecessarily.

Please schedule a Study Session for this matter at your earliest convenience so that your Commission is well-informed when the Ordinance and 90 Minto Road BESS project permitting comes your way.

Thank you.
Sincerely,
Becky Steinbruner