


SENATOR JOHN LAIRD



SB 283

Clean Energy Safety Act of 2025

SUMMARY

Senate Bill 283 provides a crucial tool and safeguard to ensure battery storage facilities are built and maintained with the highest level of safety and oversight by our local fire officials.

BACKGROUND

A disastrous fire broke out in January 2025 at the Moss Landing battery storage facility. The emergency prompted evacuations when a fire burned for several days, later reignited, and raised serious concerns within the community about toxic smoke, heavy metals, and ash.

Under existing law, battery energy storage systems (BESS) can be permitted locally or through the California Energy Commission's AB 205 Opt-In Certification Program. Although industry recognized safety standards have come a long way since Moss Landing's BESS development, there still lacks consistent state guidance on the permitting and development of BESS.

The state made recent strides to enhance BESS oversight and local coordination through SB 38 (Laird, Chapter 377, Statutes of 2023) which required local emergency plans, and SB 1383 (Hueso, Chapter 725, Statutes of 2022) which expanded the California Public Utilities Commission's (CPUC) enforcement over BESS. CPUC modified General Order 167 in March 2025 to implement and enforce maintenance and operation standards, including the enforcement of SB 38 (Laird, 2023) and add new safety standards for the operation of BESS. CPUC is actively inventorying BESS facilities to prioritize inspection and audits of all existing BESS facilities under CPUC oversight.

California established a landmark policy to use 100% renewable energy by 2045. Solar and wind power are key to meeting this goal, however grid reliability relies on BESS which stores energy for use when the sun is down and the wind is not blowing. There are

several major energy goals in California – move away from fossil fuels to a greener electrical grid, have safe and renewable energy sources, maintain affordability, and keep the lights on. The development of safe BESS is crucial to meeting these goals.

THIS BILL

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.

SPONSORS

California Professional Firefighters
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers