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MCE Clerk <clerk@mcecleanenergy.org>

Board Meeting Agenda Request - NextEra CORBY Project Contract

Deanna Cole <keepvacavillesafe2.0@yahoo.com>

Sun, Nov 23, 2025 at 10:52 PM

To: "bos5@bos.cccounty.us" <bos5@bos.cccounty.us>, "clerk@mceCleanEnergy.org" <clerk@mcecleanenergy.org>, "boardgroup@mcecleanenergy.org" <boardgroup@mcecleanenergy.org>, "interestedparties@mcecleanenergy.org" <interestedparties@mcecleanenergy.org>, "liz.alessio@countyofnapa.org" <liz.alessio@countyofnapa.org>, "sandre@cityoflarkspur.org" <sandre@cityoflarkspur.org>, "ebeckman@cortemadera.org" <ebeckman@cortemadera.org>, "mbelotz@danville.ca.gov" <mbelotz@danville.ca.gov>, "kbirdseye@ci.benicia.ca.us" <kbirdseye@ci.benicia.ca.us>, "bcoler@townoffairfaxca.gov" <bcoler@townoffairfaxca.gov>, "mebrown@solanocounty.com" <mebrown@solanocounty.com>, "kjacobs@novato.org" <kjacobs@novato.org>, "bkircher@townofrossca.gov" <bkircher@townofrossca.gov>, "tkullawa@sananselmo.gov" <tkullawa@sananselmo.gov>, "maika@cityofsanrafael.org" <maika@cityofsanrafael.org>, "jmccormick@lovelafayette.org" <jmccormick@lovelafayette.org>, "meadows@ci.oakley.ca.us" <meadows@ci.oakley.ca.us>, "bpainter@cityofnapa.org" <bpainter@cityofnapa.org>, "charles.palmases@cityofvallejo.net" <charles.palmases@cityofvallejo.net>, "mperrey@cityofmillvalley.gov" <mperrey@cityofmillvalley.gov>, "gquinto@elcerrito.gov" <gquinto@elcerrito.gov>, "hollithiertiburontowncouncil@gmail.com" <hollithiertiburontowncouncil@gmail.com>, "dbailey@herculesca.gov" <dbailey@herculesca.gov>, "mayor@walnut-creek.org" <mayor@walnut-creek.org>, "dmurphy@pinole.gov" <dmurphy@pinole.gov>, "laura.nakamura@cityofconcord.org" <laura.nakamura@cityofconcord.org>, "mary.sackett@marincounty.gov" <mary.sackett@marincounty.gov>, "swilkinson@cityofbelvedere.org" <swilkinson@cityofbelvedere.org>, "elizabethp@sanpabloca.gov" <elizabethp@sanpabloca.gov>, "msandhu@fairfield.ca.gov" <msandhu@fairfield.ca.gov>, "gthiel@moraga.ca.us" <gthiel@moraga.ca.us>, "sverose@sanramon.ca.gov" <sverose@sanramon.ca.gov>, "cesar_zepeda@ci.richmond.ca.us" <cesar_zepeda@ci.richmond.ca.us>, "bzorn@cityofmaritnez.org" <bzorn@cityofmaritnez.org>, "akobata@pittsburgca.gov" <akobata@pittsburgca.gov>

Dear Marin Clean Energy ("MCE") Board Members,

My name is Deanna Cole and I am a current MCE customer. This past Thursday, November 20, 2025 several of my neighbors attended your Board Meeting to bring to your attention, the strong opposition in our city/county regarding the current NextEra Corby BESS project proposed in Vacaville, California. I am drafting this letter to respectfully request that the Corby project be added to your next board meeting or one in the near future. We would like the opportunity to discuss this topic further and request that you reconsider your contract with NextEra on the grounds that the Corby project does not comply with Solano County's general plan as required by MCE's JPA.

I appreciate your consideration of our request. In the meantime, I have attached a copy of an article that was published in the SFGate on November 18, 2025 bringing to light the strong opposition in our area. If you have any questions or require anything further in order to add this item to your agenda, please feel free to reach out to me.

With sincerest thanks,

Deanna Cole

Signing on behalf of Keeping Vacaville Safe and 1,300+ opposing Solano County Residents



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This Bay Area city doesn't want to be part of Newsom's energy plan





Deanna Cole is a Vacaville resident and one of the organizers behind Keep Vacaville Safe, a movement in response to the proposed battery plant. The Corby Battery Plant would be built next to Cole's home along Kilkenny Road and Byrnes Road. Courtesy of Deanna Cole

By **Anabel Sosa**, Senior California Politics Reporter

Updated Nov 18, 2025 2:02 p.m.



 Listen Now: This Bay Area city doesn't want to be part of Newsom's energy plan 1x

13:11 

In early January, the massive Moss Landing Power Plant just north of Monterey caught fire, leaving an entire community mired in noxious air as the blaze burned for days. The plant, home to lithium ion batteries used for energy storage, was once the largest in the world — and the image of its toxic flames lighting up the California coastal sky looms large for residents of an idyllic agricultural city 140 miles away.

SFGATE



Last year, a lithium ion power plant was proposed on a 40-acre plot of land in Vacaville. The plant, called the Corby Battery Energy Storage System Project, could be installed as early as 2027, if approved by the state's energy commission. It would provide power to San Francisco along with other parts of the Bay Area, with contracts already confirmed with Clean Power SF and Marin Clean Energy. Residents of Solano County, significantly north of where the Moss Landing Power Plant fire broke out, have been pushing back on the state's plans to bring more battery plants to their community, fearing the same events that scarred Monterey County may unfold there.

Deanna Cole, a 53-year-old homeowner in Vacaville, is one of the organizers behind Keep Vacaville Safe, a movement that sprung up in 2023 in response to Menard Energy Storage's proposed project, also in Vacaville, that was ultimately rejected. Cole told SFGATE in a phone interview last week that she first learned about the Corby project when she received a letter last December from her next-door neighbor, 70-year-old Mike Geller. Geller told SFGATE in a phone call that he has lived there with his wife for 35 years and called the neighborhood "bucolic," with not much there besides fruit and almond trees.

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FILE: California Gov. Gavin Newsom, center, speaks during a press conference surrounded by workers, former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, second from left, and Jim Shandalov, vice president at NextEra Resources, third from left, at the

construction of the battery energy storage system for the future site of Proxima Solar Farm, on May 19, 2023, in Stanislaus County, Calif.

Getty Images

"Whether you own or rent the home you are living in, this project will have a profound impact in your life," wrote Geller in the letter, reviewed by SFGATE. Both Geller and Cole live on Kilkenny Road in Solano County; the Corby facility is slated to be built at the corner of Kilkenny and Byrnes roads. Geller said he had a "nagging suspicion" plans were underway when he learned that the Menard plant was proposed to be built over a mile away on the other side of the freeway the year before, and he said the project developers had been "less than forthcoming" about Corby.

He urged his neighbors to contact the California Energy Commission, the agency that is overseeing California's transition to clean energy, with concerns.



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"I took it upon myself to do the letter and taped it to all my neighbors' mailboxes," he told SFGATE. "I have solar panels on my home. It's all electric. I'm as green as the next guy."

But, he said, he is concerned about the process through which the state is taking on this construction. He warned his neighbors of the threats posed by electrical fires, noise, traffic and potential contamination, as well as the possibility that a looming battery storage facility would decrease their property values.

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Deanna Cole is a Vacaville resident and one of the organizers behind Keep Vacaville Safe, a movement in response to the proposed battery plant. The Corby Battery Plant would be built next to Cole's home along Kilkenny Road and Byrnes Road. Courtesy of Deanna Cole

Geller's letter was the first time Cole, who has lived with her husband in their Kilkenny Road home since 2003 after inheriting the property from her father-in-law, got wind of the project. She told SFGATE that representatives from NextEra Energy, the company responsible for operating the Corby plant, brought a few neighbors to a nearby Starbucks this past July to discuss the plans.

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"We came voicing our concerns," she said, listing off questions around noise and how their insurance premiums may change. Cole said at the end of the discussion, those representatives merely said they would voice their concerns to NextEra and get back to them.

"My response to that is, you've got to be kidding me. ... I was really frustrated with that — along with my neighbors — frustrated with that attempt," she said. Not long after the Starbucks meeting, the company hosted a town hall, which Cole likened to a "science fair."

"I felt like, if you ask them a question, each particular person would pass you on to the next person. There was never any real answer," she said.

Geller described the event, which took place at the Ulatis Community Center in Vacaville, similarly. "There weren't any chairs," he said. "They had poster boards and you could walk through the exhibit, but [there was] no chance for any public input."

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FILE: Battery storage rows at Moss Landing Power Plant.
BlackBoxGuild/Getty Images

Cole said the private property where Corby is slated to be built used to be an almond orchard — a symbol, she said, of Solano County as a rural agricultural hub. If approved, the sprawling energy storage plant would be literally across the street from her doorstep.

She said the fears of a possible fire spewing toxic air, let alone the depreciation of value in the home where she's raising her children, brings her and her husband "worry and some sleepless nights."

"I sometimes don't love where California is going, but I love California," Cole said.

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To meet the state's renewable energy goals, battery plants such as Corby are essential, the California Energy Commission argues. Not only should Corby move forward, according to the agency, but more communities should also expect to see battery plants pop up nearby.

'Clear and documented danger'

Earlier this month, the California Energy Commission held an informational public hearing in Vacaville, where 80 residents voiced their anxieties about the public health risks that could threaten their community. They specifically cited the Moss Landing fire, which smoldered for days, leaving schools shut down and residents feeling ill. Numerous mass action lawsuits have been filed against the two responsible utility companies after residents complained of health issues, anxiety and property devaluation.

"After watching the Moss Landing debacle, I cannot fathom that anyone would want to consider putting this type of facility so close to a residential area," resident Paul Troxell said during the Nov. 6 meeting.

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A fire burns at Moss Landing Power Plant on Jan. 17, 2025, on Pacific Coast Highway in Monterey Bay, Calif.
Anadolu/Getty Images

Mike Wood, also a resident of Vacaville, said that residents of Monterey County had been similarly reassured that safety would be a top priority when Moss Landing was being built. The Moss Landing battery plant, run by Vistra Corp., was completed in 2023 and considered one of the largest in the world.

The Vacaville Firefighters Association wrote a letter in opposition of the Corby plant, arguing that there “is a clear and documented danger” posed by the potential of lithium fires. They expressed concern that a significant fire could result in evacuations and severe damage to Interstate 80, while toxic gases could cause public health risks to residents and first responders.

“Our position is based on the risk the project poses to the health and safety of the public and our members. Bypassing local government and critical local funding mechanisms will only further increase this risk,” the letter stated. The union alluded to other, more remote candidates for a battery plant. Keep Vacaville Safe has suggested other locations for the plant, including a 1,500-acre industrial plot of land called Lambie Industrial Park, which is 13 miles away.

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NextEra Energy is one of the world's largest generators of renewable energy. The company said it has already invested \$12 billion in California and is responsible for a few battery and wind projects across the state, including in Solano County. It has built more than 50 battery projects in the U.S. and Canada.



Vacaville resident Mike Geller's home on Kilkenny Road.
Courtesy of Mike Geller

NextEra predicts that over the life of the Corby project, it will create jobs, attract new businesses and bring in \$70 million of tax revenue to the city to support "local initiatives," as explained in a public meeting. Josh Adams, NextEra's in-house fire safety expert, told residents during the public hearing that the battery system used in

Moss Landing is different from the one they will use at Corby, which he said will reduce the spread of fire. Corby will use "comparatively safer technology" that will "reduce the threat of fire spreading," Adams said.

The laws of the land

In 2018, Gov. Jerry Brown signed Senate Bill 100, the 100 Percent Clean Energy Act of 2018, in which the state pledged to make a full transition to clean energy by Dec. 31, 2045. The torch has now been passed over to Newsom to guide California in its biggest energy transformation in a century.

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Newsom has long praised batteries as the key to achieving that goal. Battery energy storage systems, also called BESS, help store wind and solar power for times when the wind isn't blowing and the sun isn't shining, enabling renewable sources to provide energy for communities on an as-needed basis. Newsom is steadfast on the plan to make California fully dependent on clean energy and has bragged about the state building battery plants at a pace "never seen before."

The state projects it will need 52,000 megawatts of storage capacity by 2045 to achieve its clean energy goal. In 2022, the state fast-tracked its energy storage plants to meet those goals. That move allows the energy commission to bypass local ordinances, which residents of Vacaville complain leave them out of the decision process.



Deanna Cole is a Vacaville resident and one of the organizers behind Keep Vacaville Safe, a movement in response to the proposed battery plant. The Corby Battery Plant would be built next to Cole's home along Kilkenny Road and Byrnes Road. Courtesy of Deanna Cole

Sarah Dunn, another resident and organizer of Keep Vacaville Safe, told SFGATE she points the finger at two pieces of legislation in particular that she says allow the state to overlook Vacaville's local representation. One law is Assembly Bill 205, passed in 2022, and the other is Senate Bill 254, which was part of a last-minute energy package signed by Newsom this September. AB 205 gives the energy commission the power to approve the plants and takes control away from the local city and county, while SB 254 expanded on that law to require that plants have some local benefit to the community and requires the community to provide evidence if they want to argue otherwise.

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Dunn assumes that Solano County is a desirable location for the battery plants because it is affordable and has one of the larger PG&E substations for 50 miles. She reasons that “to buy land over there is more expensive,” referring to the western Bay Area, so the companies opted to go east instead.

“With AB 205 and SB 254, they don’t need to follow any zoning or local ordinances, so they can purchase any land they want,” she said. The legislation essentially gives the power back to the state as a way to expedite these permitting processes.

Dunn helped form the citizen coalition after the Menard plant was proposed. The community successfully nixed the project after residents brought complaints to the city council.



Deanna Cole is a Vacaville resident and one of the organizers behind Keep Vacaville Safe, a movement in response to the proposed battery plant. The Corby Battery Plant would be built next to Cole’s home along Kilkenny Road and Byrnes Road. Courtesy of Deanna Cole

“Ever since then, I’ve been a vocal advocate to make sure this situation doesn’t happen again,” she told SFGATE.

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Charlie Lawlor, spokesperson for Sen. Josh Becker, a Democrat who represents Menlo Park and the author of SB 254, disputed Dunn's characterization that SB 254 erases community voices. Lawlor told SFGATE in an email that the law still keeps the public's voice as part of the decision process and still allows residents to give public comments.

The bill, he said, made only "two small changes to ensure" that the commission can manage the "rigorous processes for permitting and environmental review of energy projects."

Last week, Newsom's office announced that the state has reached a new milestone: 16,942 megawatts of battery storage. The governor spent the week at COP30 in Belém, Brazil, where he bragged that California has already reached one-third of its estimated energy capacity goal with 20 years to go. He used California's milestone as a chance to take a jab at the Donald Trump administration's fossil fuel agenda, asserting, "California won't stand by and watch."

"Donald Trump's reckless energy agenda puts China first and America last," he said. "... We're deploying more battery storage than any state in America, building a stronger grid, cutting pollution, and making abundant clean energy even more affordable."

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Stacey Shepard, a spokesperson for the California Energy Commission, defended the Corby plant, telling SFGATE in an email that the agency is "committed to listening to public input and always prioritizes the

community on any determination." Shepard also said that regulators will consider Solano County's input and assess any impacts. Once the staff assessment is published, there will be a 60-day comment period before the plan is approved.

SFGATE reached out to Assemblywoman Lori Wilson and state Sen. Christopher Cabaldon, who represent Solano County in the Legislature, for comment but did not hear back in time for publication.



FILE: California Gov. Gavin Newsom, right, former Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, center, and Jim Shandalov, vice president at NextEra Energy Resources, walk along the construction of the battery energy storage systems for the future site of Proxima Solar Farm on May 19, 2023, in Stanislaus County, Calif.

Getty Images

There are more fights to come for Vacaville. A second proposed plant is also expected in Vacaville from Middle River Power. It is slated to be built on the other end of Kilkenny Road, a mile away from the Corby plant. Middle River Power recently met this month with the city and plans to put it in operation by January 2027.

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The Vacaville City Council recently submitted a letter in opposition of the Middle River facility, with members writing that while the city “wholeheartedly supports the State’s transition to clean energy, we cannot support a process ... that overrides local planning and endangers our community’s safety and economic future.”

“[People] don’t understand, there’s more coming,” Cole told SFGATE. “I want to keep the fire burning, get the word out there.” For now, Cole said, she is “holding onto hope.”

Editor’s note: This story was updated at 8:30 a.m., Nov. 18, to correct the timeline for opening for the Corby facility.

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Anabel Sosa

SENIOR CALIFORNIA POLITICS REPORTER

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