



October 28, 2025

Testimony of Thomas Currao, Chief of Fire Prevention, FDNY

“Oversight: Fire Safety and Permitting Approval for Energy Storage Systems”

Good afternoon, Chair Ariola and Members of the Fire and Emergency Management Committee. My name is Thomas Currao and I am the Chief of Fire Prevention with the New York City Fire Department. I am joined today Joseph Loftus, Chief of Haz-Mat. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss today’s oversight topic: fire safety and permitting approval for energy storage systems.

The FDNY approach to achieving its life safety and fire prevention mission is realized via a layered, multi-faceted risk-based analysis and decision-making process. This begins with a review of the specific Battery Energy Storage System that a manufacturer is applying to install within New York City.

The Bureau of Fire Prevention takes this responsibility very seriously and thoroughly examines, from an engineering, fire prevention and hazard mitigation perspective, full scale testing that is completed as per standard protocols of a Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory such as Underwriters Laboratory. This testing mimics various component and system failures and provides test results that depict how the equipment contained a malfunction, so that a thermal runaway event does not initiate. It also demonstrates how well the equipment’s protective systems perform to contain a thermal event.

It is important to note that the FDNY has exclusive authority and responsibility to grant Certificates of Approval (COA) for Battery Energy Storage Systems for use in New York City as required by NYC Fire Code 112 and Fire Code 608.5. Although the FDNY has no authority regarding the specific location of installation - that topic is best addressed by others such as the Department of City Planning or the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice - we at the FDNY represent a multi-step safety gateway ensuring a high-level protective performance of the battery energy storage system installed at any location.

This is primarily achieved in three ways:

- ✓ Contractor Submittal of a plan for installation of the equipment, for outdoor systems greater than 250kwh, based on the FDNY Certificate of Approval for the equipment, a Hazard Mitigation Analysis, and Manufacturer Specifications
- ✓ Contractor Submittal of a plan for the design and installation of the Fire Suppression Systems as per National Fire Protection Association Standard 15
- ✓ Contractor Submittal of a plan for the design and installation of a Fire Alarm System

Although the layers may seem redundant, this is a vital check and balance process involving multiple units with the Bureau of Fire Prevention. Each one of these units conducts an independent review and, only upon satisfactory assessment, will issue a Letter of Acceptance for each system.

A Letter of Acceptance is but step one of the life safety and fire prevention process involved with Battery Energy Storage Systems. There are many other safeguards, risk mitigation and fire

prevention measures that are enumerated as per the NYC Fire Code, Rules of the City of NY and NFPA Standard 855 such as:

- **Certificate of Fitness Holder:** System Shall be operated and maintained under the supervision of a Certificate of Fitness Holder issued by the FDNY having necessary qualifications
- **Emergency Management Plan:** The owner, manufacturer or installer of a stationary energy storage system shall have an emergency management plan that includes procedures for notifications, the provision of technical assistance, mitigation of hazardous conditions, decommissioning and restoration of normal operations
- **Energy Storage Management System Monitoring:** All Stationary Energy Storage Systems shall be designed with an Energy Storage Management System that transmits data regarding energy storage system status and temperature to a remote monitoring facility or other approved location
- **Fire Protection and Hazard Mitigation:** Stationary Energy Storage Systems shall be designed to address the hazards of full-scale testing, including protecting the Stationary Energy Storage System and the building or enclosure that houses that system with fire barriers, fire alarm systems, explosion mitigation, gas detection and other emergency alarm systems, fire extinguishing systems and ventilation systems
- **Central Station Monitoring:** All fire protection systems protecting the Stationary Energy Storage System installation, including any fire protection system, fire and gas

detection or other emergency alarm system shall be monitored by an approved central station

- **Notification to the FDNY:** Notice of commissioning and decommissioning shall be given to the local fire company and Hazardous Materials Operations for their familiarization with the system, its operation, the safety systems incorporated and actions to take in case of emergency in accordance with the emergency management plan
- **E-STOP:** Emergency Shut Down must be provided close to the Fire Department Connection

Once an applicant receives the necessary Letters of Acceptance, it must apply to the Bureau of Fire Prevention for a Project Authorization to begin installing the Battery Energy Storage System. This alerts the FDNY that actual construction will begin based on the submitted plans.

Finally, upon completion of the installation, the applicant must schedule three inspections for an onsite review of the installation and the Fire Alarm and Fire Suppression Systems. These inspections are completed by the Bureau of Fire Prevention's (1) Bulk Fuel Safety Unit, (2) the Fire Alarm Inspection Unit, and (3) the Rangehood Unit.

It is only upon a satisfactory inspection across this full spectrum of Fire Code requirements and receiving sign off from the Department of Buildings Office of Technical Certification and Research, that an Operating Permit is issued to the applicant.

The Fire Department has also trained to respond effectively if there ever is an emergency involving a battery energy storage system. Haz-Mat Operations has a multi-layered safety

protocol in place for such responses.

Before an Energy Storage System is commissioned, Haz-Mat Operations and the FDNY's Emerging Technologies Chief visit the site to perform a familiarization drill. The drill is performed with the FDNY certificate of fitness holder for the site and is also attended by local fire units and the Special Operations Command Haz-Mat battalion chief.

A detailed emergency information card (EIC) is prepared by the Emerging Technologies Chief and made available to all members via the incident command application. All members receive a comprehensive training document that details tactics and instruction specific to emergencies involving battery energy storage systems. If there is an incident at an ESS, it will draw a robust Haz-Mat response, including the Haz-Mat battalion chief, the Chief in charge of Haz-Mat operations, a nationally trained Haz-Mat technician unit, and Haz-Mat Company 1 (HM1).

HM1 is the nation's premier Haz-Mat response unit. It is comprised of the most highly trained firefighters in the nation, many of whom teach battery response across the country. They are the only fire company in America that focuses strictly on hazardous materials. Many of them have well over 1,000 hours of training and have earned multiple degrees and certificates.

The risk management functions of the Bureau of Fire Prevention are mutually supported by the preparedness, training, equipping and response capabilities of the FDNY Operations and Special Operations Command, particularly the highly trained members of the Hazardous Materials Response Group. These FDNY entities have been ahead of the curve in studying the response

challenges of battery energy storage systems and they work in concert to study and stay abreast of the latest developments regarding energy storage system technology. Training and response procedures are specifically tailored to the systems, with revisions and upgrades being made as technologies evolve.

The FDNY's Risk Management approach consists of both a Fire Code that is widely recognized as one of the most robust, comprehensive and strict codes in the country as well as a response that is executed by skilled and knowledgeable firefighters who are specifically trained to address ESS emergencies. As a result, the Department's approach to this technology is considered a benchmark for the safety of urban energy storage systems, exceeding the typical standards that exist in other jurisdictions. We have achieved this level of stringency through local customization, risk analysis based on thorough testing, strong enforcement, and emergency preparedness and response. Battery energy storage systems are a complex technology, so the Department's regulation and response to them is intentional and thorough.

Thank you for your attention to this important subject. I would be happy to take your questions at this time.



**Submitted Testimony of Con Edison to the New York City Council Committee on Fire and
Emergency Management
on Fire Safety and Permitting Approval for Community Energy Storage Facilities
October 28, 2025**

For more than 200 years, Con Edison has delivered safe, reliable, and resilient energy to run New York City. Today, Con Edison plays a leading role in transitioning New York City to a clean energy future. Through our Clean Energy Commitment to support City and State clean energy laws, we are investing in, building, and operating an innovative energy infrastructure system that is allowing customers to adopt electric heating and transportation options, as well as building a resilient and reliable grid of the future.

Con Edison would like to thank the NYC Council Committee on Fire and Emergency Management for holding this hearing and providing the public with an opportunity to testify on this important topic. Battery Storage is a key aspect of electrification reliability. Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) can charge during off-peak hours to help capture excess available renewable energy, and discharge energy when demand is high, which enhances reliability and resiliency to the energy grid.

Delivering safe energy and electricity is paramount to Con Edison's mission. To help ensure our projects are safe, we partner and work closely with the FDNY regarding interconnection and operation of BESS facilities. We do this by stringently abiding by the relevant NYC Fire codes and procedures relating to battery energy storage facilities. In addition, Con Edison participates in annual joint emergency drills with the FDNY (as well as NYS and Federal partner agencies) to address emerging issues, streamline processes, and ensure that we are as prepared as possible for any potential event involving a BESS facility.

In addition to FDNY alignment, community engagement and education around battery storage is paramount as well. We always strive to be a trusted partner to our customers, and the communities we serve and communicate that their safety is our priority. Con Edison has a deep commitment to the communities we serve and wants to ensure our service is safe and reliable for all New Yorkers.

We believe today's discussions on energy storage facilities will promote better collaboration among all stakeholders involved in safety and permitting for these facilities, Con Edison stands ready to continue this important work, safely.



October 28, 2025

**Testimony of Linda Baran
President & CEO
Staten Island Chamber of Commerce**

Before the

New York City Council Committees on Fire & Emergency Management

Regarding

Fire Safety and Permitting Approval for Community Energy Storage Facilities

On behalf of the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce, thank you Chair Ariola, members of the Committee, and staff for the opportunity to submit testimony on the important issue of fire safety and permitting approval for community energy storage facilities.

The Chamber fully supports investments that strengthen our power grid and advance New York City's transition to a more sustainable energy future. Properly planned and managed, community energy storage facilities can play an important role in building resiliency and reliability into our system. However, the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce is deeply concerned by the absence of a clear regulatory framework to govern how and where these facilities are sited. These facilities can currently be developed "as of right," bypassing the layers of review and oversight that are required for virtually every other type of business and infrastructure project in our city.

This "as of right" status is particularly troubling for Staten Island. For decades, Staten Island has shouldered the City's environmental burdens, from the Fresh Kills landfill to toxic industrial sites along the North Shore. The long legacy of ill-planned development and "as of right" construction has brought a host of negative consequences on Staten Island communities, from long-term health issues, pollution, and strain on municipal resources. Adding energy storage facilities without any structured review process risks repeating that pattern, not only further burdening Staten Island neighborhoods but also introducing serious health and safety concerns such as fire hazards, chemical exposure, and increased risks for already vulnerable residents, while depriving the community of transparency and fairness it deserves.

The Chamber believes a thoughtful regulatory framework must be established to ensure these projects are integrated into communities responsibly. Transparency is essential: residents and business owners should be fully informed of proposed projects and have opportunities to weigh in on their potential impacts. The community impacts of energy storage facilities should be calculated. It is unfair to require Staten Island to bear these costs without offsetting investments. As we plan for a clean energy future, we must also protect space for the kinds of commercial and mixed-use development that drive economic growth and opportunity on Staten Island.

The Chamber urges the Council and relevant agencies to take action now to create a regulatory structure that balances the city's climate and resiliency goals with the needs of the communities asked to host these facilities. We stand ready to work with you to develop policies that both strengthen the grid and protect transparency and economic vitality.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and for your commitment to ensuring a safe, sustainable, and equitable energy future for all New Yorkers.



The PEAK Coalition

Testimony to the New York City Council Committee on Fire and Emergency Management Oct 28, 2025

Chair Ariola and members of the Committee on Fire and Emergency Management,

The PEAK Coalition—UPROSE, THE POINT CDC, New York City Environmental Justice Alliance (NYC-EJA), New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI), and Clean Energy Group (CEG)— is a campaign to end the long-standing pollution burden from power plants on the city’s most climate-vulnerable people. Our coalition represents millions of New Yorkers living and working near polluting, unreliable, and expensive fossil fuel peaker plants in communities like the South Bronx and Sunset Park. We thank you for this opportunity to testify on fire safety and permitting approval for community energy storage facilities.

The current energy infrastructure in New York is too dangerous. Most power plants in New York run on natural gas. In the past fourteen years, the State had 126 natural gas distribution incidents resulting in 37 explosions, 97 injuries, 12 fatalities, and more than \$30 million in incident costs. Tens of thousands of gas leaks happen in New York every year, costing taxpayers and residents over \$70 million annually and contributing to 2,000 excess deaths a year in New York City. Gas-fired power plants, many of which are over 50 years old, also pose another weakness for energy reliability. New York City nearly had a mass outage event this past winter because the city’s largest power plant couldn’t find a replacement part that was made almost 70 years ago. A recent study by FracTracker Alliance further found that newer gas pipelines are actually more prone to leakages and other hazards. New Yorkers witness the daily cost and consequences of aging or poorly maintained infrastructure, as seen with the MTA; we cannot allow the same to happen to our energy grid.

Energy storage is an essential component that moves New York towards a more reliable, affordable, and healthier power grid. Our coalition has long advocated for the development of battery energy storage systems across New York City because of their effectiveness. Energy storage couples well with most energy generation sources to increase their efficiency and serve as a resilience measure when power generators, renewable or otherwise, are unavailable. Particularly, we have advocated for the use of battery energy storage systems as a replacement for New York City’s peaker power plants. Many of these facilities run no more than a couple of dozen hours per year, yet cost hundreds of millions of dollars to remain on standby. Research by NYC-EJA has also identified peakers as sources of increased neighborhood heat and thus greater heat vulnerability, which is gravely concerning, as they tend to operate on the hottest days of the year. Battery energy storage systems are well-suited to replace these crumbling, expensive, and unreliable fossil fuel peakers.

The State has set a mandate to develop 6,000 MW of energy storage capacity by 2030 and recognized that most of that capacity should be located downstate. New York City and State already have some of the highest standards for energy storage fire safety in the country, thanks to the work of FDNY personnel, retired FDNY personnel, the State’s Inter-Agency Fire Safety

Working Group, volunteer and professional fire services in nearby municipalities, and other relevant professionals who have engaged with our communities over the last few years. On October 27, 2025, members of the PEAK Coalition visited a BESS site located directly across from multiple public schools and a grocery store, alongside some of these energy and fire professionals from across the state. Their knowledge and hard work in helping us get back on track with building energy storage and making our grid more resilient must be respected.

New York City already has the highest fire safety standards, far above what the State has recently required for battery energy storage systems. Certifications such as UL1973, UL9540, and UL9540 (A), applied on top of the State's NFPA 855 standard, ensure that Iron-Phosphate battery chemistry found in BESS installations is safer than traditional Nickel-Manganese-Cobalt battery chemistry found in smartphones, e-mobility devices, and other appliances that have caused fire incidents in New York City. There have been no incidents involving battery energy storage systems in New York City.

Growing concern about the environmental impacts of BESS fires and fire response has prompted contamination studies looking at the air quality, water, and soil contamination following an incident. Following the three incidents in New York, an Inter-Agency Fire Safety Working Group concluded that there were no reported injuries and no harmful levels of toxins detected in the air quality, soil, and water data collected in the days following the incidents.

An additional review by the American Clean Power Association of 35 large-scale BESS fire incidents across the US found that airborne emissions are confined to the immediate fire scene, and nearby water and soil samples didn't contain hazardous contaminants. In effect, battery energy storage systems have not been found to pose a higher level of danger warranting significant additional operational capabilities beyond the FDNY's approach to structural fires, many of which already include energy storage systems due to the prevalence of electronic devices.

Clean energy is an essential part of New York City's future, not only because it is a moral investment, but because it is a responsible investment for safety, for affordability, for reliability, and for economic development. Compared with the natural gas infrastructure present across all communities, including gas infrastructure inside and around residential zones, battery storage offers a safer solution to New Yorkers' current and future energy demands. Their siting and development should be easier in any neighborhoods that welcome them and are necessary in neighborhoods facing higher heat vulnerability, energy bills, and blackout or brownout frequencies. We should lead the nation in advancing energy storage development, or risk being left behind.



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Testimony for Committee on Fire Management and Safety October 28, 2025

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Thank you to the Fire and Safety Management Committee Chair Council Member Joanne Ariola for the opportunity to submit written testimony.

My name is Faiza Azam and I am the Climate and Labor Organizer for ALIGN: The Alliance for a Greater New York. ALIGN brings together labor, climate, and community for a more just and sustainable New York. We co-coordinate the Climate Works for All Coalition—a group of labor, community, student, parent, faith, and environmental justice organizations fighting climate change and inequality in New York City. Our campaigns move us towards an equitable economy, a resilient, livable and healthy climate, and prioritize justice for low income Black and Brown communities across New York City.

From devastating flooding to poor air quality caused by greenhouse gases, students, teachers, and faculty often are among those first impacted when a climate disaster strikes. Central to our work is our Green, Healthy Schools campaign, which primarily focuses on creating energy efficient public school buildings because New York City's students, teachers, parents, and school staff deserve safe and healthy spaces to work, learn and play. Our campaign supported the passage of Local Law 99, important legislation that aimed to ensure NYC public buildings, especially school buildings, implemented rooftop solar panels up to 100 megawatts.

I am here today to advocate for the passage of Int 354, legislation that would require the Department of Citywide Administrative Services to identify city-owned energy storage lots for up to 300 megawatts of capacity by 2030 – especially for solar panels in NYC Public School Buildings. This legislation is necessary to support the increase in school buildings currently scheduled to be electrified and upgraded in the coming year. This is our coalition's long term vision for Green, Healthy Schools.

We are proud to stand with labor on this issue and engage union membership in this plan. We see workers, from teachers to nurses to janitors, mobilizing for Green, Healthy Schools, public solar and energy storage. New York City residents work in presently poor building conditions every day, and they deserve to make a living without putting their health at risk. Int 354 is an investment in the New York City workforce, New York City students, and New York City families. We strongly urge this bill's passage in order to make the City healthier and more resilient while creating thousands of union, family sustaining jobs and saving the city in energy costs.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Faiza Azam



**Testimony of Alia Soomro, Deputy Director for New York City Policy
New York League of Conservation Voters
City Council Committee on Fire and Emergency Management
Oversight Hearing on Fire Safety and Permitting Approval for
Community Energy Storage Facilities
October 28, 2025**

My name is Alia Soomro and I am the Deputy Director for New York City Policy at the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV). NYLCV is a statewide environmental advocacy organization representing over 30,000 members in New York City. Thank you, Chair Ariola and members of the Committee on Fire and Emergency Management for the opportunity to testify.

I am here to speak today about the important benefits of battery energy storage systems (BESS) across New York City. These systems, along with renewable energy sources such as solar and wind, are a vital and safe technology solution not only for the clean energy transition to address climate change and improve public health—particularly for disadvantaged communities—but to make our energy grid more resilient and efficient. We strongly urge the City Council and Adams Administration to show leadership when it comes to making BESS a top priority.

Today my comments focus on 4 areas: what battery energy storage systems are, existing safety regulations in NYC, clarifying the difference between BESS and e-mobility lithium-ion batteries, and why this technology is important from an environmental and public health perspective.

What are Battery Energy Storage Systems?

As New York State transitions to renewable energy technologies like wind and solar, energy storage can make clean energy more dependable such as when the wind isn't blowing or the sun isn't shining. These systems are back up energy sources for homes or businesses; they store extra electricity produced when the wind is blowing hardest or when the sun is brightest, and saves for later when the weather changes or the sun goes down. BESS can also reduce utility costs for New Yorkers by providing the grid with cheaper power during periods of high energy demand.

NYC Safety Regulations for Energy Storage Systems

Concerns about BESS fire safety are certainly understandable, but those concerns should not prevent us from deploying this critically important technology when FDNY leads the nation in its fire prevention standards and safety protocols.

Battery energy storage systems are heavily regulated at the federal, state, and local level. New York City has some of the strictest BESS safety rules in the world. Every BESS site must meet rigorous standards and is reviewed for safety by both FDNY and the NYC Department of Buildings (DOB). Moreover, all energy storage systems authorized for installation in New York must have undergone many stages of rigorous third-party safety testing under UL standards, and then individual BESS installations have required project design and equipment reviews and inspections by FDNY and DOB, and are equipped with built-in safety precautions.

At the federal level, construction and safety code standards are developed collaboratively, involving years of consensus-building between technology experts and State and local code/building officials.

The most widely recognized battery energy storage safety standards include Underwriter Laboratories (UL) certification and compliance with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards.

- International Code Council (ICC) — developed the International Fire Code (IFC) and revises it every three years
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) — NFPA is a U.S.-based nonprofit organization that develops and publishes standards relating to fire and building safety that are recognized and respected around the world. The national standard for battery energy storage safety, NFPA 855, provides requirements for the design, installation, commissioning, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of battery energy storage facilities.
- Underwriters Laboratories (UL) Standards — UL is a third-party certification company founded in 1894 that develops industry-wide safety standards for a wide range of electrical products and lays out stringent testing protocols to demonstrate product safety. While other third-party companies also provide similar standards and certification services, UL is the “gold standard” and the most common in the U.S.

At the [state level](#), in July, 2023, Governor Kathy Hochul announced the creation of a new [Inter-Agency Fire Safety Working Group](#) (FSWG) to ensure the safety and security of energy storage systems across the state. Updates and resources can be found on the [Working Group’s webpage](#). On [July 25, 2025, New York officially adopted updated energy storage safety codes](#) based on the FSWG’s recommendations, further cementing the State’s commitment to safe deployment. A number of fire safety leaders, including the FDNY Commissioner, applauded the adoption of the New York State Fire Prevention and Building Code Council for adopting updated fire safety regulations for battery energy storage systems in [this statement](#). We urge FDNY to align its permitting requirements for small residential and medium-scale energy storage systems with the newly enacted NYS Fire Code, which was developed through broad stakeholder engagement.

At the local level, New York City has *additional* codes and safety standards. All code, location, spacing, and other local requirements must be met before a project is installed. In addition to

general code compliance, additional site-specific protections may be required to be addressed by operations and emergency procedures, and fire service coordination.

- FDNY has a separate process to approve individual stationary energy storage products for use in NYC. In addition to equipment approvals, FDNY has a site-specific approval process for each project. More info on FDNY's requirements can be found [here](#).
- The NYC Fire Code has an entire section (608) devoted to Stationary Energy Storage Systems.
- The Office of Technical Certification and Research has a similar equipment approval process for the New York City Department of Buildings (DOB). More info on DOB requirements can be found [here](#).

Energy Storage Systems vs E-Bike Lithium Ion Batteries

Battery energy storage systems are different from the mostly unregulated lithium-ion batteries used for e-bikes. Over the past couple of years, there has been a lot of news coverage about e-mobility devices catching fire, so we certainly understand concerns about safety. However, it is extremely important to distinguish e-bike lithium ion battery fires with BESS, the latter of which are much safer under current city regulatory standards. [FDNY and DOB have strenuous standards, regulations, and annual inspections for battery energy storage systems on buildings](#). Unlike e-bike lithium-ion batteries in use—which can be safe when properly regulated, but many of the ones that have caught fire are *not* regulated or tested for individual devices, are charged improperly due to lack of access to safe charging, or are second hand—the batteries used in energy storage systems must be made to specifications by [UL Standards & Engagement](#), the product testing and safety company. Installing energy storage systems are highly regulated and need to be approved by FDNY and DOB *before* they're installed on buildings.

Public Health and Environmental Benefits of BESSs

Energy storage facilities also play a critical role in the state's efforts to reduce the emissions that contribute to climate change and help the state achieve its ambitious climate goals under the [Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act \(Climate Act\)](#), which codified a goal of 1,500 MW of energy storage by 2025 and 3,000 MW by 2030. In June 2024, New York's Public Service Commission expanded the goal to 6,000 MW by 2030.

Furthermore, BESS is not only a key pillar in the State and City's transition to clean energy but essential for improving local air quality by moving away from high-emissions, dirty, polluting "peaker" plants." Fossil fuel-based peaker plants, currently located overwhelmingly in environmental justice communities throughout the five boroughs, are badly outdated and contribute significantly to respiratory illness, affecting children and seniors in particular. Replacing these peaker plants with community BESS is therefore an environmental justice priority for the City. According to the New York City Department of Building's methodology, reaching the 750 megawatt target recently set by the state for NYC community BESS

deployment would result in the removal of approximately 136,000 tons of CO₂ per year.¹ This would be equivalent to taking about 25,000 gas-powered cars off the streets of New York City.²

BESS also contributes to grid infrastructure at no cost to households. Utility upgrades such as new substations or electrical feeders often result in higher bills for customers. By contrast, community BESS is developed independently from the utility and does not factor into any rate calculation. In fact, using Con Edison's methodology, at the target 750 megawatts of BESS deployed in the City, community BESS would add approximately \$170 million per year in grid value.³ Battery projects built locally, near where electricity is consumed in residential areas, is essential to help alleviate grid transmission congestion and make sure people have access to cleaner electricity when they need it, at a lower cost than upgrading the transmission grid.

Additionally, we urge the City Council to promptly bring Intro 354 of 2024 to a full Council vote before the end of the year. NYLCV supports Intro 354, sponsored by Council Member Nurse, because the bill would require the Commissioner of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), in coordination with the Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability, to identify city-owned lots suitable for installing energy storage systems (ESS), develop a plan to achieve the amount of energy storage capacity specified in the bill, and make annual progress reports. The bill would require that the energy storage capacity of ESSs on city-owned lots be at least 300 megawatts (MW) by the end of 2030 and at least 400 MW by the end of 2035.

By allowing the use of city-owned lots for energy storage, Intro 354 addresses a significant opportunity to increase the City's capacity to store and manage energy more effectively. Intro 354 complements the City's goal to install [500 megawatts of energy storage](#) installed citywide by 2025 and aligns with one of the goals outlined in [PlaNYC](#), which is to maximize climate infrastructure on City-owned property on all viable City-owned property by 2035. Furthermore, this legislation promotes transparency and accountability by mandating regular reporting on progress toward these energy storage targets.

Clean energy storage is a smart and environmentally friendly investment in our City which will result in safer, cleaner, and healthier communities.

NYLCV is proud to support BESS facilities and we urge the City Council and Adams Administration to take leadership promoting BESS and combat disinformation to ensure these projects are continuing to be implemented in a safe manner.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

¹ Based on DOB Local Law 97 regulations for the "total emissions spread" resulting from off-site energy storage.

² Based on EPA Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator: <https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator>.

³ Based on Con Edison's \$226 per kW-yr Marginal Cost of Service (MCOS), which is used to value peak grid injections under the Value of Distributed Energy Resources (VDER) "value stack."



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New York City Council
Committee on Fire and Emergency Management
Oversight - Fire Safety and Permitting Approval for Community Energy Storage Facilities
October 28, 2025

Chairperson Ariola and members of the committee,
Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Josh Kellermann and I am the Director of Policy and Research at Climate Jobs New York. I am in support of Intro 354 and expanding battery storage facilities throughout New York City for several reasons.

Batteries Help Meet Our Climate Goals and Create Good Union Jobs

Large scale battery storage is essential if we are going to meet our state's climate goals. Solar and wind power are intermittent and must be stored during times of low energy demand and then deployed to meet peak energy demand. Without this, we cannot achieve a diverse energy mix to ensure a more reliable grid and we cannot achieve American energy independence.¹

In addition, the growth of this sector can lead to the creation of good, local union jobs with family sustaining wages, health and retirement benefits and the opportunity for career advancement. Skilled union workers ensure these projects are built safely, on time, and on budget. There are some labor standards attached to battery storage projects that would help create good middle class jobs, such as prevailing wage on projects that are 1MW and above, but we need to continue to expand the policy framework for ensuring all battery storage jobs are good jobs for our City's residents and the overall economy.²

Intro 354 Should be Passed Immediately

Intro 354 will make NYC a leader in battery storage development. If this bill is passed, the City will have a positive obligation to build out its battery storage infrastructure on city land that is appropriate and suitable for such development. This will reduce the strain on the grid, make our city more resilient and create good union jobs building and maintaining these systems.

¹ NYS, Governor Hochul Announces Approval of New York's Nation-Leading Six Gigawatts Energy Storage Roadmap, at <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-approval-new-yorks-nation-leading-six-gigawatts-energy-storage>

² DSPTCH, Understanding Prevailing Wage Rules for NYSEDA Incentivized Projects, at <https://www.dsptch.work/blog-posts/understanding-prevailing-wage-rules-for-nyserda-incentivized-projects>

Batteries Reduce Costs for Ratepayers

Large scale battery storage is essential for reducing energy costs for ratepayers. Batteries can store energy during low cost periods and deploy that cheap energy during high cost periods, reducing peak power demand and peak power costs.³

Batteries Storage Is Not Dangerous

Battery storage facilities are significantly less dangerous than they are made out to be. In late 2023, NY's Inter-Agency Fire Safety Working Group recently conducted an incident analysis of every battery storage facility fire in NY to date and found that there were no reported injuries and no harmful levels of toxins detected in the air, soil, or water in the days following the incidents. The report also found that based on information available as of December 1, 2023 "there is no evidence of significant off-site migration of contaminants associated with the fires."⁴

Battery Storage Batteries Are Different from E-Bike and Scooter Batteries

Battery storage batteries are not e-bike and scooter batteries. Many of these consumer electronics batteries are not tested for safety and are produced in countries with few manufacturing standards. Bulk storage batteries are approved by the Underwriters Laboratory and have undergone rigorous testing and certification. Also, many battery storage batteries are produced right here in New York State, creating local jobs for New Yorkers.⁵

Like Any Technology, Battery Storage Needs Appropriate Rules and Regulations

We need appropriate zoning and permitting rules, notification to first responders about each facility and a clear facility-specific fire-response plan, updated fire-safety codes and training for local fire personnel. This is all being done right now. The state and local jurisdictions have all responded to the concerns of communities about this technology. The concerns have not been dismissed but instead have been dealt with directly to create a safe and effective technology.

There is Risk in Everything

Finally, let me note that there is risk in every energy source. Gas pipelines have exploded destroying entire residential buildings in NYC, coal plants pollute the air and water, gas-powered cars can catch fire, oil spills cause widespread damage to ecosystems. Potential risks associated with batteries should not disqualify an essential technology, but should simply lead to improved safety systems and better technology to reduce the risk.

Thank you,
Josh Kellermann
Climate Jobs New York
917-916-3447
jkellermann@climatejobsny.org

³ American Clean Power, Energy Storage: Lowers Electricity Costs & Reduces Ratepayer Bills, at <https://cleanpower.org/resources/energy-storage-costs-fact-sheet/>

⁴ NYS, Initial Findings Released From Inter-Agency Fire Safety Working Group On Emergency Response, at <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/About/Newsroom/2023-Announcements/2023-12-21-Governor-Hochul-Announces-Results-of-Fire-Safety-Working-Group>

⁵ American Clean Power, Claims vs. Facts: Energy Storage Safety, at <https://cleanpower.org/resources/claims-vs-facts-energy-storage-leading-on-safety/>

Testimony Before the NY City Council Committee on Fire and Emergency Management, September 26, 2025
William Scarborough, President-Addisleigh Park Civic Organization

Good Morning Chair Ariola,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this issue. My name is William Scarborough, and I am the president of the Addisleigh Park Civic Organization, and also of the Southeast Queens Residents Environmental Justice Coalition. We are very concerned about the proliferation of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) in NYC, especially in residential neighborhoods in close proximity to homes. A company called NineDot Energy is seeking to build five "battery farms" in Southeast Queens, including one about a half block from my home.

Under the current policy, these facilities are not required to undergo a standard ULURP process, they only need to receive permits from the Dept. of Buildings and the FDNY. There is no requirement for approval by the city council or any legislative body, just these two city agencies. That means that the only protection that residents have regarding BESS placement is through the permitting process, especially through the FDNY.

We would urge the council to change current policy, so that these facilities are not allowed in residential areas, or anywhere in NYC within ^{CLOSE PROXIMITY} ~~fifty yards~~ of homes. These lithium-ion battery systems create catastrophic fires when they burn, and allowing them to build within feet of homes is putting lives and property at risk. The city enacts ^{500 FEET} ~~distance~~ requirements for liquor stores, cannabis dispensaries, adult entertainment sites and other businesses deemed to pose a threat or a hazard to certain populations. BESS facilities have been proven to be volatile, with thermal runaway fires in New York State and elsewhere, and they should also be subject to distance requirements. We urge the council to enact these policies to protect our communities, while allowing the potential clean energy benefits to be produced in a safe environment. Neither the FDNY nor BESS developers can guarantee that these facilities will not catch fire despite the stringent requirements imposed by the FDNY. It is only reasonable that there be a safe distance between these facilities and residences. Thank you for your consideration.

BAKER RISK SEPT. 2023 WHITE PAPER ON BESS "THERE IS NO EXISTING DESIGN THAT IS INHERENTLY IMMUNE TO THERMAL RUNWAY"

S. 7197/A. 6955

New York City Council. October 28, 2025.

Committee on Fire and Emergency Management.

Oversight – Fire Safety Permitting Approval for Community Energy Storage Facilities.

Good morning Chairperson Ariola and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Cornelius Skeahan, and my title is Safety Director and lobbyist for the Joint Industry Board of the Electrical Industry, which is affiliated with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union No. 3 and the New York City Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association where consensus of the aforementioned 3 parties demands that best practices employing safety protocols in the work place is paramount.

The unionized electrical industry encourages the expansion of battery energy storage systems throughout New York City and believes the legislation Intro. 354 as amended helps reach that aim with appropriate labor standards.

New York State's landmark 2019 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act is one of the most ambitious climate laws in the nation in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. And battery energy storage systems are an integral part of reaching the goals laid out in the CLCPA.

Wind and solar power generation are dependent on weather patterns at times offering intermittent power production. The ability to store power at peak power production during low power demand and then deploy stored power when demand is high creates an adaptable reliable renewable energy provision.

Large scale battery energy storage systems for public use are a recent phenomenon, however, for decades battery energy storage has been a backup power system for use in commercial space.

Battery energy storage facilities are not as dangerous as opponents of clean energy would have the public believe. The inter-agency Fire Safety Working Group comprised of various government agency experts was established by governor Hochul to ensure safety standards and security of battery energy storage systems being integrated into the state's energy systems.

Fire Safety Working Group also investigated several fire incidents within the state. The investigation results uncovered no injuries, no detected air toxins and “no evidence of significant off-site migration of contaminants associated with the fires”.

Greater public safety to the community near and around job sites, a decrease in preventable injuries and fatalities on union construction sites is attributable to the ever-growing focus on safety training and its implementation. Over time the implementation of a culture of safety at work has easily debunked past beliefs that safety protocol slows production and becomes costly, where in fact a culture of safety at work increases productivity and employer profit margins. Safer installation of energy storage systems breeds safer plant performance with reduced danger to the surrounding community hosting battery energy storage systems.

At the Joint Industry Board of the Electrical Industry Local 3 members are provided, New York City Local Law 196 and federal OSHA 10- and 30-hours training, resulting in a safety culture backed by knowledge and experience that has become the electrical industry disposition.

The Joint Industry Board does not train for City and State mandates exclusively (Local Law 196 and OSHA), but we also provide elective electrical safety and skill training, such as Alternative Energy training, Energy Storage and Microgrid Training, High Voltage Theory, High Voltage Splicing, and Confined Space training just to name a few courses.

The preeminent Safety course taught to Local 3 members by Local 3 member Trainers, concentrates on electrical safety related work practices based on the National Fire Protection Association 70E curriculum. The training received in this course seamlessly transfers to electrical safety related work practices for battery energy storage system safe installation and maintenance.

NFPA 70E training expires on a 3-year cycle. This ensures that trainers remain current on latest updates.

As technologies rapidly advance, in the renewable energy sector and especially in Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), continual safety training embracing safety's best practices is critical and best performed by union trades who through education and experience provide safe installation and performance of cutting-edge technologies.

Clean energy generation is the future. The clean energy economy should lead to the creation of good local union career jobs with social mobility, family sustaining wages, quality healthcare, and good retirement.

Nothing is risk free. There is risk in all types of energy production and generation. Coal mines explode killing workers, oil and gas pipelines break, oil tankers leak or crack in half destroying the environment. With the proper comprehensive perpetual safety training battery energy storage systems will prove to be the lowest risk energy provision.

Supporting critical battery energy storage systems in NYC, spurred by good legislation like the amended Intro 354, will help our city meet the needs of our electrified future, built by local workers in middle class union jobs, proving itself to be affordable, resilient, reliable and safe!

Thank you Chairperson Ariola and members of the committee for your time today.



RENEWABLE ENERGY PROVIDER

NYC Council Fire & Emergency Management Committee Hearing 10/28/25

Chairperson, Councilmembers, and fellow New Yorkers:

Good afternoon and thank you to the members of the Fire and Emergency Management Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony at this hearing. My name is Connor Kreb and I work as a Development Manager at Soltage. Soltage is a renewable energy company based across the river in Jersey City. Most of our team, including myself, live across the five boroughs. In our 20 year history, Soltage has developed, owned, and operated more than 130 utility-scale solar energy projects across the Northeast United States and the rest of the country. We develop our projects to own and hold long-term and to operate them ourselves. Adding to our solar business, our energy storage division is focused on building utility grid support projects in New York City. Today, we have one Battery Energy Storage project in operation in Maspeth and two more in construction.

I would like to begin with the need for these facilities and their benefits. Energy storage projects in New York City are necessary critical infrastructure. Energy storage is not just about green energy, it's primarily about a resilient, reliable, modern electric grid. With new demand sources and aging infrastructure, our grid is not keeping up. Energy storage is one incredibly important tool to improve both the capacity and the reliability of the local neighborhood grid. Storage projects support the existing infrastructure by storing power closer to the areas where it will be used and thereby reduce the need for more infrastructure upstream. At a time when electric bills are increasing and Con Edison is asking for significant rate increases, this helps maximize the utility of the existing grid and build out the grid more efficiently. Furthermore,



RENEWABLE ENERGY PROVIDER

energy storage projects generate credits which are allocated by Con Edison to give discounts to customers enrolled in their Energy Affordability Program.

These projects are needed right in the neighborhoods, because that's where the demand is and where the infrastructure is weakest. New York City is capable of bringing the necessary power in from upstate, but the hardest part is getting it to the homes and businesses on each block. Importantly, these projects serve the local area in which they're located. A battery in Queens is not there to only serve Manhattan. It benefits the electric wires it is discharging onto and the local substation it is connecting to. This power then gets redistributed to the communities served directly by that substation. In today's era of digital communications, payments, healthcare, and heating, electric outages are catastrophic. Our projects work to reduce that risk.

We recognize that as an industry we are behind on educating the public about the safety and necessity of these projects. We appreciate the opportunity to do so today and encourage additional forums for public information and education. Grid-scale energy storage projects are extensively reviewed and inspected by the Fire Department and Department of Buildings across all aspects of the design over a period of years. They are stationary batteries in outdoor, custom-built sites equipped with state-of-the-art monitoring, alarm, and safety systems. Only the very safest products are even allowed in the City in the first place. The batteries in e-bike and consumer electronics have not been subject to the same regulations and scrutiny. We are continuing to increase our efforts and dedicate more resources to convey the safety and necessity of these projects.

Thank you for your time.

TESTIMONY OF MICHAEL P. MEZZACAPPA,
PARTNER & GENERAL COUNSEL COFFEY MODICA LLP
TO THE COMMITTEE ON FIRE & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

October 28,, 2025

Good morning, Chairwoman Ariola, and Honorable Councilmembers. My name is Michael Mezzacappa, and I am both a Partner & General Counsel at the national law firm, Coffey Modica LLP.

As an attorney, I have decades of experience in dealing with serious and sometimes fatal fires and have now litigated dozens of cases involving insurers and their insureds, related to lithium-ion battery explosions and fires.

Today I present testimony about the proliferation of Battery Energy Storage system facilities, better known as BESS.

While New York State has rushed to embrace this technology as a key part of its climate strategy, both state and local leaders are ignoring the very real public safety dangers these can pose.

BESS facilities utilize supersized lithium-ion batteries. As we have seen with the smaller versions used in electric bikes and scooters, these batteries can be a life hazard, with New York City [experiencing 277 lithium-ion battery fires](#) in 2024, compared to 268 fires and 18 deaths in 2023.

In fact, to call many Lithium-Ion batteries a fire hazard, is perhaps an extreme understatement. Fires caused by even smaller batteries, from 250 to 500 watts, have the capacity to take down an entire New York City apartment building.

When ignited, Lithium-Ion batteries explode.

Due to a phenomenon known as thermal runaway, the temperature of these batteries can rise from [to 1,800 degrees](#) in a second, burning hotter and longer than normal fires, while simultaneously emitting toxic chemicals.

BESS facilities each have power outputs dwarfing e-bike batteries. The [facility planned for Marine Park, Brooklyn](#), would be 14 megawatts, roughly 28,000 times the power of an e-bike battery. The facility would use Tesla MegaPacks, which have [had incidents of fire](#) in the past.

Let me make three key points clear:

- 1:** From experience in doing litigation discovery and subpoenaing responsible parties involved in horrific Lithium-Ion battery cases, those products that are imported from manufacturers in other parts of the world – often China – never respond to a summons!
- 2:** They are not Underwriters Laboratories (UL) certified!
- 3:** And it is highly likely that in 100% of the cases, these manufacturers have zero insurance coverage for when their batteries and products fail, so spectacularly and fatally.

While the greatest fire department in the world, the FDNY, have come up with ingenious methods to snuff out smaller to mid-sized Lithium-Ion fires once they arrive at the fire scene – including specialized EV fire blankets – there is no custom-made fire suppression blanket big enough to cover an entire industrial sized building burning from a Lithium-Ion explosion.

Also consider what happens to residents and neighbors, in the minutes it takes to detect the fire and then first responders arrive at the scene. If it is in the overnight, expect the fire to grow undetected for quite some time until eventually reported to 9-11 operators.

Earlier this year, while Southern Californians battled enormous wildfires, Northern California firefighters combatted the horrific [Moss Landing BESS Power Plant](#) fire. 1,200 civilians were forced to evacuate for days, and [many reported negative health issues](#) upon return to their homes.

That California BESS plant was half a mile from the nearest residential areas. But what about neighborhoods like Middle Village, Marine Park, and communities across my home borough of Staten Island, that will not have that same half-mile buffer zone.

It is no wonder residents across New York City have protested about these facilities being built adjacent to their homes, and next to local veterans' hospitals, public schools, daycare centers and throughout the city's many densely populated residential neighborhoods.

Thank You for your time, attention and consideration today.

#

TESTIMONY OF ANDREA SCARBOROUGH

ADDISLEIGH PARK NY 11434

OVERSIGHT: COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Good-afternoon Chairwoman Ariola and members of the Committee on Fire & Emergency Management. My name is Andrea Scarborough, I am a former president of my civic organization, a Board Member of the Queens Solid Waste Advisory Board, a Board Member of the Anthropocene Alliance a national organization with a focus on Climate Justice and Environmental Justice. I am also a Board Member of the Southeast Queens Residents Environmental Justice Coalition (SQREJC). SQREJC is an organization that advocates for environmental policy changes and tangible improvements in the Southeast Queens community. Today I come before you as a concerned resident of Addisleigh Park where placement of a Lithium-Ion Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) has been proposed by the Developers, NineDot Energy.

“My new neighbor, a battery storage system has turned my life into a nightmare.” Mr. Dyer of Mason County Texas stated “We had no idea that something like this would ever happen this close to us.” I happen to agree with Mr. Dyer that Lithium- Ion Battery farms should not be allowed in close proximity to residents’ homes but rather they belong in Industrial zoned areas. I urge the committee to pass City Council Resolution 0966-2025 and include a minimum 1000 feet setback requirement for all Community Energy Storage Facilities, away from residential properties as part of the permitting approval process of Lithium Ion (LI) Battery farms.

We know that there have been three battery plant fires in New York since last summer, in Jefferson County, East Hampton and in Warwick NY. In the case of East Hampton, a consequential health hazard was created when the town’s primary water supply was poisoned by runoff water used to extinguish the fire at the existing battery farm. Toxins that can lead to cancer and other illnesses released into the town’s sole source of freshwater. In NYC we have seen extensive fire incidents that have occurred by scooters and electric bikes due to Lithium Ion (LI) battery technology. I understand that the chemistry make-up for scooters differ from the chemistry of LI batteries found at battery farms and they are less volatile. However, at the core of both exist a product that is toxic and flammable and both types of batteries allows for thermal runaway fire incidents.

Why would we as residents want this type of facility 5 feet away from our homes?

There have been many articles espousing FDNY implementation of strategic measures and monitoring systems to mitigate risks at BESS farms, including stricter safety regulations. The BESS developers love to promote that there have been no battery farm fires in NYC. I would argue that the history of safety of these farms is very thin as BESSs is still a new phenomenon in NYC. I would also argue that the fire in East Hampton occurred after five years of operation. The fire at Moss Landing had also been in operation approximately five years before this monumental fire occurred resulting in the evacuation of over 1,000 residents and a wider

emergency alert warning those nearby to stay indoors. I maintain that current statistics is no indication of future outcome nor should we embrace the idea of a “zero fire possibility” as a rationale to place these facilities near our homes.

Clean Energy Associates (CEA) a leading provider of green energy solutions most recent report of May 2025 revealed a 24% increase in system level defects; a 28% defect increase in fire detection and suppression systems, 19% increase in safety-critical failures and a 15% defect increase with thermal management systems. As per CEA, an increase in the fire suppression systems is quite alarming as these defects include, non-responding release actuators for the fire extinguishing agent, non-functional fire alarm abort buttons and non-responding smoke and temperature sensors. These types of system defects can surely lead to no recognition of a system failure at a BESS site resulting in fires and a delayed response by the FDNY. Its's very troubling that system defects are on the increase at the same time that BESS sitings are expanding.

Again, why would we as residents want this type of facility 5 feet away from our homes?

Lastly, placement of Battery farms near our homes benefits the Developer. In my case in Addisleigh Park where I live, a few blocks away a Con Edison substation is being built. I have come to understand that the cost of connecting a BESS to the grid can vary based on its proximity to a substation. Locating a BESS close to a substation is ideal because it minimizes the need for extensive new transmission lines or other network upgrades, leading to lower interconnection costs for the company. As a result, in my community I and my neighbors have become a victim to NineDot's Energy goal of reducing their costs and increasing their profit margin as we are close to that substation. **These farms can be built anywhere and achieve the goal of meeting the increased energy demand in a high needs area because BESSs supply energy to the grid and not directly to residents' homes. So, placement near our homes in this case advantage the developer.** Greed is driving the placement of these battery farms in some instances 5 feet away from our homes, where our residents are raising their families.

This should not be!

Chairwoman Ariola and all of the committee members, I urge you to please use your good office to ensure that Lithium-Ion Batteries are not permitted to exist near residents' homes.

Thank you.

Andrea Scarborough
Concerned Resident

PS Link to Southeast Queens online petition/ Our homes are not experiments.

https://www.change.org/p/protect-nyc-neighborhoods-against-bess-responsible-siting-true-community-input?source_location=my_petitions_list

Testimony of Amit Shivprasad

Before the Fire and Emergency Management Committee

Regarding the Siting of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) in Residential Communities

Date: September 21st, 2025

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Fire and Emergency Committee,

My name is Amit Shivprasad. I am a resident of Hollis, Queens, a proud member of Community Board 12 (Queens), and a representative of the Southeast Queens Residents Environmental Justice Coalition. I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony today regarding a critical issue facing our community – the inappropriate siting of a large-scale Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) facility in a dense residential neighborhood.

A BESS facility is currently under construction at **181-07 Jamaica Avenue, Hollis, NY 11423**, with a setback of only **three feet from residential homes** and located **within two blocks of three local schools**. This is deeply alarming and raises significant public health, safety, and environmental justice concerns.

Key Safety and Health Concerns

1. Fire and Explosion Risk

Lithium-ion batteries – commonly used in BESS facilities – are susceptible to **thermal runaway**, which can cause intense fires and even explosions. These events are notoriously difficult to control and require **specialized equipment and training** that many local fire departments may not possess.

2. Toxic Emissions

Fires involving lithium-ion batteries can release highly toxic gases such as **hydrogen fluoride (HF)**, **carbon monoxide (CO)**, and **hydrogen cyanide (HCN)**. These substances are not only immediately harmful but also pose **long-term respiratory and neurological health risks**.

3. Environmental Impact

The **runoff from firefighting efforts** in the event of a battery fire can contaminate soil and groundwater. This can cause **long-term environmental degradation**, disproportionately affecting communities like ours that have historically borne the brunt of environmental injustice.

4. Emergency Response Limitations

Our local first responders may not have the **training, equipment, or resources**

necessary to adequately manage a BESS emergency. This lack of preparedness puts **both residents and responders at greater risk** during an incident.

5. **Inappropriate Siting in a Residential Community**

Placing this facility just three feet from homes and within close proximity to schools is **not only irresponsible – it is dangerous**. It also threatens:

- **Property values**
- **Air quality**
- **Homeowners' insurance premiums**
- **Overall quality of life**

The proposed project by **NineDot Energy** is particularly troubling. This company lacks a demonstrated track record of safely managing similar systems and has **not followed best practices for community engagement, siting, or risk mitigation**. Instead of acting as responsible stewards of energy transition, they are treating Hollis as a **testing ground** for unproven and potentially hazardous technology.

In the past **24 months**, at least **two BESS-related fires** have occurred in New York, causing significant environmental damage and serious health consequences for nearby residents. We cannot afford to wait for a similar incident to occur in our neighborhood before action is taken.

Call to Action

I urge this committee to:

- **Conduct a full review of the BESS permitting process**, especially for sites proposed in residential areas.
- **Suspend or reconsider permits** for facilities located within unsafe distances from homes and schools.
- **Implement stringent community consultation requirements**, ensuring that residents have a real voice in decisions that impact their safety and wellbeing.
- **Prohibit the siting of BESS facilities in residential zones** unless all safety, environmental, and emergency preparedness standards are not just met – but exceeded.

The residents of Hollis have lived in this community for generations. They deserve the same safety, peace of mind, and quality of life as any other New Yorker. This facility

threatens to drive families out, hollow out our neighborhoods, and unravel the very fabric of our community.

Please do not let Hollis or New York City become a cautionary tale.

Please take a hard look at the permitting process and put meaningful safeguards in place.

Battery Energy Storage Systems do not belong in residential neighborhoods.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I am available for any questions and would be happy to provide further information upon request.

Respectfully submitted,

Amit Shivprasad

Member, Community Board 12 – Queens

Southeast Queens Residents Environmental Justice Coalition

Resident of Hollis, Queens

Jane Onyi Ikezi, Esq., M.B.A.

██████████
Addisleigh Park, New York 11433

24th October 2025

New York City Council
New York, New York

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: **Dangers of Lithium Ion Battery Storage Facilities in Our Neighborhoods**

My family and I have been living in the beautiful historic neighbourhood of Addisleigh Park, Queens for more than twenty (20) years. When visitors come to our home from out of state or the other boroughs, they compliment our neighbourhood for its unique homes and serene environment. It is a surprising nook hidden in plain sight in Queens. This is a family friendly neighborhood, with a rich history, where generations of family members are still domiciled.

Unfortunately, our beautiful historic homes are now threatened by the building of Lithium Ion Battery storage facilities in our backyards. It is well settled that Lithium Ion Batteries are very dangerous and cannot be controlled by professional fire fighters.

Beyond the uncontroverted dangers of lithium Ion batteries, there are also many latent dangers, including risk to health for residents, including potential risks to children and pregnant women. There has not been research done on the future health risks posed by the presence of Lithium Ion Battery Storage Facilities in residential areas. We do not want to be test studies.

Furthermore, the presence of Lithium Ion Battery Storage Facilities will definitely lower our property values and affect our quality of life. BESS must not be allowed to commence degradation of our community and safety.

I implore you to strongly consider the issues raised here and the testimony of our neighbours.

Very Truly,
Jane Onyi Ikezi, Esq., M.B.A.

TESTIMONY: New York City Council Committee on Fire and Emergency Management Hearing.

- My name is Jasmin Lawrence. My husband and I are the owners of 115-48 180th street in St. Albans, Queens. NineDot Energy is proposing a lithium ion battery energy storage system immediately adjacent to our property at 179-21 Linden Blvd.
- NineDot is building several of these systems, with the first one in the Bronx being operational for only one year, from the summer of 2024. They state that they are currently building these lithium ion battery farms in residential neighborhoods across the five boroughs. But that doesn't make it right. They say that these battery farms are safe. But safe for how long? I do not feel that there has been sufficient time, experience and expertise to guarantee their safety. There is no evidence that these lithium ion battery farms will be safe 1, 5, 10, or 20 years from now.
- I have seen Tesla lithium ion batteries cause explosions in vehicles. I have watched multi million dollar SpaceX rockets using lithium ion batteries from the same manufacturer, have catastrophic failures and blow up mid air. This gives me no sense of assurance that the Tesla megapacks used at these lithium ion battery farms are safe to be placed in residential areas. They are only safe right up to the point where they are not. The three battery farm fires in New York State alone in Jefferson County, Warwick and East Hampton were all considered safe... UNTIL THEY WEREN'T.
- These failures can start with an explosion, then thermal runaway, and can't be put out by ordinary means. In some cases these fires have burned for days. I have read of people all over New York concerned that these battery farms have been built 200 or 250 feet from their property lines. Well, this proposed battery farm would be less than ten feet from our house. The company Urban Future Clean Energy, LLC, a subsidiary of NineDot Energy is currently suing us in Queens County Supreme Court because they require access to our property for between 12 weeks to 12 months to make progress on their lithium battery energy project, that's how close it is.
- The humming noise created by these lithium battery megapacks so nearby would be a constant reminder that a catastrophic event could occur at any time, and in our case less than 10 feet away. How do you lay your head down to sleep in peace? How do you lay your child's head down when their bedroom is less than 10 feet from potential deadly harm? I do not want to live this close to a lithium ion battery farm and neither does anyone else. Would you?
- Such close proximity to a battery energy storage system like this would significantly devalue our property. My grandfather bought this house over 70 years ago and it is our intention to leave it for our children and grandchildren. This and other homes in the immediate area have stood for over 100 years. The installation of a BESS facility jeopardizes all of the nearby irreplaceable homes in this historic landmark community of Addisleigh Park.
- I understand the need for clean energy but not at the expense of hard working people who just want to know that they are safe in their homes. We are by law entitled to quiet enjoyment of our property.
- These battery farms should be built in industrial areas or at the very least built a reasonable distance from residential homes, schools and hospitals. There are other locations available to these companies that are not on the doorstep of residential properties. Areas where if a failure does occur, it will not cause a situation where fire can spread to adjacent homes with toxic emissions that would require indefinite evacuations or potentially kill someone who lives less than 10 feet away.
- We are counting on the Fire Department of New York, who makes the decisions to grant permits to these energy companies to consider the residents, protect our communities and make reasonable regulations about where these BESS facilities can, should and most importantly should NOT be built.

October 28, 2025

Oversight Committee on Fire and Emergency Management
Joann Ariola, Council Member Chair

As a homeowner. I'm not opposed to BESS- they can be a source of cleaner energy than fossil fuels. However, I am opposed to them being built in close proximity to my home and homes in my community due to their volatility and the devastation caused when lithium-ion batteries **catch fire**, and they **also emit toxic gases** which create another potential health hazard for residents. In addition, there is concern as to what this could mean for homeowner insurance costs and property values. **The safety of our residents must be the highest priority.** I am asking for the committee's support in preventing these BESS facilities from being built next to our homes. There should be a safe distance between these facilities and residences and they should undergo a public review before placement.

As one of many concerned community residents, we ask for your support for NYS legislation S7197-Addabbo / A6955-Williams that addresses these issues."

Thank you for your consideration.

Noemi Angelettie

Noemi Angelettie

[REDACTED]

St. Albans NY 11412

Good day,

As both a homeowner and a real estate professional in Addisleigh Park, I am deeply concerned about the proposed lithium battery energy storage site. Our neighborhood is defined by its historic, low-density, wood-frame homes, many over 100 years old and its designation as a culturally significant landmark community. The proposed site is less than two feet from one such home and only three blocks from my own, placing residents in direct proximity to an environmentally high-risk facility.

Equally troubling is the fact that our nearest fire station is not equipped to combat lithium battery fires, which are known to spread rapidly and release hazardous toxins. This poses an unacceptable risk to both residents and first responders. Additionally, the environmental impact of the project cannot be ignored. Battery insulation and storage systems present chemical and air-quality hazards that regulators and insurers alike acknowledge are not yet fully understood.

Our community already shoulders a disproportionate environmental burden, with nearby industrial zones, waste transfer stations, and heavy truck and bus traffic. Introducing yet another high-risk facility here raises serious questions about equity and environmental justice.

The financial impact is also significant. Proximity to environmental hazards has been shown to reduce property values by as much as 40%, threatening generational wealth in a community that is only just beginning to recover from the housing market downturn and COVID-19. Insurers, including Travelers, specifically caution against placing these facilities near residences or in flood-prone areas that are well documented in Queens.

If this project proceeds as planned, it will not only endanger public health and safety but will also expose decisionmakers and stakeholders to long-term liability for preventable harm.

In the spirit of being solution oriented, I respectfully propose an alternative: 180th Street, between Sayers and Liberty Avenues. This nearby industrial area, adjacent to ConEd's new substation, offers vacant space without placing families in direct jeopardy. It provides an opportunity to meet operational goals while protecting residents, preserving property values, and honoring the integrity of a historically landmarked neighborhood.

I strongly urge reconsideration of the proposed site and encourage decision-makers to adopt an approach that prioritizes public safety, regulatory compliance, and community preservation.

I am a concerned resident of Saint Albans, Queens. As an active part of my community, I am against the installation of a Battery Energy Storage System in our neighborhood. The location is too close to residences, which could have potentially catastrophic effects should the storage facility experience a malfunction or a fire. It also has the potential to disrupt some people's home insurance, a vital protection in home ownership. More specifically, Addisleigh Park is a historic neighborhood which holds and preserves the legacy of New York City. An electrical fire in the area would be truly devastating to all New Yorkers. I am urging the FDNY and the committee to stop permitting lithium-ion Battery Energy Storage Systems in residential areas across the entire city, including the currently proposed facilities in Saint Albans and Jamaica, Queens. They do not belong near our homes. It is a grave public safety hazard. Thank you.

This is concerning our safety due to the lithium ion battery storage unit that is being built on 181-07 Jamaica avenue. This building is only 3 feet away from our home at 91-27 181st Jamaica New York. This is a fire hazard to our community, we have 3 schools, a medical center, senior citizen home and many businesses that will be affected negatively if there is a fire. Our communal fire department is not equipped to deal with a fire of this proportion; fires from lithium ion batteries need to burn out, they can not be put out with water. These fires can burn for days on end, additionally the acid from said batteries will be detrimental to our health, these fumes will definitely kill those within a 10 mile radius. Where will all these people go? This site will be controlled remotely, if this is such a safe alternative, why wouldn't there be workers on the site in case of an emergency. I have lived here for over 30 years, my children were all born in this house, my memories are precious. Since this site started I have had many sleepless nights worrying about the safety of not only my life, my children's life but my communities as well. We are not saying no to clean energy but we are saying not in RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES, rather in industrial areas. JFK is offering the company a site, please go there instead. NINE DOT please go to the industrial areas and leave our communities alone.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chief Thomas Curao

Address: Chief of the Prevention

I represent: NYC FDNY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/28

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Stephen Levin

Address: 9-03 44th Road

I represent: Solar One

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/28

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DANTEL CHU

Address: 462 36 ST, BROOKLYN, NY

I represent: NYC ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ALLIANCE

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

15

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/28/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jasmin Lawrence

Address: _____

I represent: myself

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 3995 Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/28/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: WILLIAM SCARBOROUGH

Address: 115-05 179 STREET, JAMAICA, NY 11434

I represent: ADDISLEIGH PARK CIVIC ORGANIZATION

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/28/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Connor Kreh

Address: _____ Brooklyn NY

I represent: Soltage Energy Storage Company

Address: 333 Washington St Suite 401, Jersey City, NJ

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 354 Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/28/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Katvann LaCerra

Address: [Redacted] Staten Island, NY, 10314

I represent: IBEW Local #3

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 354 Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10-25-25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Thomas McGhie

Address: [Redacted] 11 Ave Flushing 11355

I represent: Local 3

Address: same

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10-26-25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chief Joe Lofhus

Address: 9 metrotech, Brooklyn

I represent: FDNY

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10-28-25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chief Thomas Currao

Address: 9 metrotech, Brooklyn

I represent: FDNY

Address: 9 metrotech

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Andrea Scarborough

Address: [REDACTED]

I represent: SELF / SARETC

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/28/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Faiza Azam

Address: 42 Broadway

I represent: ALIGN / Climate Works for All

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/28/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Cornelius Skeahan

Address: 158-11 HARRY VAN ARSDALE JR AVE

I represent: Joint Industry Board / Local 3

Address: Same

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: Oct 28, 2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: CAROLL FORBES

Address: [REDACTED] Ave, Jamaica, NY 11433

I represent: Jamaica Queens Neighborhood

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/28/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Patrick Robbins

Address: 1 Whitwell St. NY, NY

I represent: Utility Customers Association

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/28/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Josh Kellermann

Address: 350 W 31st St NYC

I represent: Climate Jobs NY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/28/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alia Soomro

Address: _____

I represent: NY League of Conservation voters

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/28/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Costa Constantinides

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kathleen Schmid

Address: Deputy Executive Director

I represent: NYC MOCEJ

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Elyon Hutchinsan

Address: Executive Director

I represent: NYC MOCEJ

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chief Joseph Loftus

Address: Acting Chief of HazMat Operations

I represent: NYC FDNY

Address: _____

 Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms 

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition 17

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: PETE SITORA

Address: 275 Degraw St. Brooklyn 11231

I represent: NEW YORK COMMUNITIES FOR CHANGE

Address: _____

▶ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◀

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/28/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christopher Leon Johnson

Address: [REDACTED]

I represent: SEIU

Address: _____

▶ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◀