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CLERK OF THE BOARD  
COUNTY OF ORANGE  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

## Memorandum

Date: 10/02/2024  
To: Robin Stieler, Clerk of the Board  
From: Katrina Foley, Fifth District Supervisor  
Re: Supplemental Item for the October 8, 2024 Board of Supervisors Meeting

NT for KF

SI4D

Please add a supplemental item to the October 8, 2024 Board of Supervisors meeting direct staff to research and consider drafting an ordinance to adopt development guidelines and standards for Battery Energy Storage System (B.E.S.S.), also known as Lithium Battery storage, projects. The intent of this directive is to ensure safety in light of the rapid expansion of B.E.S.S. in the region.

### Background

In the last decade, B.E.S.S. technology rose to prominence through its ability to capture and store energy for use during outages and high-use periods. B.E.S.S. facilities raise concerns related to public safety, wildfires, public health, and the environment.

Unlike traditional building fires, these fires are exacerbated by the presence of lithium inside the building, complicating mitigation efforts. On July 26, 2024, a flatbed trailer containing lithium-ion batteries caught fire on the Interstate 15 Freeway near Barstow, California, causing a 48-hour closure. Recently, on July 17, 2024, a facility in Santa Ana caught fire and triggered temporary evacuations.

With heightened fire hazards in dry, expansive unincorporated areas, these facilities could present an even higher risk.

The establishment of guidelines to keep B.E.S.S. facilities at a safe distance from residences and business will clearly communicate the desires of residents to interested developers at the outset. With such guidelines in place, the County of Orange can achieve its climate goals, while securing the safety of its residents and businesses.

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