



EPA announces settlement over Otay Mesa battery facility fire

From Kaye <kaye@coopmead.com>

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To Jaome R. Blay <jblay@santafecountynm.gov>

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Hi Jaome:

Very interesting quotes from an official at the EPA about battery fires in utility-scale facilities and the dangers of these facilities to firefighters. The EPA is clearly changing their tune about the "horrible toxic conditions" of fires in these "green" projects.

The EPA often show up more than 15 hours after the fire has started to start air monitoring like they did in Moss Landing with a number of the few monitoring stations they set up not operating properly, never measured for the toxic heavy metals that were released by the burning batteries and then claim nothing was found.

Dr. Aiello at the Santa Jose State University found extremely high levels of Nickel, Cobalt and Manganese in the Elkhorn Slough protected refuge area two miles from the facility where he has been studying the soil for years and has pre-fire testing that shows these elevated heavy metals were not there before these NMC lithium-ion batteries went into thermal runaway and released a gigantic plume of smoke which contained these heavy metals for miles around the facility.

Cleanup in the Otay Mesa facility mentioned in this article is still going on more than a year after a warehouse style BESS had a huge fire on May 15, 2024 in Otay Mesa, CA that burned for two weeks. Fourteen months later they still have not revealed a single piece of information as to what caused the fire in this facility showing that there is no transparency from these companies owning and operating these dangerous facilities.

"Calling a technology 'green energy' does not mean there are no environmental impacts. This is an issue of growing concern," EPA Pacific Southwest Region Administrator Josh F.W. Cook said in a statement.

"I am alarmed by the incidents and impacts of Utility-grade battery fires on first responders, specifically the professional firefighters who are exposed to horrible toxic conditions when batteries catch fire. This settlement action is a step in the right direction, but the broader battery storage fire issue requires additional attention and EPA enforcement."

The EPA is finally speaking out about the dangers of these facilities just like the one AES plans to put in the middle of three neighborhoods and an elementary school. It is time for the County and fire department to now listen to this new information from the EPA about the dangers of these facilities for the fire department as well as all of us residents that will be impacted by a fire that will occur in this facility.

Thanks for reading.

Kaye

Kaye Cooper-Mead

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