

Sue Sweeney

For BESS Public Hearing on Sept 1 2026

My name is Suzan Sweeney. I don't have a PHD, I don't represent a distant political group, I don't have academic experience in power sources or strategies and I wasn't recruited to come from another area or state to speak to you this evening. I am a local resident. My husband and I own a home at 13 Mt Pisgah Lane directly across from Dr. Lieb's property where the BESS facility was proposed. And over the last 6+ months we have been put on the defensive to protect our home and our neighborhood.

We have no issue with the need for alternative energy sources - but a BESS facility does not belong in a neighborhood. We've been criticized for being "NIMBYs" - and it's true that we do not want BESS in our backyard - nor ANY local backyard. It's been tried already with devastating results in some communities and I'll share some experiences with you in a few minutes. But first, let's lay some groundwork.

During our last Public Hearing on June 22, I shared a list of questions that I sent to Carson Power on behalf of our local neighborhood working group. I sent this list to them on April 30 - the day after the chaotic "non-info" session they hosted at Mt. Pisgah Lodge. Although they acknowledged receipt of my list, they have never provided answers. And while our last speaker addressed a number of these, I think it's important for you all to be aware of the work that was done to try and understand more of the specifics related to Carson's activities. After all, they are a key player in the efforts to put our homes at risk. Here is a quick summary of the questions they received:

1. What exact grid problem is this proposed BESS facility solving?
2. What makes Trudeau Rd. the desired location other than proximity to the power grid?
3. What are the specific, quantifiable benefits to local residents if this proposed facility is built?
4. Please provide a copy of the Interconnection Study from 2025.
5. Please share the business requirements from National Grid and/or State of NY for a new BESS facility; with a list of the local substations you reviewed/assessed along with the answers to these requirements.
6. What specific outages in the last 10 years would this proposed facility have mitigated?
7. In the event of runaway BESS fire, what is the protocol for local fire fighters and how long would you generally expect this type of fire to burn for a facility the size and type of what you are proposing?
8. For this proposed site, who would pay for new equipment, annual drills and ongoing training for local first responders, EMS and Fire Departments? What is the content and duration of the contractual commitment to this support?
9. What is the lifespan of the batteries proposed for this location and is there an increased risk of failure and/or fire with age? What specific studies have been done to support this answer?
10. For this proposed location, is there any renewable energy going to the batteries? If yes, please be specific and quantify.
11. Please provide a list of the BESS facilities you have successfully implemented.
12. It seems the location of the Upstone quarry, a year-round blasting facility, was a surprise to your team last night. Please provide a copy of any "motion" studies you have done or reviewed for battery sites similar to the one you are proposing for Trudeau Road - to support the stated view that "it should not be a problem."

Let me underscore again that we have never received responses to these questions from Carson Power. Instead, we moved forward with our own investigation - focusing on more recent activities and information. We didn't have to look far. I'll outline just a few for you:

- On **March 15**, the North Hampton NY Supervisor Jim Groff shared his experience on a number of items being questioned in the press:
 - Why do we need battery energy storage units? QUOTE: "To be quite honest, (we) don't need battery energy storage systems. We don't have issues with power fluctuations. Grid reliance, rolling blackouts and brownouts are not a concern in the Adirondack Park...We do have power outages but they are typically due to storm damaged accidents. When there is damage to the grid a BESS will not be able to supply backup power. In the event of an outage with no damage to the grid, this BESS would provide up to 4 hours of power No more." END QUOTE
 - These same comments could be made about the Mt. Pisgah location.
 - Where should BESS facilities be placed? QUOTE: "In a very carefully selected safe and responsible location where the demand for them is relevant such as industrial zoned areas with the infrastructure to support them. Away from neighborhoods and densely populated areas." END QUOTE
 - Again, could be said about Mt. Pisgah.
 - Why are they always catching fire? QUOTE: "The data used to support the "likelihood of a battery system fire has dropped 98%" is very misleading. The data used to generate that percentage includes behind-the meter small commercial and industrial battery systems, not just utility-scale systems. In NY state there have been 6 utility scale BESS fires since 2023. SIX in THREE years." END QUOTE
 - It's important to note that some of the fires are not directly tied to the batteries. There are numerous other triggers, including water seeping into a battery pack; a faulty wire connection; and batteries tipping off their transport vehicle. But they are all tied to the overall BESS infrastructure and they have all led to fires.
 - How can BESS fires be prevented? QUOTE: "...the claim that they can be prevented with remote monitoring is false. Most BESS fires were monitored remotely. And Carson Power claims to be using the safest BESS, the Tesla Megapack. But while they may be the safest, just 5 months ago TWO Tesla Megapack containers caught fire in Nevada." END QUOTE
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 - MOVING ON...
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- On **August 6** the East Hampton Star reported that local officials called for operations at the local battery storage center to be suspended. Prior to that in the month of June, a lawsuit was filed by the Suffolk County Water Authority alleging that at least 2 of the water authority's drinking water wells were contaminated by forever chemicals following the 2023 fire. The water authority lost 7% of its total local capacity due to contaminated wells. It's still not clear what human health impacts are caused by the forever chemical that has seeped into the drinking water wells. In addition, there's a growing concern with the impacts of toxic smoke. Local residents have called for the town board to establish a long-term health-monitoring fund and blood testing program.
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 - AND A FINAL EXAMPLE...
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- In Forrest City Arkansas on **August 11** - A lithium ion Tesla Megapack tumbled off an 18-wheeler and ignited on fire. Local firefighters requested assistance from 10 other fire departments. The fire exposed passing motorists to toxic fumes and gases for over 12 1/2 hours before they actually moved it up the road - where it continued to burn for at least 12 more hours. An estimated up to 1.5 million gallons of water mixed with numerous toxic chemicals and leached directly into roadside ditches where it then ran into local water sources. The Mt. Pisgah neighborhood is served by well water only - we couldn't support the supply needs with this type of fire and it would surely have an impact on our home water supply and quality.

I could share more but will respect the required time limits. I know I'm getting close.

I want to close with some comments from the MIT Climate Portal, by the Cofounder of the MIT/Northeastern Center for Battery Sustainability (Juner Zhu):

"Fire is the biggest concern. A BESS is not like a coal plant or an oil refinery, which creates air pollution in the normal course of running. If nothing goes wrong, there's no reason living near a BESS should affect your health. BUT there are toxic compounds inside batteries and others can be produced in a fire, so areas exposed to smoke need to be evacuated."

IN SUMMARY - It doesn't matter which case study you look at for what's actually happening - in reality, not academics. BESS does not belong anywhere near an established neighborhood like Mt. Pisgah. It puts undue risk on the shoulders of local residents. If you are convinced that the short-term strategy of BESS facilities is a "must" - then put your efforts into finding an industrial location that isn't located in the middle of a residential area, and definitely not close to a hospital, a pre-school, an ARC housing site and the local watershed.

Thank you.