# Solano County Battery Storage Brief (Sample)

By Stephen Lloyd, Siting Desk (sitingdesk.com). Research as of Nov 15, 2026.

County: Solano, California. Technology: front-of-the-meter battery energy storage (BESS). Scope: unincorporated county, with the City of Vacaville where projects cluster at the Vaca-Dixon substation.

## 1. Bottom line: caution

Caution. Solano allows front-of-the-meter batteries of 1 MWh or more only in commercial-service and industrial zones (C-S, M-L, M-G-1/2, M-G-3, I-WD and I-AS) under Ord. 2025-1864 (effective Dec 4, 2025). Each project needs a Use Permit that the Board of Supervisors decides after a Planning Commission hearing.

Every agricultural zone is closed, including the A-40 land by the Vaca-Dixon substation where most proposals have clustered. A farmland project of 200 MWh or more can only use the state opt-in route; a smaller one has no permit path. The one test case, NextEra's Corby BESS, faces an organized resident group, objections from county and city officials, and a staff assessment the CEC will recirculate for 60 days, with no decision date (CEC letter, Oct 6, 2026).

An industrial site, such as the Lambie Industrial Park that attendees suggested at the county's July 18, 2024 workshop, is the county path. Budget for third-party fire and plume studies that the county picks, owner liability for thermal-runaway response costs, and a Board vote. Measure E, which includes a capacity tax on batteries, was losing 62% to 38% in KQED's Nov 13, 2026 count.

## 2. Current rules

Ord. 2025-1864 (zone text amendment ZT-25-02) added Section 28.83 to Chapter 28 of the Solano County Code and repealed the 2024 interim ban. It covers front-of-the-meter systems rated 1 MWh or more; behind-the-meter systems are exempt (Sec. 28.83(C)).

| Zones | Front-of-meter BESS, 1 MWh or more | Code |
|---|---|---|
| C-S (Commercial Service) | Use Permit | Table 28.41A |

| Zones | Front-of-meter BESS, 1 MWh or more | Code |
|---|---|---|
| M-L, M-G-1/2, M-G-3, I-WD (Manufacturing and Industrial) | Use Permit | Table 28.42A |
| I-AS (Industrial-Agricultural Service) | Use Permit | Table 28.43A |
| A-20, A-40, A-80, A-160; A-SM-80, A-SM-160; A-SV-20, ATC, ATC-NC | Prohibited | Tables 28.21A, 28.22A, 28.23A |
| RR-2.5, RR-5, RR-10; all R-TC districts | Prohibited | Tables 28.31A, 28.32A, 28.32B |
| C-H, C-N, C-R, C-R-L, C-O; W; MP; P | Prohibited | Tables 28.41A, 28.51A, 28.52A, 28.61A |

Standards in Sec. 28.83:

- Hazard zones, (D)(2): no site in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. High zones are allowed only in the industrial and I-AS districts. A FEMA floodplain site must sit 2 ft above base flood elevation, with a CLOMR before grading.
- Setbacks, (D)(3): if the chemistry carries thermal-runaway risk, 300 ft from any existing sensitive receptor, 100 ft from the front line, 50 ft from side and rear lines, and a 30 ft fire-rated road around the array. With no such risk, 20 ft from all lines. The Board can raise these after technical study.
- Site design, (D)(4) to (7): a 10 ft non-scalable fence with two rapid-access gates, cameras monitored 24 hours, modules hidden from non-participating homes and public roads, 65 dB average at the nearest occupied building or road, and construction from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays.
- Chemistry and fire, (E) and (H): a third-party finding on thermal-runaway risk, and where there is risk, a technology comparison and plume model. The applicant commits to the latest NFPA 855 and UL 9540, supplies UL 9540A large-scale fire tests, and pays for studies by a fire protection engineer the county selects. Those studies cover plume effects on Travis Air Force Base flight paths and on nearby property values and insurability. The applicant funds 10 or more air monitors. No indoor systems.
- Owner liability, (E)(2): after a thermal runaway, the owner repays emergency response costs, third-party damage assessments and cleanup.

- Possible conditions, (F): yearly payments for fire equipment and responder training, radio interoperability and dispatch support, and a point of sale for equipment in unincorporated Solano.
- Decommissioning, (I): a bond, parent guarantee or letter of credit (not cash) at least equal to a third-party net cost estimate, posted by commercial operation; a bankruptcy bridge policy; a battery recycling agreement; and farmland used in the prior 10 years restored for farming. A new owner must notify the county within 30 days or the approvals are void.
- Process, (J): two technical review fund deposits, a required pre-application meeting, then a Planning Commission hearing and a Board decision under Sec. 28.106. Adding more than 10% capacity needs a Use Permit amendment; more than 20% needs a new Use Permit.

Farmland: BESS are barred from every agricultural zone. The ordinance text does not mention Williamson Act contracts.

## 3. Pending changes

No county BESS ordinance change is pending. Legistar shows no BESS item after the Nov 4, 2025 adoption other than Measure E (search of Nov 15, 2026).

- Measure E, Nov 3, 2026 ballot. The Board placed it 4-0 on July 28, 2026 (Res. 2026-164). It would tax front-of-the-meter BESS $1.50 per MWh of approved capacity each month, about $21,600 a year for a 1,200 MWh project. It would also tax solar ($0.00008 per kWh), raise the wind rate from $0.00003 to $0.00008 per kWh, and tax natural gas ($0.30 per Mcf) and data centers ($5 per square foot a year). KQED's Nov 13, 2026 count: 37.6% yes (55,534 votes), 62.3% no (91,821). Not certified; if it passed, it would take effect Jan 1, 2027.
- Corby BESS at the CEC. On Oct 6, 2026 the CEC told NextEra that significant new information will go into the staff assessment and be recirculated for 60 days. The dashboard lists recirculation, the updated staff assessment and the vote as to be determined.
- Vaca Dixon Power Center at the CEC. The CEC found the application incomplete on Feb 13, 2026, and the applicant filed data responses through Nov 13, 2026. The 270-day clock has not started.
- City of Vacaville. The council voted unanimously for a BESS ordinance on Tuesday, Mar 10, 2026, according to a GovTech story dated Mar 12 that does not say whether the vote was the first reading or final adoption. The ordinance bars lithium-ion BESS,

leaves one parcel (the former Gibson Canyon Creek wastewater plant) open to other chemistries, raises the sensitive-use setback from 300 ft to 500 ft, and requires a financial assurance plan. Its text was not reviewed for this brief. On Feb 11, 2026 the city wrote to the CEC about Vaca Dixon Power Center's compliance with the ordinance, then pending. A CEC certificate would supersede it.

- State fire rules. SB 283 took effect Jan 1, 2026. In the next Building Standards Code update after July 1, 2026, the State Fire Marshal must evaluate siting restrictions and may propose them, such as requiring dedicated fire-resistant buildings or outdoor sites (ESS News, Oct 10, 2025).

## 4. Project history, 2021 to Nov 2026

Every standalone battery proposal found ties into the Vaca-Dixon or Lambie substations; the Montezuma wind projects at Birds Landing also list storage in the CAISO queue. No solar or data center application appears in Board or Planning Commission item titles since 2021, and KQED reports no data centers in unincorporated Solano.

| Project | Applicant | Size | Location | Path and status |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corby BESS | NextEra (Corby Energy Storage LLC, North Bay Interconnect LLC) | 300 MW / 1,200 MWh | 40.3-acre A-40 parcel (APN 0141-030-090) at Kilkenny and Byrnes roads, outside Vacaville; 1.1-mile 230 kV line to Vaca-Dixon | County Use Permit filed 2023, frozen by the Jan 2024 ban. CEC opt-in filed Nov 4, 2024 (24-OPT-05), complete Oct 17, 2025; draft EIR comments July 15 to Sept 14, 2026; recirculation ordered Oct 6, 2026. Pending. |

| Project | Applicant | Size | Location | Path and status |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vaca Dixon Power Center | Vaca Dixon BESS LLC and Arges BESS LLC | 157 MW / 457 MWh (57 MW/57 MWh plus 100 MW/400 MWh) | About 10 acres (APN 0133-060-060) in Vacaville, beside the CalPeak Vaca Dixon peaker | CEC opt-in received Jan 14, 2026 (26-OPT-01); found incomplete Feb 13, 2026. Pending. |
| Corby 2 | Not listed | 476 MW | CAISO queue, Vaca-Dixon 230 kV | Queued Apr 2021, online date 2031. No county application found. |
| Tolenas | Not listed | 417 MW | CAISO queue, Lambie 230 kV | Queued Apr 2021, online date 2031. No county application found. |
| Menard Energy Storage | AMPYR Energy USA | Not stated by the city | 7050 Leisure Town Rd, Vacaville (city land) | City negotiating agreement Jan 10, 2023. After a Sept 7, 2023 community meeting the council told staff not to proceed and steered Menard to industrial sites. Ended. |
| Withdrawn queue entries | Not listed | Juglans 711 MW; Brushy 400 MW; High Winds Storage 121 MW; Fortis wind, solar and storage hybrid, about 205 MW each | Vaca-Dixon, Lambie and Birds Landing | Withdrawn Aug 6, 2025 (Juglans), Jun 8, 2026 (Brushy), Jun 1, 2026 (High Winds Storage) and May 14, 2025 (Fortis). |

CAISO queue figures come from the public queue report run Nov 15, 2026.

## 5. Who decides and who opposes

The Board of Supervisors decides every county BESS Use Permit. Members at the Nov 4, 2025 vote: Cassandra James (District 1), Monica Brown (District 2, vice chair), Wanda Williams (District 3), John Vasquez (District 4) and Mitch Mashburn (District 5, chair). District 4 changes hands in January 2027: the Nov 3 race pitted Vacaville Vice Mayor Mike Silva against Mayor John Carli, and Silva led 55.6% to 44.3% in KQED's Nov 13 count.

| Date | Action | Vote | Motion, second |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jul 28, 2026 | Res. 2026-164 puts Measure E on the ballot | 4-0, Vasquez absent | Mashburn, Williams |
| Nov 4, 2025 | Ord. 2025-1864: permanent BESS rules, repeals the interim ban | 5-0 | Vasquez, Williams |
| Aug 26, 2025 | Amendment No. 1: lifts the ban in industrial zones with interim standards | 5-0 | Vasquez, Mashburn |
| Feb 27, 2024 | Ord. 2024-1852-U-E: extends the ban 22 months 15 days | 5-0 | Williams, Hannigan |
| Jan 23, 2024 | Ord. 2024-1852-U: 45-day ban on new commercial BESS | 5-0 | Vasquez, Williams |

The Planning Commission recommended ZT-25-02 on Sept 18, 2025; its tally was not found.

Officials on Corby: at the CEC's Sept 1, 2026 meeting in Vacaville, Supervisor Mashburn said the project would violate the county's siting ordinance and asked why the CEC was considering this site (KION). Local News Matters reported that Mayor Carli, Vice Mayor Silva and fire district officials also spoke against it. Rep. Mike Thompson wrote the CEC on Sept 16, 2026 relaying constituent concerns about consistency with Measure T, the General Plan and the county ordinance.

Opposition: Keep Vacaville Safe formed in 2023 over the Menard proposal. Its organizers include Deanna Cole and Sarah Dunn, who also sat on the county's BESS working group. Cole's Nov 23, 2025 letter asking MCE to reconsider its contract with NextEra was signed for the group and 1,300+ opposing residents. Their main arguments, as the Thompson

letter and their docket filings put them: the site is near homes, medical facilities and Interstate 80; fire and toxic smoke; groundwater; loss of farmland and conflict with Measure T and the county ordinance; property values. They name the Lambie industrial area as a better site. The Solano County Historical Society asked the CEC to deny Corby (Sept 14, 2026), and Save Our Rural Town filed a 90-page letter.

Supporters on record: the California Energy Storage Alliance and ACP-California (joint letter, Sept 16, 2026); IBEW Locals 180, 428, 441 and 1245; and the Bay Area Council (Aug 27, 2026). Local News Matters reports a $500,000 community benefits agreement between NextEra and the Solano Community Foundation.

## 6. State overlay

- Opt-in eligibility: storage of 200 MWh or more can apply to the CEC instead of the county (AB 205, 2022). Corby (1,200 MWh) and Vaca Dixon Power Center (457 MWh) both use it. A smaller project has to go through the county.
- Clock: the CEC must decide within 270 days of a complete application, but recirculation moves the dates. Corby was complete Oct 17, 2025 and had no vote date as of Nov 15, 2026.
- Local rules: a CEC certificate replaces county permits. The CEC checks the project against local rules and can approve one the county would not. Corby's A-40 site is in a zone where Ord. 2025-1864 bars BESS.
- Other agencies: the certificate does not replace permits from BCDC (relevant around Suisun Marsh) or the Regional Water Board (the Central Valley board commented on Vaca Dixon Power Center on Feb 11, 2026). The Coastal Commission keeps its role too, but Solano has no coastal zone.
- SB 283, effective Jan 1, 2026: meet the local fire authority at least 30 days before applying, and arrange and pay for its inspection before the system operates. The State Fire Marshal adopted the latest NFPA 855 in March 2025, effective Jan 1, 2026.
- Fire districts: the Board ratified the 2025 California Fire Code with local amendments for the Cordelia, Dixon, Montezuma, Suisun and Vacaville fire protection districts (Legistar 26-96, Mar 24, 2026). The amendments add access road, gate and hydrant rules but nothing specific to energy storage. Which district covers a given site needs a check.
- Airports: Sec. 28.83 requires plume modeling for Travis Air Force Base and the other county airports.

## 7. Site constraints

Not included: this sample names no parcels. A client brief adds, for each parcel, the FEMA flood zone, National Wetlands Inventory features, the USFWS IPaC species list, Important Farmland and Williamson Act status, the CAL FIRE hazard zone and the distance to the nearest substation.

## 8. What to watch

- Nov 18, 2026 : CEC business meeting. Corby is not on the final agenda docketed Nov 6, 2026 (TN 273425), so there is no Corby vote that day.
- Dec 3, 2026 : last day for the Registrar of Voters to certify the Nov 3 results, Measure E included (30-day canvass).
- Date to be set: the CEC recirculates the revised Corby staff assessment for 60 days, then issues an updated staff assessment and schedules a vote. Track docket 24-OPT-05 and the Opt-In Certification Dashboard.
- Date to be set: the CEC decides whether the Vaca Dixon Power Center application (26-OPT-01) is complete, which starts its 270-day clock.
- Jan 1, 2027 : Measure E's effective date, if the certified count reverses the trend. The new District 4 supervisor also takes office in early January.
- Ongoing: any BESS Use Permit in an industrial zone goes to the Planning Commission, then the Board. None was found on Legistar as of Nov 15, 2026, and no Board or Planning Commission agenda was posted past Nov 12.

Open questions:

1. The Planning Commission's tally on ZT-25-02 (Sept 18, 2025).
2. Whether anyone has applied for a BESS Use Permit since Dec 4, 2025. Planning desk: (707) 784-6765.
3. Who stands behind Corby 2, Tolenas, and the Vaca Dixon BESS and Arges BESS entities.
4. Which fire district covers the Corby site.
5. Vacaville's adopted ordinance: number, date and standards.
6. The certified Measure E result.
7. The signature page of the Aug 2025 interim amendment lists Aug 25 for introduction and adoption, while its vote recital and the minute order say Aug 26.
8. The certified District 4 result (Silva led Carli on Nov 13).

## 9. Sources

Checked Nov 15, 2026. The two Local News Matters articles could not be opened in full, so their facts come from search-result summaries.

Solano County

- Ordinance 2025-1864 (ZT-25-02), signed copy, Nov 4, 2025
- ZT-25-02 ordinance text, Attachment A, Oct 2025
- Board minute order, Nov 4, 2025
- Gov. Code 65858 10-day report, Sept 2025
- Ordinance 2024-1852-U-E Amendment No. 1, Aug 26, 2025
- Board minute order, Aug 26, 2025
- Board minute order, Feb 27, 2024
- Board minute order, Jan 23, 2024
- Measure E tax ordinance, redline, July 2026
- Board minute order on Measure E, July 28, 2026
- Board minute order on the fire districts' 2025 Fire Code, Mar 24, 2026
- Battery Energy Storage Systems page (July 18, 2024 workshop, working group)

State and grid

- CEC: Corby BESS project page
- CEC: news release on the Corby scoping meeting and complete application, Nov 3, 2025
- CEC: project update and schedule change letter, Oct 6, 2026 (TN 273050)
- CEC: Corby docket log, 24-OPT-05
- CEC: final agenda, Nov 18, 2026 business meeting (TN 273425)
- CEC: Vaca Dixon Power Center project page
- CEC: Vaca Dixon Power Center docket log, 26-OPT-01
- CEC: Opt-In Certification Program
- Rep. Mike Thompson: letter to the CEC, Sept 16, 2026 (TN 272813)
- CAISO: public queue report, run Nov 15, 2026
- ESS News: California adopts battery storage safety legislation (SB 283), Oct 10, 2025

City of Vacaville and news

- City of Vacaville: Battery Energy Storage Systems page

- City of Vacaville: Menard BESS questions and answers, Oct 16, 2023
- GovTech: Vacaville moves to block lithium-ion battery storage projects
- KQED: Solano County election results, Measure E and District 4, updated Nov 13, 2026
- Local News Matters: Solano County rejects energy and lodging tax measures, Nov 10, 2026
- Local News Matters: Vacaville mayor, residents denounce proposed battery storage site, Sept 3, 2026
- KION: Vacaville battery storage project draws hours of opposition, Sept 2026
- Keep Vacaville Safe: letter to MCE, Nov 23, 2025


This brief is research from public records as of Nov 15, 2026. It is not legal advice.