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# BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS WORKGROUP MEETING

## Meeting Minutes – Thursday, February 12, 2026

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### Committee Members Present

Tim Spears, CAL FIRE, Office of the State Fire Marshal  
Brian Marshall, California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (virtual)  
Robert Chun, California Energy Commission  
Ryan Hart, California Public Utilities Commission  
Cara Morgan, CalRecycle (virtual)  
Steve Guarino, University of California Campus Fire Marshal  
Travis Tyler, California State University Campus Fire Marshal (virtual)  
Jason Nailon, California Fire Chiefs Association (virtual)  
Jeff Gilbert, Fire Districts Association of California (virtual)  
Brad Driscoll, California Training Officers Association (virtual)  
David Myers, California Fire Prevention Officers Association (virtual)  
Mostafa Kashe, California Building Officials (virtual)  
Rex Pritchard, California Professional Firefighters  
Todd Braverman, California Firefighters Joint Apprenticeship Committee  
Eddie Sell, California State Firefighters' Association (virtual)  
Josh Calista, FIRESCOPE  
Sean Decrane, Fire Safety Research Institute (virtual)  
Scott Murtishaw, Storage Alliance  
Stanley Greshner, TESLA

### Committee Members Absent

Chris Ochoa, California Building Industry Association

### CAL FIRE Staff in Attendance

Daniel Berlant, CAL FIRE, Office of the State Fire Marshal  
Vickie Sakamoto, CAL FIRE, Office of the State Fire Marshal  
Chris Fowler, CAL FIRE, Office of the State Fire Marshal (virtual)  
Crystal Sujeski, CAL FIRE, Office of the State Fire Marshal (virtual)  
Jillian Fisher, Supervisor I  
Carrie Lewis, Analyst II  
Danh Dao, Analyst I

## 1. CALL TO ORDER

**Tim Spears**

### A. Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 3:05pm.

### B. Roll Call – Carrie Lewis

There was not a quorum with 9 committee members present in-person and 10 attending virtually.

- It was suggested that meetings not be held from 3-5pm as it's difficult to find flights for those coming from southern California.

- It was suggested that quarterly meetings be held around FireScope to ensure a quorum at least quarterly.
- It was suggested that those members that repeatedly aren't attending in person be removed from the workgroup to lower the threshold for a quorum.
- Can meetings also be held in Southern California to assist in getting a quorum. At this time, it's not an option as we don't have anyone to assist with logistics. But it may be possible in the future.

C. Approval of the January 7, 2026, meeting minutes (**Motion Required**) **Tim Spears**

The meeting minutes were not approved as there was not a quorum.

D. Approval of the February 12, 2026, meeting agenda (**Motion Required**) **Tim Spears**

The meeting agenda was not approved as there was not a quorum.

## 2. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Chief Berlant – The Bagley Keene Act is what really gives this meeting its guidelines on how to ensure there's public participation. In a group like this it can be challenging, especially with members all over the state. The requirements of Bagley Keene restrict us though in ensuring the quorum in in person, so participation is critical. For this group to stay on track of many of the timelines the legislature has given us, it's important that we make sure we have a quorum. Alternative energy is an important part of the Governor's and administration's policies and our role within the administration is to ensure safety in all aspects and in all policies. Also, ensuring that our firefighters and the public is safe with battery energy storage systems being so critical. There are a number of representatives, CPF, labor reps, CalJAC, that help us with our training both on labor and at OSFM. It's important that alongside our local fire partners, we're readying our fire services for the strategy and tactics that are required and not only making sure they're prepared for these types of incidents that could occur, but more importantly, that they are safe and come home. We've put this workgroup together to help our office be informed of where we're going when it comes to State Fire Training - our training of the fire service, our co-development, as we continue to make amendments to the fire and building codes, but also our overall public education. I give a huge amount of credit to President Rice of the California Professional Firefighters and his push, with many stakeholders in this room, to move a lot of legislation related to battery energy storage systems forward but also making sure we're addressing critical pieces of it. It's one of the reasons we folded in the elements out of AB 841 and making sure that the protective equipment of our firefighters is addressed. I am so appreciate of the different organizations in this room, the different walks of life, the different lived experiences related to battery storage systems to help inform the work that we are doing and that we are charged with in this committee but also in our overall commitment as an office related to safety and prevention of wildfires. There's a significant amount of work to do in a short period of time.

- **Ruben Grijalva** – Is it the intent or the scope of this committee, with regard to safety, to go further than NFPA and fire code in terms of requirements?
- **Tim Spears** – It's a great discussion and deliberation to have, to be able to identify what the risk is and how we can mitigate that risk, and whether or not that means we need to propose new things, either legislatively or regulation-wise, either in Title 24 or Title 19.

- **Daniel Berlant** – There was legislation that required us to make some changes in the fire and building codes - we have some proposals at the legislature. We are working through, with our partners in the Building Standards Commission, AB 130 and the pause on updates to certain building codes. There may not be the ability for us to bring forward certain code provisions related to battery energy storage systems, related to SB 283, and so we are working with the LCAS Commission to try to push the proposals into the next cycle. But we have to work within the confines of the legislation that was passed that ensures that there is a limit to code changes that occur within the next 6 years.
- **Rex Pritchard** – What are the things that we can and cannot do in the absence of a quorum? It sounds like there's a certain level of discussion, which in many ways might be the most valuable part of this forum, that can happen regardless of a quorum, but what are the things that we need a quorum for?
- **Tim Spears** – We need a quorum to be able approve minutes and if there's a motion required, we need a quorum to be able to vote on those items. I think that one of the things that is on the agenda today is a discussion and hopefully establishment of a subgroup to be able to start work on the provisions and development of a report on PPE and decontamination of that. The charter does allow the chair to be able to establish these subgroups but doesn't necessarily say that it must be voted on and approved. It's hoped that we can establish the subgroup to be able to start the work and identify representatives that could lead that effort.
- **Daniel Berlant** – This may be a forum to take the input and if you don't have a quorum then you don't make a decision and we'll defer to the chair as much as possible to keep things moving forward as a quorum is established to be able to take more formal action. Conversations and work shouldn't be delayed.
- **Ruben Grijalva** – Is this committee, similar to other committees of the State Fire Marshal, where the committee only makes recommendations to the State Fire Marshal and the State Fire Marshal moves things forward?
- **Daniel Berlant** – There are some charges that we gave to the committee. There are a lot of advisory committees that just help inform the office where this one, because it's legislatively mandated, has more specific charges. We specifically built this so that the work you do rolls up to the State Board of Fire Services. But we'll have to check the legislation. Under AB 841 we've chosen to use this committee as a vehicle to get those requirements through, so there may be things that come from this committee that are directed via legislation.
- **Tim Spears** - The goal of the workgroup is to provide science-based solutions to enable the State Fire Marshal in consultation with the State Board of Fire Services to make recommendations on how to reduce risk.

### 3. NEW BUSINESS

#### A. Review of Charter

- i. The size of the workgroup
  - **Tim Spears** - Would like to avoid adding more members but can add them to subgroups as there are no limitations on those. If it's decided that additional subgroups need to be created to take on different elements such as SB 283 – potential code changes and revisions to Title 24. There's 1245 and those provisions. There are different subgroups that could be created for these.

## B. AB 841 State Fire Marshal: Personal Protective Equipment: Battery Fires

- i. AB 841 was passed during the last legislative cycle. The legislation directs us to convene a workgroup and develop recommendations on PPE and equipment and decontamination practices for lithium-ion battery fires. Specifically, the bill requires a review of PPE that may limit exposure to lithium metals, evaluation of decontamination technologies and practices, and consideration of whether PPE and decontamination needs differ based on battery type.
- ii. The legislation also identifies the membership of that group and a lot of the members of this workgroup itself. It states that members of the State Board of Fire Services, academia, health and safety experts, a representative from OSHA or the Division of Occupational Safety and Health, and a labor organization representing the utility workforce that we don't currently have on this workgroup. Given the technical nature of this effort, a subgroup would be good for this because the report has a deadline of September 1, 2026. A chair/co-chair for this subgroup needs to be identified and then build out the subgroup and talk about next steps. This subgroup will follow a hybrid version of Bagley Keene; members will be able to attend virtually.
  - Is it possible to have a technical writer assigned to the group?
  - This may be possible as we refine the report.
  - Rex Pritchard assigned as Chair
  - Sean DeCrane volunteered to be part of the subgroup
  - Subject matter experts that could be part of the subgroup could include:
    - a. PPE experts from TEEEX
    - b. Dr. Irwin, UCLA, LA County
    - c. Others interested in being part of the workgroup should contact [Rex Pritchard](#) or [Tim Spears](#)

### 1. Stakeholder Presentations – Identifying Topics and Speakers

- i. There was a conversation about members giving a 20–30-minute presentation during each meeting to talk about your subject matter expertise and how it impacts battery energy storage and the safety of that.
  - **Ruben Grijalva** – There have been a lot of great presentations at CFPI and maybe we could identify some of those people to make presentations here as well.
  - **Tim Spears** – We hosted the Battery Energy Storage Systems Symposium in July of last year and there will be another one on August 20, 2026, as part of the National Association of State Fire Marshals Conference in Garden Grove. We are currently looking through the different presentations and proposals that have been received.
  - **Stanely Greschner** – Is the ask that we give you topics that we want to see presented or to give topics that we would like to discuss and then find a SME?
  - **Tim Spears** – If you're a member, I would like you to present on your membership expertise, but we can have others with expertise present as well. Everyone here has a different, unique perspective as it relates to battery energy storage.
  - **Stanely Greschner** – We have a lot of SMEs across companies who are willing to come in and do presentations but there are a lot of experts here already.

- **Robert Chun** – CEC is running our opt-in permitting process which has about 10 gigawatts of battery energy storage, either in the pipeline or in discussion to be in the pipeline. We're at the point where we have had a few of our staff assessments published. These are open documents that outline our approach to various kinds of study of potential significant impacts, including worker safety and fire, as well as our mitigation measures. CEC can provide a staff presentation of what our lessons learned have been through that process, the approach to date that we've taken with projects like Darden and Soda Mountain. Presentations could be on the latest and greatest research being done on flu modeling and air quality. This has been a persistent topic of interest on manufacturers and how they're thinking about large scale fire testing plans.
- **Rex Pritchard** – It would be interesting to hear from everyone on the different challenges they are facing in the industry to better understand, if you're developing, is it working with the municipalities or code enforcement?
- **Ruben Grijalva** – One of the challenges is inconsistencies across various jurisdictions. That would be a good topic for discussion or presentation on how we resolve the inconsistencies statewide.
- **Todd Braverman** – It would be valuable for folks to provide brief talking points and maybe package something together as we give organizational updates and maybe have a larger discussion in a future meeting.
- **Scott Murtishaw** – We were expecting the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development to finalize the model ordinance by now. I don't know if something has resulted in a delay in that but as soon as they finish and publish the final version it might be interesting to have someone present the highlights and talk about why they ended up making the recommendations that they made on some of the more controversial topics.
- **Public Comment:** Lakshmi Srinivasan – I'm a researcher within the storage program focusing on battery safety. Is it possible to become one of the member organizations? We'd also be interested in doing a stakeholder presentation on some of the topics identified.
- **Tim Spears** – We'd be happy to have a presentation; anything related to energy storage would be great. We will contact you to set up a future presentation.
- **Lakshmi Srinivasan** – We are conducting a project right now trying to interview fire departments that have responded to battery fires, specifically more utility scale and we're trying to understand what the common practices are and the gaps to conduct further research in that area to support training and response.
- **Ryan Hart** – We might be able to provide a presentation (multiple people talking at the same time so topic was not heard).
- **Jeff Gilbert** – We have two large projects going on – one with 5 acres of battery and the other with 14 acres. Our county doesn't have a hazmat team. We will have to burden either CalOES or another county. They are looking into the smaller rural areas that don't have the resources for a lot of these battery storage systems. Getting all this information is a high priority.

- **Stanley Greschner** – Is there any interest in exploring outreach or amplification of this or a formal subgroup focusing on outreaching education for fire hazards associated with battery energy storage.
- **Steve Guarino** – When I was with OSFM, at some point, in partnership with the Fuel Cell Partnership, we put together emergency response guides and training curriculum for the fire service. Do you know where that is today?
- **Tim Spears** – I'm not familiar with it but will look into it. We do have a website dedicated to battery energy storage so maybe we can share some of these resources there.
- **Ruben Grijalva** – It would be a good idea to have a knowledge database housed on the State Fire Marshal's website and subgroup to review those items and make recommendations on whether or not items should be included in the knowledge database or clearinghouse.

#### 4. MEMBER ORGANIZATION UPDATES

- A. **Robert Chun** – The National Electric Reliability Council had their reliability report released a few weeks ago. One thing that was notable was a description of a lot of the reliability issues that are being faced across the country in a lot of areas. TJM and ERCOT have been in the news but there are serious reliability issues in a number of regions on the horizon. One region that was not on the reliability watch list was California. California is no longer designated as elevator high risk for reliability issues. That is in large part due to the batteries that have been installed in the state. The CEC, by our count, indicates that we are at about 17 gigawatts of battery energy storage. That is a real cause for celebration and a testament to the role that batteries are already playing and keeping the lights on in California. Internally, at the CEC, the focus is on permitting. We have 10 gigawatts in the pipeline and 5 projects that we are working on that applications have been filed in Los Angeles County, San Bernardino, Solano, Alameda, and Orange. Those projects are quite large, as large as 1.2 gigawatts of battery energy storage. I really encourage everyone to look at the stats assessments that we're putting out. You'll see a significant emphasis on fire and worker safety. This is a broad set of conditions of certification to encourage the developers to ensure that the infrastructure on that site is adequate for emergency response to their jobs in the event of an emergency. You'll also see a real focus on local developer cooperation to ensure that there is training, coordination, and funding associated with that project to ensure that emergency services are able to respond appropriately.
- B. **Ryan Hart** – Continuing to audit facilities which include energy storage facilities that we brought under our purview as part of GL167C last year. Those audit reports are posted on the website. We're up to August of last year. There is a timeframe for us to write those reports and then go through the internal review process and then connect with the sites for any confidentiality and claims. There are a lot of good findings and a lot more to come to highlight some of the issues that we see at the sites that are starting to become common.
- C. **Rex Pritchard** – It's important to the firefighters and fire departments to get this work going as soon as possible. They are looking for guidance on this issue and looking forward to moving the health department to deal with these issues.
- D. **Todd Braverman** – At CalJAC we have just over 11,600 active apprentices within our program, about 200 departments throughout the state. We, in conjunction with CPF, have a vested interest in helping to identify some of the problems as these are the members out in the field for both of our organizations.

- E. **Josh Costello** – We’ve been busy continuing to review several large BESS facilities throughout our jurisdiction. For context, we’re a fire protection district that covers 60 cities within Los Angeles County as well as the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County. We are seeing quite a few large BESS facilities proposed for urban areas in addition to a couple out in the more rural areas in the Lancaster, Palmdale area. One of our projects we are working on is with the California Energy Commission through the opt-in program to provide comments and support their team. We’ve been using our recently refreshed submittal package guidance for these large facilities. We are seeing more cabinet-type, commercial industrial-scale BESS that we review as well as the more common residential one- or two-family dwelling projects that we handle day in and day out. We are continuing our participation as the sitting member on UL9540, 9548 Technical Committee, the new NFPA 800 Battery Safety Code Technical Committee, and are participating in the NFPA 855 and FCAC with the International Code Council. One of the main areas we are trying to tackle are the zoning issues because many of the planning agencies are trying to delineate some zoning requirements.
- F. **Rob Rezende** – The Board of Directors for FireScope created a new subcommittee called the Energy Subcommittee at the recommendation of the original ad hoc group that has been working on similar types of challenges for the state over the last year and a half. The Energy Subcommittee is intended to tackle beyond just battery energy storage systems and lithium-ion batteries, but all things energy that are in the transition to greener energy. One of the challenges I’ve seen for the last 4 years is how “feral” the information has gotten about lithium-ion batteries and emergency response across the nation. Part of the reason that there is not the best continuity of operations between fire departments and industry is because we have not had the opportunity to determine what best practices are. My recommendation is to liaise with other state fire marshal offices to share work and learn from others.
- G. **Scott Murtishaw** – In an effort to strengthen relationships between the energy storage industry and firefighter personnel, fire districts, and all the associations that represent fire departments and fire districts in the state, we are going to be involved in a couple events coming up. The first is the California Fire Protection Institute Conference in Santa Barbara on March 3. This is an all-week conference with a really extensive amount of training for firefighters on a wide variety of issues. Monday, Tuesday, and Friday all have content related to energy storage. We will have materials on the latest developments in energy storage chemistries and why they’re safer and more stable, the evolution of project configuration, and what we’ve learned from all the analysis of soil, water, and air samples that have been collected and analyzed from incidents that have occurred in California and elsewhere in the US. On April 2, I will be on a panel at the California Fire Districts Association talking about how the presence of energy storage and other clean energy technologies, as they start reaching into some of the more rural districts, might place burdens in terms of needing new equipment, new facilities and how to fund those.
- H. **Stanley Greschner** – Continuing to organize first responder and fire safety training events around the state. Often, it’s many fire departments at one time in various regional events. If anyone wants to have an event like this, please reach out.
- I. **Brian Marshall** – We’re focusing a lot on our firefighters, but I think a stakeholder should be the public in general but also continuing with education of our firefighters with quick reference guides when a firefighter gets on scene. We had a hazmat incident in Siskiyou County, not related to batteries, but there’s no hazmat team that covers Interstate 5 and I think that’s one of the things we really need to identify – where we have gaps and how we can generate some quick response forces to support some of those areas.

- J. **Travis Tyler** – We have some staff members that are interested in attending some subcommittees. We’re seeing a lot of large solar systems with batteries being proposed on our campuses. Because we have a lot of extra land and we’re seeing energy companies that want to do financing partnerships. A lot of these projects need to be accelerated due to grants. We have questions that come up regarding projects where the installation companies try to say they’re a public utility and then you have questions about jurisdiction and enforcement. We’ve also seen proposals for lithium generator replacements. With all the AQMD requirements on generators we’re seeing proposals for outdoor lithium systems that would replace emergency generators like diesel-powered emergency generators.
- K. **Jeff Gilbert** – I think a lot of fire district concerns are related to vehicles and how they’re going to cause us a lot more grief up and down the highways and will hurt the firefighters more than these big BESS systems will. And we don’t understand what we’re getting ourselves into with some of the injuries, especially what’s coming out of Sac City. I just want to make sure we concentrate on the safety of them.
- L. **Brad Driscoll** – We’ve seen at our symposium and the symposiums that have gone on all over the state over the past year that there is a huge interest in BESS response and lithium-ion battery response. We are concerned that there is not a consistent message from these classes and seminars that are being put on. We’re concerned that the firefighters are confused about boots-on-the-ground response. Hopefully this group can come up with something that’s very clear response guidelines.
- M. **Eddie Sell** – We’re looking to support departments across the state with our SAFER grant. We are looking for training and reimbursement opportunities and assisting with PPE and the cleaning of PPE. Many of the departments across the state can’t afford extractors or the latest up-to-date information on PPE cleaning. We are working with our partners across the state to come up with solutions. We have the NorCal Fire Explorer Muster taking place on April 26 in Citrus Heights with Sac Metro and the SoCal Fire Explorer Muster taking place on May 16 with San Bernardino County Fire.
- N. Sean Decrane – The IFF is focusing more in the battery area to develop additional resources for our members. We address responding to batteries and talking about strategic, tactical, and PPE considerations in the [IFF Energy Hazard Guide](#). We’ve been involved with research with UL’s FSRI, UL Solutions, and others for many years. There’s a lot of misinformation out there, so we’ve hesitated to develop a lot of materials until we have the research. Like any other new technology that comes on the market, we have to understand it before we can develop a tactical response. We need to make sure that we’re basing our responses on fact, on what we can demonstrate through research.

#### 4. PUBLIC COMMENT

- A. There was no public comment

#### 5. UPCOMING MEETING DATES FOR 2026

- B. March 2026, date TBD

#### 6. MEETING ADJOURNED 4:24 PM

Resources from this meeting:

[FireScope ICS 1150 – Lithium Ion Battery Emergencies Operational Guidelines](#)  
[IAFF Energy Hazard Guide](#)