

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS BRIAN WORRELL, LIZ BREADON, COLETTA ZAPATA, DURKAN, MEJIA, MURPHY, SANTANA AND WEBER



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS THE USE OF BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS (BESS) IN THE CITY OF BOSTON

- WHEREAS,** Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) are large-scale energy storage technologies which utilize batteries to store and quickly provide dispatchable power to electric grids in instances of high demand or grid failure; *and*
- WHEREAS,** BESS are a new and rapidly growing technology; a 2023 study done by McKinsey and Company’s Battery Accelerator Team estimated the global demand for BESS technology to double by 2030; *and*
- WHEREAS,** There is a demonstrated need for battery-stored energy in Boston to meet rising electrical demand, provide backup power in response to incidents of short-term volatility or grid failure, and support of our City’s aging infrastructure; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Carbon Free Boston is the City of Boston’s initiative to become carbon neutral by 2025, and BESS play a crucial role in the transition to sustainable energy by allowing for the energy generated through solar, wind, and other renewable sources to be stored when production outweighs demand, providing reliable delivery of green energy to customers regardless of time of day or weather conditions; *and*
- WHEREAS,** The Energy Information Administration (EIA) estimates that 90% of BESS operating capacity uses lithium-ion based batteries, which FEMA has identified as presenting a unique challenge to firefighters and first responders because, in large BESS facilities, a “failure of one lithium cell can cascade to include hundreds of individual cells. The hot flammable gases can result in an explosion, or a very difficult to extinguish fire”; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Battery Energy Storage facilities are typically placed close to customer load in order to rapidly supplement existing power delivery during peak usage or provide backup energy in cases of grid failure, necessitating the construction and retention of BESS facilities in highly-populated urban areas; *and*
- WHEREAS,** There are currently two proposed BESS facility projects in the City of Boston, one in Brighton and one in Hyde Park/Mattapan, and both proponents have

displayed a commitment to community engagement and education that can set the foundation for future BESS installations; *and*

WHEREAS, A robust conversation is necessary surrounding BESS facilities within Boston, including discussion of their significant potential to bolster our grid capacity and reduce our reliance on fossil fuels, as well as the unique challenges they present to firefighters, emergency management, and other first responders due to their use of large lithium-ion batteries; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss the use of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) in the City of Boston, and that representatives of relevant City departments, electricity utility companies, battery storage providers, state and local energy regulatory agencies, researchers, and interested members of the public be invited to attend.

Filed on: January 15, 2025