

2025 Workplan for BESS Moratorium

Workplan Background

Ordinance 639-2025 imposed a 365-day moratorium on the acceptance of new applications for battery energy storage systems (BESS). The ordinance notes several unknown or poorly understood elements of developing BESS that without properly executed permits could create emergent situations.

Workplan Goal

The goal of the workplan is to accomplish analysis and investigative review of several work tasks that need to be understood to responsibly permit BESS. Understanding the issues and appropriate solutions will lead to an ordinance which specifically addresses BESS installation in Kitsap County. The deadline for this effort, including a recommendation by the Planning Commission and a decision by the Board, is May 2026.

Workplan Tasks

Elements of the workplan include:

- A. The County is aware BESS facilities may pose significant risks and will investigate the risks of explosion from overheating and resulting environmental contamination, as well as the general risk of fires that can take time to extinguish, require large volumes of water and chemicals to bring under control, and may result in environmental contamination.
- B. The County is aware that BESS facilities may produce noise, including low-frequency humming, visual impacts, and impacts on wildlife, and the County will investigate the scope of this issue and where facilities may be best suited to reduce incompatibility with adjacent land uses, including, potentially, industrial zones rather than rural, commercial or residential zones.
- C. The County is aware that BESS facilities may create additional strain on local emergency response agencies and their personnel, and the County will investigate the scope of this issue in collaboration with local emergency response agencies.
- D. The Washington State Department of Ecology is beginning to compile guidance on BESS facility sites that the County will need to study before updating its zoning and other regulations applicable to BESS facilities.
- E. The Washington State Legislature adopted House Bill 1216 in 2023, and new Washington State regulations are codified at WAC 51.54A.0322 which are intended to minimize the risks of lithium-ion BESS facilities through fire safety requirements and construction standards and will take effect soon. The County will study these new laws and regulations to determine what effects they will have on local regulatory authority. Other counties are also investigating the effects of these regulations. For example, King

County is studying whether its codes need updating to add conditions for approving these types of facilities, including zoning, safety, and insurance requirements; Kitsap County desires to learn about King County's regulatory initiatives before finalizing updates to its regulations.

- F. Puget Sound Energy (PSE) is conducting Requests For Proposals for third-party private entities to develop energy storage facilities connected via high-voltage transmission lines to PSE's regional substations and has published safety and reliability requirements for such facilities that need to be explored and better understood before the County can finalize updates to its regulations.
- G. It is unknown what fiscal or economic development benefits would flow to the County if BESS facilities were permitted within the County or which zone(s) would be most advantageous for siting them. The County needs to investigate and analyze potential economic impacts and tax revenues associated with such projects.
- H. Kitsap County will need to understand financial commitments for BESS facilities for the project from 'cradle to grave.' This may include financial sureties for different elements of a project, including decommissioning.