

A major fire at one of the world's largest battery storage plants was a 'wake-up call' for the industry, official says



A fire erupted at Moss Landing Power Plant in California on January 17, 2025. Tayfun Coskun/Anadolu via Getty Images© Tayfun Coskun/Anadolu via Getty Images

- A fire broke out at California's Moss Landing Power Plant on Thursday.
- The plant, said in 2023 to be the world's largest, stores energy for the California grid.
- 40% of the battery plant was burned, officials said, terming it a "disaster."

A major fire broke out Thursday at one of the world's largest battery storage plants.

The facility — in Moss Landing in northern California — stores energy for general use as part of the state grid and is a significant part of California's clean energy efforts.

Officials in Monterey County said it caught fire Thursday afternoon, prompting evacuation orders for over 2,000 people. County officials said at a press conference Friday that the fire caused no injuries or deaths and that most of the fire is now extinguished.

North County Fire Protection District Chief Joel Mendoza said at the press conference that every battery rack inside the facility has a "fire suppression system," but it wasn't enough.

"In other incidents that we've had, that system has worked perfectly," Mendoza said. "In this particular case, that system was not sufficient. It was overridden and that led to fire overtaking the system and eventually overtaking the entire building."

"There are two battery operations going on there, and both of them have had fires, and this has got to be the last one," Church said.

The facility is operated by Vistra Energy, a Fortune 500 firm based in Irving, Texas. It serves some 4 million residential and commercial customers across 20 states.

Although its stock price was down just over 5% in premarket trading on Friday, it has soared more than 330% in the past 12 months, valuing it at \$59 billion.

One of the batteries at Moss Landing, the Elkhorn Battery, was built in partnership with Tesla.

The system uses Tesla Megapack battery units, which contain [lithium-ion batteries](#) and power conversion equipment, and has a capacity of [730 megawatt hours](#) of energy storage.

[Tesla CEO Elon Musk](#) said on X that any insinuation that the fire is related to Tesla is "false."

"This fire has nothing to do with Tesla and our Megapacks are operating well," Musk wrote.

Vistra Director of Community Affairs Brad Watson said at the press conference that the company is hiring an outside consultant to help with air quality testing in the area around the fire in addition to testing by the local government and the EPA.

"Safety is our top priority, and we've heard the comments, last night and this morning, from residents and officials, about the concern about air quality from what happened at our facility," Watson said.

In a press release announcing the plant's expansion in 2023, Texas-based Vistra Energy said it was one of the world's largest battery storage plants.

The site has experienced problems before. In 2015, a transmission tower at the power plant collapsed, resulting in a significant power outage.

A failing heat detector also damaged the battery complex in 2021, and in 2022, a fire broke out at a nearby Pacific Gas & Electric-owned battery plant.

Church said that the expansion of renewable energy in Monterey County "needs to be safe" and that he had been "personally assured" that the kind of fire that broke out Thursday would not happen at the facility.

"There were safety protocols in place," Church said. "Well, obviously, that failed. And I think that just shows the nature that nobody knows really what we're dealing with here in this technology, and as the importance of it is, we got to learn a lot more about it."