

So happy that a better location will be found for the large scale battery project!

The **resolution I filed that was unanimously approved by our Holyoke City Council & Mayor Garcia**

**ORDER: that the City Council adopts the attached resolution in support of the City of Westfield and for the good of Holyoke.**

## RESOLUTION

CITY OF Holyoke

IN CITY COUNCIL April 15, 2025

A RESOLUTION OF THE Holyoke CITY COUNCIL REGARDING BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS (BESS) AND

A PETITION BEFORE THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

### **WHEREAS,**

Holyoke is a municipality of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; and Article 97 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts states that, "The people shall have the right to clean air and water, freedom from excessive and unnecessary noise, and the natural, scenic, historic, and esthetic qualities of their environment; and the protection of the people in their right to the conservation, development and utilization of the agricultural, mineral, forest, water, air and other natural resources is hereby declared to be a public purpose;"

**Whereas,** The General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has defined environmental justice principles, environmental benefits, environmental burdens, meaningful engagement, and the related requirements placed upon the Secretary of the Environment and all departments, boards, commissions, and authorities of the Commonwealth; and

**Whereas,** The City of Holyoke is home to environmental justice populations as defined by both the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the United States Environmental Protection Agency; and

**Whereas,** There is a proposal for a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) on Medeiros Way in Westfield, to have 219 stand-alone lithium battery storage units in Westfield, in a protection district which protects the aquifer that also extends into Holyoke, at a site that is close to the border of the city of Holyoke.

**Whereas,** BESS failures are such a frequent occurrence that the Electric Power Research Institute maintains a database of BESS failure incidents whose consequences pose a very real potential threat to our environment, first responders, and residents; and

**Whereas,** The Department of Public Utilities is reviewing the BESS project proposed to be located on Medeiros Way in the City of Westfield to determine:

1. Whether the project is necessary, serves the public convenience, and is consistent with the public interest under G.L. c. 164, § 72; and
2. Whether the zoning exemptions should be granted, and if the proposed use of the Parcels is reasonably necessary for the convenience or welfare of the public, pursuant to G.L. c. 40A, § 3; and

**Whereas,** The only way the DPU can approve the BESS on Medeiros way is to decide that having clean energy infrastructure is more important than the Westfield Water Resource Protection District zoning ordinance, which protects the largest aquifer; and

**Whereas,** We must balance clean energy progress with vigilant oversight to prevent environmental and public health harm from emerging technologies.

NOW, THEREFORE,

**Be it ordained by the City Council of Holyoke as follows:**

**RESOLVED** that the City Council of the City of Holyoke in agreement with caring and concerned citizens, hereby urges the DPU **to find that:**

The potential benefits of this project do not outweigh the very real environmental and public health risks associated with it.

Violation of the Water Resource Protection District's protections should not take place for the public convenience of residents anywhere; and

Siting this project in close proximity to already overburdened EJ and disadvantaged communities, schools and long term care facilities, and in a water resources protection district is not equitable distribution of environmental burdens and environmental benefits; and

The proposed use for this particular set of parcels is not reasonably necessary for the convenience or welfare of the public.

**Presented to the Mayor**

**April 15, 2025**

Approved by the Mayor

Sent from my iPhone

City Councilor Ward 5

Linda Vacon

C:210-6077