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## Proposed 130 MW battery storage facility in Fire District

3 messages

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Chris Alef <chris@crickertech.com>

Wed, Mar 18, 2026 at 8:53 PM

To: waho@esf-r.org

Chief Aho,

I live in Snoqualmie Ridge, about a mile from the proposed Cascadia Ridge battery storage site. I'm writing because your district would be the primary responder if anything goes wrong at this facility, and I'd like to understand how the district is thinking about it.

Jupiter Power is proposing a 130 MW lithium-ion battery storage facility on about 45 acres in unincorporated King County, directly across Snoqualmie Parkway from Snoqualmie Ridge. It would connect to PSE's Mt. Si substation via a 115kV tie-line. They held a community open house on March 17 at The Club at Snoqualmie Ridge, and more people showed up than the venue could hold.

I've been researching the project and have some questions that I think only your district can answer:

1. Has Jupiter Power contacted Eastside Fire & Rescue about the project, pre-incident planning, or mutual aid?
2. Does the district have the training, equipment, and staffing to respond to a lithium-ion battery storage fire? These fires involve thermal runaway, toxic hydrogen fluoride gas, reignition over days or weeks, and contaminated runoff. McMicken (Arizona, 2019) injured 8 firefighters in an explosion. Gateway (San Diego, 2024) burned for 11 days. Moss Landing (Monterey County, 2025) destroyed most of the facility, evacuated 1,200+ residents, and became the largest EPA lithium-ion battery cleanup in history.
3. Has the district looked at whether it would need additional resources or specialized training for a facility this size?
4. The Critical Areas Designation for this site (CADS25-0076, July 2025) confirms Fisher Creek runs through the northwest portion of the parcel with an unmapped floodplain. Firefighting runoff from a battery fire would carry heavy metals and fluoride compounds. Does the district have a protocol for containing that?

Two scenarios I've been thinking about that I'd value your perspective on:

- Evacuation with limited egress. Snoqualmie Ridge has two ways out (Snoqualmie Parkway and SR-18). A lithium-ion fire producing hydrogen fluoride could require shelter-in-place or evacuation for a large residential population. The City's ESF #16 plan (2017) doesn't contemplate an industrial toxic release scenario.
- Seismic trigger. The valley has significant seismic exposure (Southern Whidbey Island Fault, Seattle Fault, Cascadia Subduction Zone). Lithium-ion cells can develop internal short circuits from mechanical deformation. A major earthquake could trigger a battery fire while simultaneously damaging access roads, water supply, and evacuation routes.

For what it's worth, my position isn't against storage at this location. It's against lithium-ion specifically. Sodium-ion eliminates thermal runaway entirely, and Jupiter Power is already using it on other projects. If the chemistry were different, most of these questions wouldn't apply.

I've put together research at <https://cascadiaridgebess.org> covering fire risk, the Critical Areas Designation, permitting status, and comparable incidents. Happy to talk by phone if that's easier, but I'll be out of town until Monday.

Chris Alef  
[chris@crickertech.com](mailto:chris@crickertech.com)  
Former City of Snoqualmie Planning Commissioner  
206-491-9827

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Chris Alef <chris@crickertech.com>

Wed, Apr 1, 2026 at 2:15 PM

To: waho@esf-r.org

Chief Aho,

I wrote to you on March 18 with questions about the proposed Cascadia Ridge battery storage facility and Eastside Fire & Rescue's preparedness for it. I haven't heard back and wanted to follow up.

Since that letter, Jupiter Power has confirmed in writing (April 1) that they have met with the King County Fire Marshal, Eastside Fire

District, and Snoqualmie Fire Department about the project. I'd like to understand what Jupiter shared with your district and what your assessment is.

Jupiter Power also stated that battery chemistry "has not yet been selected" but is expected to be "lithium ion (LFP) or sodium ion." That's significant because the two chemistries present very different response scenarios. LFP can undergo thermal runaway with cascading cell-to-cell propagation, sustained hydrogen fluoride emissions, and fires lasting days or weeks. Sodium-ion has shown no thermal runaway in abuse testing, which eliminates the propagation risk entirely.

I also want to flag something I've learned since my original letter. The project parcels have no municipal water connection, no fire hydrants, and no water mains. Every property in the area is on private wells. Any fire suppression water for the facility would need to come from on-site storage. For a lithium-ion facility where fires can last days (Gateway in San Diego burned for 11), the adequacy of that water supply is a real question for your district.

I sent a similar letter to King County Fire Marshal Eric Urban today (he is out of the office until tomorrow). I've also compiled what other Washington jurisdictions have required through SEPA for comparable BESS projects at <https://cascadiaridgebess.org/wa-bess-sepa>. Highlights relevant to your district:

- Skagit County required annual emergency response plan review by the fire authority, with mandatory amendments whenever facility design or operations change (Mt. Vernon, 200 MW).
- Sumner required a Fire Response Plan approved by East Pierce Fire & Rescue and two on-site fire hydrants (Greenwater, 200 MW).
- Arlington required remote surveillance for thermal runaway detection (SnoPUD, 25 MW).

My original questions from March 18 still stand. The most important one: does your district have the training, equipment, and staffing to respond to a lithium-ion battery fire at this scale, on a site with no municipal water, in a valley with limited egress and atmospheric inversion conditions?

Chris Alef  
[chris@crickertech.com](mailto:chris@crickertech.com)  
Snoqualmie Ridge resident  
206-491-9827

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**Will Aho** <[WAho@esf-r.org](mailto:WAho@esf-r.org)>  
To: Chris Alef <[chris@crickertech.com](mailto:chris@crickertech.com)>

Mon, Apr 6, 2026 at 8:05 AM

Good morning Mr. Alef,

Thank you for your follow-up email and for taking the time to outline your concerns regarding the proposed Cascadia Ridge battery storage facility.

Eastside Fire & Rescue is aware of the proposed project and the operational and life safety issues it raises. At this time, several critical details that would directly affect emergency response remain unresolved or have not been finalized, including the battery chemistry, site design, fire protection systems, available water supply, and facility-specific emergency planning information.

Because those elements are not yet fully defined, Eastside Fire & Rescue cannot confirm that we are fully prepared today to mitigate an incident of this type and scale. Battery energy storage systems present complex and evolving hazards, and Jupiter Power has met with our hazmat team to help develop recommended training, equipment, response planning, and interagency coordination necessary for this type of risk.

Your concerns regarding water supply, site access, evacuation challenges, and the implications of final battery chemistry are valid and directly relevant to emergency response planning. Those factors would need to be clearly addressed as part of the project review and mitigation process. As you identified King County Permitting and King County Fire Marshal's Office is authority having jurisdiction over this project and site planning and permitting questions are best addressed by them.

As additional technical information becomes available, Eastside Fire & Rescue will continue evaluating the operational impact of the proposal and the response capabilities that would be required. At this stage, it would be inaccurate to suggest that all fire and life safety questions have been answered.

Thank you again for reaching out and for sharing your perspective.

Sincerely,

Will

*Excellence in Service*



*Dedication to Community*

**Will Aho** | Fire Chief

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