

Evacuations, Road Closures Begin as Fire Engulfs World Largest Lithium Battery Plant in California

A massive fire broke out at a Californian power plant early Friday morning, threatening one of the largest battery energy storage facilities in the world.

The blaze began in a building containing lithium-ion batteries hours earlier, an official at the Monterey County Sheriff's office [told](#) the BBC.

The Moss Landing power plant, run by Vistra Corp, was evacuated, as were people in the surrounding area. No injuries were reported.

Officials are not actively fighting the fire, the Monterey Sheriff spokesperson said, and are instead leaving the building and the batteries to burn on the advice of fire experts.

Hundreds of people have been ordered to evacuate and part of Highway 1 in Northern California has been closed.

The Moss Landing Power Plant, located about 77 miles south of San Francisco, is owned by Texas-based company Vistra Energy and contains tens of thousands of lithium batteries, the [Independent reports](#).

The batteries are important for storing electricity from such renewable energy sources as solar energy, but if they erupt in flames the blazes can be extremely difficult to put out.

“There’s no way to sugar coat it. This is a disaster, is what it is,” Monterey County Supervisor Glenn Church told KSBW-TV. But he said he did not expect the fire to spread beyond the concrete building it was enclosed in.

North Monterey County Unified School District announced that all schools and offices would be closed Friday due to the fire.

Officials said the fire is not connected with any of the current spate of wildfires in Los Angeles or other parts of the state.

