This is a vote on the County's battery storage *code*, not any specific project.

The December 16 vote is about establishing countywide rules for how battery energy storage systems (BESS) are sited, reviewed, and permitted in the future.

- It is **not** a vote on the proposed Shenandoah battery project.
- It is **not** a vote on the Primergy's 155MW solar and storage project in Hesperus, which is totally unrelated to LPEA.
- It does **not** approve or deny any specific application.
- All individual projects will still require a **full, separate permitting process** with public input.

How do Modern Battery Safety Standards Work?

Battery storage is regulated using **national fire and electrical safety codes**—the same standards used in communities across the country. These evidence-based rules are based on:

- equipment safety testing
- fire protection design
- emergency response planning
- spacing between equipment and nearby buildings
- modern enclosure technologies

These standards are designed to protect people, homes, and first responders.

Interesting fact: There was a 97% reduction in [BESS] failure rates between 2018-2023 as the industry learned and adopted new designs. (Source: EPRI and Pacific NW National Laboratory)

Why spacing matters

National practice evaluates safety based on distance from equipment to buildings rather than to property lines.

This is how most communities regulate BESS today.

About the Proposed Shenandoah Battery Project

- The Shenandoah project **is not** under County review at this time.

- It would begin permitting only if the County adopts its code.
- Here are the factual details about the proposal:
    - 5MW, 4 hour duration, 20 MWh battery system
    - Uses the same Tesla batteries found in many local homes for EV charging and approved for use in dense urban areas like New York City by the New York Fire Department (FDNY).
    - Enough storage to power 2,800 homes for several hours
    - Located 650 feet from the nearest home
    - Under 40 decibels at the fence line (below suburban ambient noise), and 24 dB at 650' away (below the ambient noise in a forest, that is to say **inaudible)**

Why battery storage helps LPEA members

Grid-edge batteries reduce:

- peak-hour power costs
- vulnerability to outages and regional supply issues
- carbon emissions
- strain on transmission lines

How BESS supports DER integration

- Stores excess energy, like solar, then delivers it when production drops
- Reduces costly peak demand by using stored energy at high-use times
- Stabilizes voltage and frequency from variable rooftop solar
- Eases congestion on local lines and delays expensive grid upgrades
- Makes renewables more predictable and dispatchable
- Strengthens resilience and enables community microgrids during outages

Why this location was studied

LPEA analyzes sites based on:

- safety access
- existing electrical infrastructure
- distance to homes
- topography

- wildfire considerations
- environmental impact
- cost and feasibility

The Shenandoah site meets these criteria.

Safety Commitments

LPEA's mission begins with safety, and that applies to every project in our service territory.

LPEA will:

- Adhere to all National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and National Electric Safety Code requirements
- Develop a full Emergency Response Plan (ERP) with Durango Fire
- Conduct joint training and recurring safety updates
- Prepare a decommissioning and recycling plan
- Use equipment certified through testing that evaluates and prevents thermal propagation
- Ensure all grid connections meet LPEA's internal electrical safety standards

Partnering with first responders

Durango Fire Protection District has deep experience with advanced battery systems and has studied past national incidents. They will play a central role in both planning and permitting.

Rumors vs. Facts

❌ Rumor: "The December 16 vote approves the Shenandoah project."

✓ Fact: The vote is only about the County code. The Shenandoah project will have its own separate review.

❌ Rumor: "Battery storage facilities are loud."

✓ Fact: Modern BESS are extremely quiet. Noise drops to whisper levels beyond facility fenceline.

❌ Rumor: “These batteries are untested or unsafe.”

✓ Fact: They are regulated under the same national standards used in major cities, utilities, and military installations nationwide.

❌ Rumor: “Batteries cause air pollution.”

✓ Fact: BESS produce zero emissions and help reduce fossil-fuel power consumption during peak demand.

❌ Rumor: “Batteries cause ground water contamination.”

✓ Fact: Properly installed and maintained BESS feature protection and containment systems that prevent corrosion and preserve the integrity of the battery materials.

❌ Rumor: “LPEA is moving too fast.”

✓ Fact: This project is possible now because LPEA’s long-term power contract is changing in 2026, allowing us to pursue local solutions. LPEA has been evaluating battery feasibility since 2016.

Funding and Local Benefits

This project is supported by a **competitive $2.085 million grant** from:

- the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA)
- the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)

Benefits include:

- local grid reliability
- keeping power affordable by reducing peak costs
- lower carbon emissions
- long-term grid resilience
- positioning La Plata County for future energy innovation
- Enables more distributed energy resources

What Happens Next

Step 1 – County Commissioners vote on the BESS code (December 16)
Step 2 – County finalizes the code and lifts the moratorium
Step 3 – LPEA submits a permit application for the Shenandoah project
Step 4 – County reviews the project with full public input and fire-safety analysis
Step 5 – Construction begins only if permits are approved