

## Caitlin McIntyre

Battery Energy Storage Systems and microgrids should not be located near educational or instructional school infrastructure. Pierce County has a minimum distance of 100 feet from school properties and that is not acceptable to locate these facilities so in such close proximity. Attached is a news story covered by King5 news, showing that even a small microgrid causes noise above the noise ordinance. TPCHD requires school noise levels be at a specific level and maintained and if the noise levels are further compromised by newcomers adding facilities that cause noise levels at the school to raise, the County approving this new development will now risk making school noise levels non compliant in the eyes of the Health inspector. When the code indicates marijuana dispensaries are required to be 1,000 feet from school property and adult businesses are required to be 2,000 feet from school properties, the intention is to separate and protect. I would argue that too is not doing enough. The cost of soil remediation that would be required in the worst case scenario, should there be thermal runaway and a major fire, should be fully assessed in order to understand how best to plan for locating BESS. Besides the risk of thermal runaway and fire, and major system failure, impacts to drinking water would be a concern.

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**SAMISH ISLAND, Wash.** — A Samish Island couple believes a Puget Sound Energy microgrid built near their property line violates noise ordinances and has forced them to put plans for their dream home on hold.

Zac Small and Kathleen Maloney bought property on Samish Island in 2019, envisioning it as their "happy place." Four years later, Puget Sound Energy built a microgrid next to their land to power an adjacent fire station and three homes during power outages.

The couple says the unit's noisy cooling fans run intermittently throughout the day and night, violating Skagit County's noise ordinance.

"It sounds like a little mini jet engine," Small said.

"We moved out here to get some peace and quiet, have a little bit of acreage. And we get worse noise than we do in the city," Maloney said.

The couple told KING 5 they were given no advance notice about the project.

"There was no opportunity to ask questions or communicate in any way about what to expect here," Small said.

A PSE-commissioned noise study recommended building a 14-by-18-foot wall to block the sound. That recommendation was made in October 2025, but construction has not begun.

A PSE spokesperson said the wall option could take months or even years to design, permit and construct, adding, "We have installed improvements and are actively pursuing additional upgrades to the HVAC to reduce the noise. This has taken longer than anticipated due to unforeseen delays but is a priority to resolve. We are committed to being a good neighbor."

In the meantime, the couple says they have put plans to build their dream home on hold.

"I've spent a lot of time working toward this goal and to have it interrupted like this is very disappointing," Small said.