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I Live Near the Moss Landing Battery Fire. Vistra Energy's Response is Not Enough.

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On January 16, one of the world's largest lithium battery storage plants, the Vistra Power Plant in Moss Landing, erupted in flames, leaving approximately 1,500 nearby residents with a decision: do I stay or should I evacuate?

Although authorities initially issued evacuation orders for the hundreds of people closest to the site out of concern over dangerous gases harming air quality, that concern soon abated. Four days after the fire, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced it had conducted air quality monitoring in the vicinity of the power plant and that there was "no threat to public health throughout the incident."

As a someone living 16 miles away from the site and whose 7-year-old attended school less than 20 miles from the site, I wasn't sure what to do. Were we actually safe like the EPA was now saying? Why then did I have a metallic taste in my mouth during the burn? Why did community members report sore throats, headaches and nosebleeds in the days since the fire?