



Written by [David Kelly](#) on July 10, 2023

Colorado Residents Fight Placement of EV Lithium-ion Battery Factory

The manufacturing of electric vehicle (EV) lithium-ion batteries in the United States became a top priority for the Biden administration last October with the launch of the [American Battery Material Initiative](#), an effort to “mobilize the entire government in securing a reliable and sustainable supply of critical minerals used for power, electricity, and electric vehicles (EVs).”

The administration’s “ambitious goal” for EV’s to comprise “half of all new vehicles sold in 2030” led to the Department of Energy (DOE) awarding \$2.8 billion in grants for EV manufacturing and processing companies in 12 states. Those EV manufacturing grants have led to residents in one community to fight the placement of a new lithium-ion battery factory in their neighborhood.



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Amprius Technologies, a leader in lithium-ion batteries, was one of the first companies to receive a \$50 million cost-shared demonstration grant from Biden’s battery initiative. According to an Amprius [press release](#), the company in March selected Colorado for its “strategic geographic location, extensive manufacturing infrastructure, significant factory capacity potential, and comprehensive incentives package,” and will build a 75,000 square foot facility in the city of Brighton.

“We need more batteries to power the future, and now we will be manufacturing more of them right here in Colorado. We are excited to welcome Amprius to Colorado, bringing over 300 new good-paying jobs, and joining Colorado’s innovative and collaborative business community,” said Governor Jared Polis in a [press release](#).

Representative Yadira Caraveo (D-Colo.) is supportive of the new EV battery factory as well, [stating](#),

Colorado is leading the way in technology development and innovation. I’m glad to see that leadership rewarded as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law starts vesting in Adams County. Attracting Amprius and other cutting-edge businesses to our community will stoke our local economy and create hundreds of good jobs. I look forward to their success and will continue using my position on the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee to build on this investment as we power the economy of the future right here in Colorado.

It appeared as though the Amprius lithium-ion battery factory was the beginning of another Colorado gold rush, with city and county leaders excited about the new facility as they chimed in on the new factory, with the state [press release](#) sharing,



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“Brighton City Council and the City of Brighton leadership team are excited to welcome Amprius Technologies Inc. to our community,” said Robin Martinez, Brighton Economic Development Corporation President & CEO. “We have a highly-skilled workforce and a collaborative regional approach to attracting and supporting new and existing companies in Brighton.

“We’re thrilled to welcome Amprius Technologies to the Metro Denver region,” said president of the Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation, Raymond H. Gonzales. “With one of the leading clean technology industries in the nation and an electric vehicle market that’s constantly growing, Colorado needs companies like Amprius Technologies to ensure we’re ready for all our future developments and endeavors.

The Adams County Commissioner Chair Steve O’Dorisio noted, “We are happy to welcome Amprius to Adams County and look forward to a continued partnership as they grow and develop their innovative battery technology right here in Brighton. The jobs they create will not only benefit our current local residents, but also help to expand future career paths in the renewable energy sector.”

What these official announcements and press releases failed to mention were all the potential risks and hazards that the manufacturing and storage of lithium-ion batteries pose to the public and environment. It seemed that fulfilling the “clean” energy goals of the Biden administration, while grabbing all the taxpayer-funded grant money in the process, outweighed any risks associated with opening the factory. A main concern is the risk for fires; as lithium-ion battery fires are especially dangerous because of how quickly they can start and spread, and they produce toxic gases.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) [shared](#) that EV fires involving lithium-ion batteries are some of the most challenging incidents to respond to, stating:

EV fires have been known to burn longer than fires involving traditional, gasoline-powered vehicles, with instances of EV fires reigniting hours, or even days, after the initial fire is controlled. Typically, these blazes take more water to extinguish, too, and it can be difficult for responders to apply water to areas it is needed.

The excitement about the new factory didn’t last long, as the benefit to local residents failed to materialize when the location of the Amprius facility was announced. As CBS [reported](#) in April, “The factory is set to be operational in 2025 and located ... just across the street from a residential neighborhood and within a mile of multiple schools, stands Platte Valley Medical Center and Brighton’s water towers.”

A group of concerned residents led by Jessie and Joe Williams quickly initiated a petition campaign to stop the rezoning of the property that Amprius would use. The proposed rezoning would allow Amprius to use and store hazardous and extremely flammable materials needed to manufacture the lithium-ion batteries.

CBS, reporting on the petition campaign, [shared](#):

“We live here, we love here, our children go to school here. Please don’t wreck it,” said nearby resident, Jessie Williams.



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“They say it’s clean energy, but the process involved in making these batteries used carcinogenic chemicals, flammable liquids, the whole operation is highly hazardous and would be rated as such,” said Kevin Murray, who lives a mile away from the site.

One concerned resident working with the group, Cat McQueen, reached out to *The New American* to share the group’s experiences. McQueen wrote in an email that the group is simply concerned citizens in motion, stating, “We have had one-on-one meetings with Amprius and have asked many questions only to get different answers, depending on who you spoke with. The city of Brighton has not moved toward discussions on the zoning change in city council meetings or have held public hearings on the zoning change.”

McQueen shared that the group is optimistic, stating they “remain positive” when faced with the challenges they’ve encountered and “are diligently working towards success in keeping the citizens of Brighton safe and educated in regards to lithium-ion batteries and their manufacturing techniques.”

The group, as well as thousands of nearby residents, wait to see if their efforts will pay off by forcing Amprius and the city of Brighton to rethink the factory’s location.

To date, *The New American* has yet to get any response from Brighton officials when asked for a timeline and information on bringing Amprius to the city. At this point it appears that Amprius is set to be operational by 2025 as planned.



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