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## Development of high-efficiency energy storage systems for sustainable energy

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### Abstract

The development of high-efficiency energy storage systems is essential for advancing sustainable energy solutions and addressing global energy demands. Given the inexorable shift toward solar and wind energy, each of which is inherently intermittent, the demand for economical and efficient storage technologies has grown quite significant. This paper looks into the advances in energy storage the last couple of years: lithium ion batteries, solid state batteries, early disclosures of flow batteries, supercapacitors. Their ongoing goal is to increase energy density, decrease cost and increase lifecycle efficiency with these innovations. The role of novel materials, nanotechnology and smart grid integration are investigated in conjunction with optimizing storage systems. Issues of resource scarcity, life cycle impacts, and a lack of recycling solutions are identified as challenges, and an emphasis is placed on the imperative of a circular economy. This research explores how these advancements and challenges combine to make high efficiency energy storage systems an integral component of a future energy infrastructure that can help decarbonize, sustain, and be resilient.

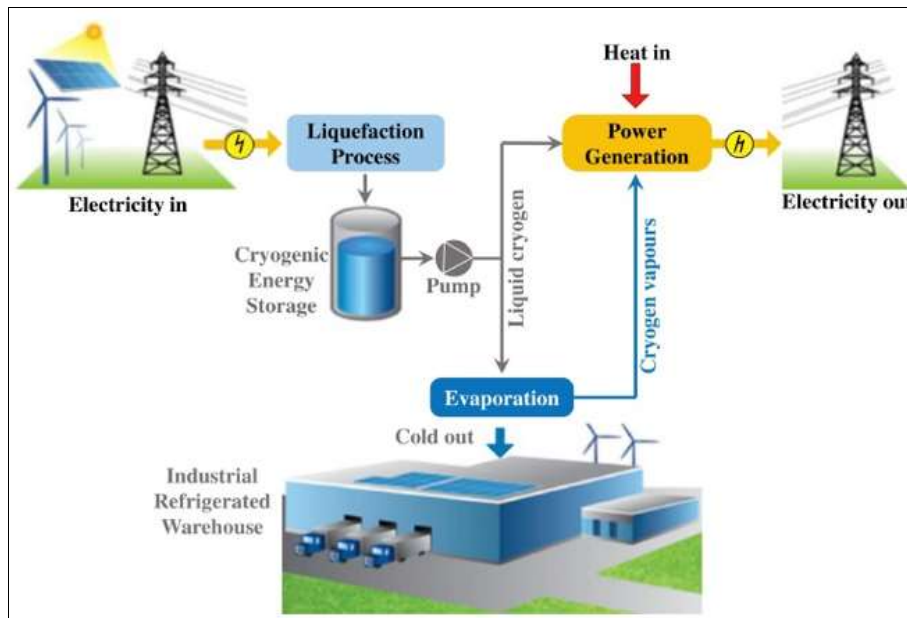
**Keywords:** High-efficiency energy storage, sustainable energy solutions, global energy demands, solar energy

### Introduction

As the world moves quickly to turn towards renewable energy sources, and to curb greenhouse gas emissions and combat climate change, Energy Storage Systems are at the forefront of renewable energy development. As renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and hydro gain prominence, their inherent intermittency presents a significant challenge: It doesn't produce energy continuously or during peak demand periods. High efficiency energy storage systems are clearly needed to store excess harvested energy and act as an available source when generation from renewable sources is not reliable. Energy storage technologies will allow for the integration of renewables into the energy market and reduce dependence on fossil fuel. Such effective energy storage solutions act not only as a means to balance the supply and demand but to stabilize grid operations which leads to more sustainable and flexible energy infrastructure.

Advances in a few major areas (Such as, for example, increased energy density, increased longevity and cost reduction), can lead to the development of high efficiency energy storage systems. The standard has been set by current technologies like lithium ion batteries and they are not without limitations - in terms of resource availability, environmental impact, and energy efficiency. The research for an alternative storage (as solid state batteries, flow batteries or supercaps, etc.) is increasing at a fast pace, and each of them has its own advantages and disadvantages. Moreover, progress in material science innovations like the development of nanomaterials and the use of sustainable raw materials is pointing the way towards more efficient and ecofriendly storage systems. Meanwhile, smart grid technologies and artificial intelligence are revolutionizing grids, making possible more exact energy management and a real-time response to demand and supply fluctuations. In this paper, we analyze these technological advances and discuss how high efficiency energy storage systems can impact the energy landscape to a global magnitude, leading to a low carbon, sustainable energy future. This work uses an analysis of these current challenges and pathways to make the case for innovation in energy storage as a key component of sustaining renewable energy growth and reliability.

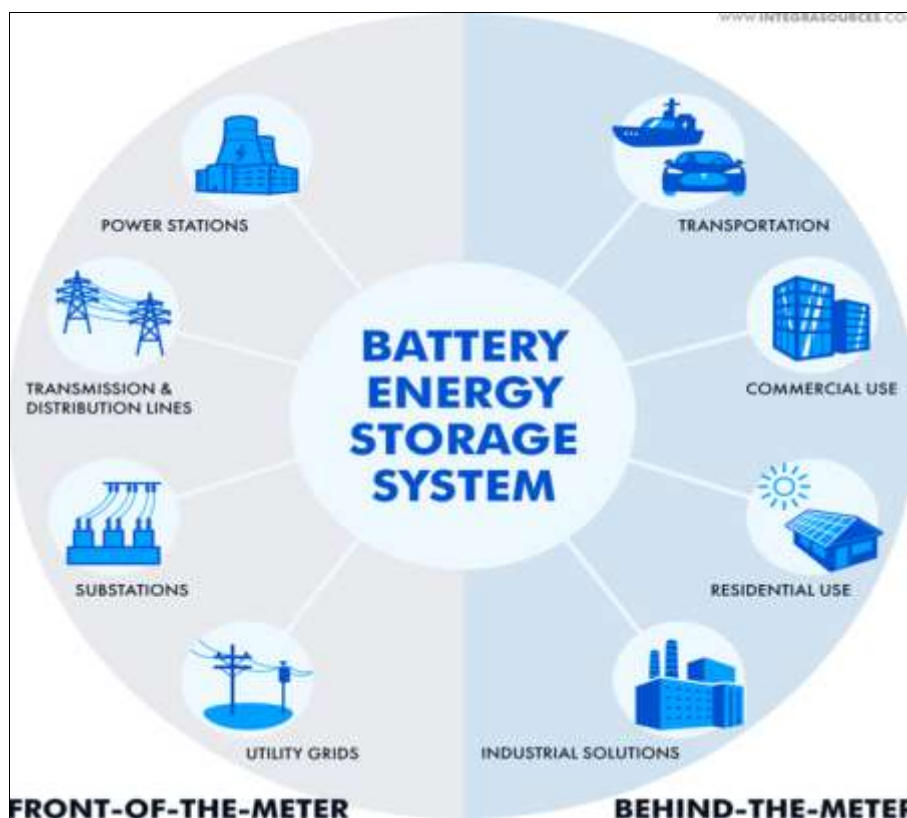
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**Importance of High-Efficiency Energy Storage Systems**

For a successful and sustainable, resilient energy future, high efficiency energy storage systems (HPESs) are necessary. In the transition from fossil fuels to more renewable sources like solar and wind, as renewables inherently vary with the day and night, reliable storage

solutions become a must for supplying steadier energy. Excess energy generated during peak production periods can be stored in high efficiency energy storage, using the excess energy generated during the same period or other period or periods where production is low such as cloudy days or night-time for solar power.



Having the capacity to balance constraints this capability reduces reliance on fossil fuels, decreases greenhouse gas emissions, and facilitates large scale decarbonization. Moreover, efficient storage systems keep the energy grid stable by managing supply and demand fluctuations to prevent outages and keep the grid resilient. Not only are they important for grid scale applications, they are important in supporting the use of off grid systems, electric vehicles and their operation and industrial processes that require

continuous energy access. Also, advances in storage technology provide economic benefits by driving down costs for energy consumers and new markets for sustainable products and services. High efficiency storage systems are critical for accelerating renewable energy adoption, achieving climatic objectives, and guiding the way to clean source and sustainable energy economy by achieving higher energy density, longer life cycle, and lowering cost.

## Objectives and Scope of Research

The aim of the research is to develop and advance high efficiency energy storage systems that support the integration of and scaling up of renewable energy. More specifically, it intends to review recent technological advancements, materials improvements and design upgrades that improve energy density, lifecycle, safety and cost. In this research, an initial attempt is made to provide an all-encompassing overview of the storage technologies that exist today, and are coming into existence today, in the form of lithium ion, solid state, flow batteries, and super capacitors; all with the goal of serving the growing but demanding need for reliable sustainable energy.

This work covers environmental, economic, and technical obstacles for the large-scale deployment of such storage systems. I explore key focus areas of sustainable material sourcing, recycling and waste reduction, and analyze the role of smart grid technologies for the optimal usage of storage. The research also considers regulatory and policy considerations for energy storage solutions deployment at both grid and off grid scales. The research explores these aspects in order to contribute to knowledge of systems development pathways and innovations that could enable the transition to high efficiency energy storage systems, and ultimately to resilient, low carbon energy infrastructures. In the end, this study used to inform the development of a strategic framework for promoting sustainable energy growth and enhancing long term energy security.

## Literature Review

Nikolaidis, P., & Poullikkas, A. (2017) <sup>[1]</sup>. Electrical energy storage systems is key to unlocking sustainability, empowering management of the grid and adoption of clean energy. Of these systems, batteries, pumped hydro storage and compressed air energy storage are notable ones. Because the energy density is high, the response time is rapid, and both mobile and stationary applications are served; lithium ion batteries are popular. Finite lithium resources, as well as environmental problems in mining and disposal, limit their sustainability. Compared to other forms of energy storage, pumped hydro storage is very energy intensive to setup, but holds promise as a reliable, long term, low impact energy source. One alternative is Compressed air energy storage (CAES) the efficiency and geographic limitations, however, make the method unattractive. Although the spread of redox flow batteries and hydrogen storage are promising technologies offering a smaller footprint on the environment, these kinds of technologies are not quite widely accessible yet. To create a resilient sustainable energy infrastructure, these systems need to be in a balanced mix (Appropriate for different applications).

Akbari, H., Browne, *et al* (2019) <sup>[2]</sup>. Since photovoltaic (PV) systems essentially depend on sunlight, efficient energy storage is important to provide power when sunshine is not available. Lithium-ion (Li-ion) batteries have the highest energy density, fastest charge/discharge cycles, and decreasing costs making them a desirable choice for all potential residential and commercial PV setups. However, they depend on limited resources of lithium which is questionable on a sustainability basis. While older, lead acid batteries are still very widely used for applications of small scale in part based on the low costs, but have shorter life and lower energy efficiency. Although more costly in terms of surface area, redox flow batteries are showing promise for

large scale PV systems because they offer scalability; can maintain long cycle life; and require less environmental impact. While hydrogen storage still holds many possibilities, converting excess solar energy into hydrogen fuel which can be stored for later is a long term promise. Scale, cost, and sustainability, however, dictate what storage technology is chosen and why an optimized mix is key to maximizing PV efficiency and reliability.

Farhadi, M., & Mohammed, O. (2015) <sup>[3]</sup>. For high power energy storage applications there are solutions to deal with high energy loads efficiently and reliably. For high power need, PHS is the most widely utilized for its huge storage capacity and length service life, but needs certain geographical conditions, for instance, sizeable elevation difference and ample water resources. Another option, more appropriate for grid scale applications, is the compressed air energy storage (CAES) system, which stores energy in underground caverns, but with an efficiency that is contingent on the integration of heat management systems. Lithiumion batteries present excellent power density and quick response times, fit for frequency regulation and grid stabilization, but can be too expensive of a proposition for large installations. Meanwhile emerging technologies such as flywheel energy storage have short response times and are very durable, which is perfect for short duration, high power demand. Combining these technologies, customized for application specific needs is essential to meeting the challenges for high power energy storage.

Krishan, O., & Suhag, S. (2019) <sup>[4]</sup>. Energy storage systems have a critical role to play in the distributed generation power systems and especially if these are supplemented by renewable energy sources such as the solar and wind power sources which are both variable by nature. Electrochemical, mechanical, thermal and chemical storage were classified as ESS technologies. Advantages of the generally employed electrochemical storage like lithium ion and flow batteries for fast response and scalability, make them attractive in both small and grid scale applications. High capacity, durable solutions are available in options such as mechanical storage like pumped hydro energy storage (PHS), flywheels, but these also typically require a specific geographic configuration. Excess heat from solar thermal systems is stored in thermal storage such as molten salt, which can be released when needed, with the benefit of efficient load shifting. Among long term and large scale applications, there is much promise in chemical storage particularly through hydrogen production by converting electricity into a storable fuel. The ESS should be carefully selected based on the requirement that can be response time, capacity and cost to optimize the distributed generation systems with renewable energy.

Abdalla, A. N., *et al* (2021) <sup>[5]</sup>. An opportunity for transformation comes by integrating ESS with RES using artificial intelligence (AI). Real time decision making, forecasting and optimization of energy flows between storage and generation units is enabled through the use of Artificial Intelligence techniques such as machine learning, neural networks and predictive analytics. In solar and wind energy applications, AI can hand model production based on weather patterns, adjust ESS charging and discharging, and strengthen grid stability. AI accurately forecasts demand and supply fluctuation and, hence, less energy wastage and more efficiency. AI algorithms can configure battery health by controlling charge cycles and prevent over usage to



elongate ESS life span. Using AI driven control systems, it allows for choosing renewable energy first, reduce the dependency on the use to fossil fuel and decrease in energy costs. The integration of AI with ESS, RES also improves system reliability and promotes a reliable and sustainable energy infrastructure for future.

Akinyele, D. O., *et al* (2014) [6]. While controlled price fluctuations do not support simple zero marginal cost solar and wind, zero marginal cost solar and wind and the technologies that enable their integration into a sustainable power grid provide an opportunity to meet these goals. Firstly, due to their high energy density, adaptability to both residential and utility-scale use, lithium-ion batteries lead; however, sustainability concerns related to resource extraction and disposal challenge. The other widely adopted option is another another big, clean, long term storage option and that's pumped hydro storage (PHS), but it has limitations though, it is geographic dependent. While the many efficiencies of electrochemical storage they do have many efficiencies themselves, but a redox flow battery presents a flexible, sustainable alternative with longer lifespans and easier recyclability, making them an ideal candidate for large scale applications. Compressed air energy storage (CAES) is a cost effective grid level storage, but only under specific geological conditions. An untapped technology, hydrogen storage has the potential for a long term sustainable option for energy storage by storing excess energy in the form of hydrogen fuel. These technologies are a diverse toolkit to form resilient, sustainable power networks.

Suberu, M. Y., *et al* (2014) [7]. To mitigate intermittency challenge and integrate renewable energy in power sector, Energy Storage Systems (ESS) are the key players. Solar and wind, renewables, also produce power in intermittent manners due to variability in weather, but ESS can store additional output generated during periods of high production and relinquish it during times of demand peaks or low production. However, lithium-ion batteries are perfect for matching short term fluctuations in renewable output because they're fast responding and scalable. Pumped hydro storage (PHS) provides a robust solution for large-scale, long duration storage of huge energy quantities and assisting grid stability, but only at specific geographical locations. While compressed air energy storage (CAES) and hydrogen storage represent options for longer durations of storage, for example, hydrogen could serve in particular as a zero carbon fuel energy alternative for continuously achieving energy supply. Effective management of renewable intermittency provides opportunities for higher penetration of renewable energy, less dependence on fossil fuels, higher power sector sustainability, and higher resilience.

Chen, L., Zheng, T., *et al* (2016) [8]. As a large scale solution to energy storage, it makes perfect sense that compressed air energy storage (CAES) systems are emerging as a promising solution especially aligned with renewable energy sources such as wind and solar. When electricity demand is low or supply is high, CAES stores energy by pumping air into underground caverns or large storage tanks where it is compressed. During periods of high demand, compressed air that has previously been stored is heated and expanded to drive turbines, which supply electricity. However, natural gas is required to reheat the air in traditional CAES systems, limiting sustainability,

compared to more adiabatic systems which seek to utilize the compression heat to eliminate fossil fuels. The advantages of CAES are its long duration storage capability and relatively low operational costs, and suitability for grid level applications. The efficiency of traditional CAES systems is about 40-50%, so efficiency remains challenging. Efficiency is being boosted through better thermal management and hybrid CAES battery systems, and yet more research. Progress of technological advancements makes CAES an important role in future sustainable energy grids.

## Types of Energy Storage Systems

### Lithium-Ion Batteries

- The most widely used energy storage technology, particularly for electric vehicles and grid storage.
- Known for high energy density, efficiency, and relatively low weight, but limited by issues related to resource scarcity, safety, and degradation over time.

### Solid-State Batteries

- A next-generation battery technology that uses a solid electrolyte instead of a liquid one.
- Offers higher energy density, improved safety, and longer lifecycle, although still facing challenges with scalability, cost, and material compatibility.

### Flow Batteries

- Stores energy in liquid electrolytes held in external tanks, which are pumped through a cell to generate electricity.
- Ideal for long-duration, grid-scale storage due to their scalability, long cycle life, and ability to maintain capacity over time. However, they generally have a lower energy density compared to lithium-ion.

### Supercapacitors

- Energy storage devices that store energy through an electrostatic charge, rather than a chemical reaction, allowing rapid charging and discharging.
- Known for their high power density and long cycle life, but limited by low energy density, making them suitable for applications requiring quick bursts of energy.

### Pumped Hydro Storage

- A large-scale storage method that involves pumping water to a higher elevation during low-demand periods and releasing it to generate electricity during high-demand periods.
- Offers long-duration storage and high efficiency but requires specific geographical conditions and significant infrastructure investment.

### Compressed Air Energy Storage (CAES)

- Uses surplus electricity to compress air into an underground cavern or tank, which is then released to drive a turbine and generate electricity when needed.
- Suitable for large-scale energy storage, though efficiency is lower than other technologies, and it requires specific locations for storage.

### Thermal Energy Storage

- Stores energy as heat or cold, typically in materials like molten salts or phase-change materials, which can be used to generate electricity or provide heating/cooling later.
- Common in solar thermal power plants, this technology is ideal for applications that can tolerate slower energy discharge rates.

**Hydrogen Storage**

- Uses electricity (often from renewables) to produce hydrogen through electrolysis, which can be stored and later converted back into electricity using fuel cells.
- Suitable for large-scale and long-term storage, but challenges include efficiency losses, infrastructure requirements, and cost.

**Materials and Technologies for High-Efficiency Storage**

Meeting the demands of sustainable energy systems necessitates high efficiency energy storage and reliance upon developments in materials and technologies for the same. Materials used in lithium ion and solid state batteries have enabled a large increase in energy density, safety and life in battery technology. While lithium ion batteries use materials such as lithium, cobalt, nickel and manganese, solid state batteries are based on the use of a solid electrolyte which decreases safety risks and increases energy capacity. The key to increasing a supercapacitor's power density and enabling rapid charge-discharge cycles is using materials such as graphene and carbon nanotubes - which are ideal for applications that require bursts of electrical power. Meanwhile, hydrogen and fuel cell technologies use electrolysis to make clean, long duration, storable hydrogen from fuel cell power with supplemental materials, such as fuels cell catalysts which includes costly

elements like platinum, but can convert the hydrogen back to electricity. During thermal energy storage, phase change materials (PCMs) such as molten salts and paraffin serve as a heat buffer by absorbing and releasing heat energy to and from the storage material, enabling heating, cooling and generation of electricity. These PCMs absorb and release large amounts of energy at specific temperatures, and are hence ideal for concentrated solar power and building energy management. Innovations across these varied materials and technologies are making storage systems higher efficiency, more sustainable, and multifaceted enough to suit many energy applications.

**Results and Discussion**

High efficiency energy storage systems experience significant progress in energy density, cost reduction and sustainability, which are essential to realize renewable energy as a dominant energy power. Technological innovations in lithium ion batteries and solid state batteries provide improved storage capacity and faster charging features that would allow them to be more suited than gas powered vehicles for grid storage and electric vehicles. Energy bursts with fast discharge performance can be supported by supercapacitors while flow batteries are suitable for the long duration storage in applications such as grid stability. Meanwhile, hydrogen fuel cells offer potential clean and long term energy storage, but are hindered by cost and infrastructure. Even so, each of these still has capacity limitations, such as resource scarcity and environmental impacts. Innovations in materials, with smart grid integration and AI driven management can address these, providing more reliable solutions and accelerate global sustainable energy transitions.

**Table 1:** Advancements, Benefits, and Challenges of Energy Storage Technologies

Technology	Key Advancements	Benefits	Challenges
Lithium-Ion Batteries	Improved energy density, extended cycle life, and faster charging rates	Widely used in EVs and grid storage; scalable	Resource scarcity (lithium, cobalt); thermal stability issues
Solid-State Batteries	Use of solid electrolytes, higher safety, and potential for greater energy density	Safer and longer-lasting storage; suitable for future EVs	High production costs; limited large-scale production
Supercapacitors	Enhanced power density through materials like graphene	Rapid charging/discharging; long cycle life	Low energy density limits use to specific applications
Flow Batteries	Scalable design for long-duration storage, especially vanadium-based flow cells	Ideal for grid applications; long lifespan	Lower energy density; requires large storage space
Hydrogen Fuel Cells	Efficient energy conversion with hydrogen as a clean fuel	Clean, long-term storage; adaptable for transport	High costs; infrastructure requirements

This table defines the progress, advantages, and disadvantages of various energy storage technologies and focuses on each technology's special contribution and limitation. Through improvements in energy density, cycle life, and charging rate lithium ion batteries have become the option for electric vehicles (EVs) and grid storage, though resource scarcity issues (e.g., lithium, cobalt) and thermal instability still remain. Solid electrolytes which are used in solid-state batteries enable batteries with higher safety and the potential for higher energy density for future EVs, but their high production costs and limited scalability constitute barriers. The enhanced version of the existing supercapacitor - with materials such as graphene - is able to charge quickly, keep cycling for long lives but is low energy

density, meaning it can only power for short bursts. Vanadium based flow batteries are a scalable solution for long duration storage and whilst they have all of the features required for grid applications (i.e. long service life, etc.) they have relatively low density and so would demand large amounts of storage infrastructure. However, there are high costs and significant infrastructure required for the former, hydrogen fuel cells, which are very efficient in converting hydrogen to clean energy and addressing long term storage needs and transport applications. Each technology serves specific energy storage needs along a continuum of performance improvements against the constraints of existing technology and economics.

**Table 2:** Comparison of Key Performance Metrics for Energy Storage Technologies

Technology	Energy Density (Wh/kg)	Cycle Life (cycles)	Efficiency (%)	Cost (\$/kWh)	Charge Time (Hours)
Lithium-Ion Battery	150-250	500-2,000	85-95	120-200	0.5-2
Solid-State Battery	300-500	2,000-10,000	90-98	300-800	1-4
Supercapacitor	5-10	500,000+	90-98	10-20	<0.1
Flow Battery	20-50	10,000+	70-85	150-300	2-6
Hydrogen Fuel Cell	33	1,000-5,000	40-60	300-1,000	Varies (Production-dependent)

Table shows how the key metrics of various energy storage technologies fit different applications. Lithium-ion batteries (150-250 Wh/kg) hold promise for electric vehicles and grid storage thanks to moderate cost (\$120-200/kWh), high efficiency (90-95%) and rapid turnarounds (0.5-2 h), albeit with fewer cycles (500-2,000 cycles). As a promising alternative, solid-state batteries provide higher energy density (300-500 Wh/kg), longer cycle life (2,000-10,000 cycles) and higher efficiency (90-98%), but at a higher cost (\$300 to \$800/kWh) and with a longer charging time (1 to 4 hours). Although supercapacitors have inferior energy density (5-10 Wh kg<sup>-1</sup>) relative to conventional capacitors, they have the fastest charging (<0.1 hours) and use period (500,000+ cycles) capabilities, which are essential for applications that require a large power output over short period of time. Long duration storage, a high cycle life (10,000+ cycles), and moderate efficiency (70-85%) at \$150-300/kWh are provided by flow batteries, but with slower charge times (2-6 hours). In terms of long term storage, hydrogen fuel cells present energy density that ranges between 33 Wh/kg and efficiencies about 40-60% with charge times that vary based on production (~4 g kWe) and higher costs (\$300-1,000/kWh). The benefits of each technology in terms of energy density, cost, and charge/discharge traits indicate that they are designed for different functions within sustainable energy infrastructure.

### Design and Optimization of Energy Storage Systems

In order to improve the performance of overall energy storage system, design and optimize of the system is requires to increase efficiency and decrease associated losses. The primary design strategies include increasing energy density, increasing charging and discharging rates, and improving safety, i.e. generating modular, scalable structures and choosing materials able to accept high energy storage efficiencies. Advanced thermal management to limit overheat, innovative control algorithms to reduce self-discharge and optimized charge/discharge protocols to maximize battery life, are among the techniques studied to reduce energy losses. With increasing importance of storage optimization in utilizing AI and machine learning, real time monitoring, predictive maintenance and adaptive energy flow management in storage systems are being made possible. They can use, for example, machine learning algorithms to study usage patterns and environmental conditions, thus predict demand and, consequently, properly orient the storage operations in order to improve both reliability and energy efficiency. Practical applications of these strategies include grid scale storage stabilizing renewable energy supplies and battery management systems in electric vehicle applications that maximize performance and longevity. Examples being Tesla's Power wall and large installations of energy that use AI to predict demand and dynamically redistribute the energy. Continuous improvement in design, reduced energy losses, and intelligent optimization now provide more energy storage

systems more resilient and energetically efficient operation, on the way to sustainable energy networks everywhere.

### Conclusion

Energy storage is fundamental to making sustainable energy sources mainstream and realizing a low-carbon energy future, and the development of high efficiency energy storage systems is key to achieving this. With the rising importance of renewable energy sources like solar and wind, to an increasingly significant portion of global energy supply, the solutions to their intermittency are increasingly important as well, and that involves efficient storage, offering a steady and reliable power flow. Energy density, cycle life, and safety have all seen significant positive advances due to improvements in materials like those found in lithium ion, solid state, and supercapacitor technologies, and efficiency and energy losses are being reduced through innovation in design and optimization strategies. The synthesis of AI and machine learning has also enabled new degrees of control and adaptability that are enabling storage systems to respond dynamically to demand and ambient conditions. Continuous research and development have been putting forth possible solutions for alternative energy storage options that are more sustainable, environmentally friendly, and cost effective alternatives to storage problems associated with resource scarcity and environmental impacts. These systems not only have the potential to stabilize grids but also empower consumers and reduce reliance on fossil fuels; grid scale storage and electric vehicles are but two practical applications demonstrating this transformational capability. As such, high efficiency energy storage systems are an essential component of a sustainable, resilient energy infrastructure that meets the needs of a growing, energy intensive global population. These systems will continue to contribute to the achievement of long time sustainability and energy security, through further innovation.

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