

| <b>DOCKETED</b>         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Docket Number:</b>   | 24-OPT-02   |
| <b>Project Title:</b>   | Compass Energy Storage Project  |
| <b>TN #:</b>            | 263470  |
| <b>Document Title:</b>  | Senator Steven Choi Comments - Senator Choi - Opposition to Proposed Compass Energy Storage Project (24-OPT-02) |
| <b>Description:</b>     | N/A   |
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| <b>Organization:</b>    | Senator Steven Choi   |
| <b>Submitter Role:</b>  | Other Interested Person   |
| <b>Submission Date:</b> | 5/28/2025 10:42:17 PM   |
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*Comment Received From: Senator Steven Choi*

*Submitted On: 5/28/2025*

*Docket Number: 24-OPT-02*

## **Senator Choi - Opposition to Proposed Compass Energy Storage Project (24-OPT-02)**

Dear California Energy Commissioners,

As State Senator for California's 37th Senate District, I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) facility less than 1,500 feet from Laguna Niguel residents. The project applicant, Compass Energy Storage LLC, proposes to construct, own, and operate an approximately 250-megawatt (MW) BESS facility in the City of San Juan Capistrano. The project site is located within the northern portion of San Juan Capistrano, adjacent to the Oso Creek Channel, Interstate-5, and the LOSSAN/Amtrak Railroad.

The BESS facility would be composed of lithium-ion batteries, which are incredibly dangerous when they overheat, causing the batteries to catch fire. The proposed location of Compass Energy Storage's project site poses significant public safety, public health, environmental, and economic concerns that jeopardize the well-being of residents across the county, including:

• **Wildfire Risks:** The proposed project site is surrounded by vegetation and steep terrain, as well as homes and schools, and is in close proximity to a high fire severity zone, easily leading to the widespread destruction of homes

• **Public Health:** Lithium batteries emit toxic gases within seconds of igniting, leading to air pollution and public health risks. If first responders quickly extinguish a lithium battery fire, they would be exposed to hazardous, toxic gases, which can cause severe, debilitating health impacts. If the fire is not readily extinguished, the toxic gases emitted would generate a public health risk for the surrounding communities

• **Railroad Safety:** Sole access to the proposed project site is through the geometrically constrained Rancho Capistrano public railroad crossing. The railroad right-of-way is active as passenger rail service (LOSSAN and Amtrak) and freight operators (BNSF Railway) utilize this railroad line throughout the day. Construction of the BESS facility would require many large equipment and

# California State Senate

SENATOR  
STEVEN S. CHOI, PH.D.  
THIRTY-SEVENTH SENATE DISTRICT



May 28, 2025

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California Energy Commission  
Docket Number: 24-OPT-02  
Project Title: Compass Energy Storage Project

**RE: Opposition to Proposed Compass Energy Storage Project (24-OPT-02)**

Dear California Energy Commissioners,

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The BESS facility would be composed of lithium-ion batteries, which are incredibly dangerous when they overheat, causing the batteries to catch fire. The proposed location of Compass Energy Storage's project site poses significant public safety, public health, environmental, and economic concerns that jeopardize the well-being of residents across the county, including:

- **Wildfire Risks:** The proposed project site is surrounded by vegetation and steep terrain, as well as homes and schools, and is in close proximity to a high fire severity zone, easily leading to the widespread destruction of homes
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- **Railroad Safety:** Sole access to the proposed project site is through the geometrically constrained Rancho Capistrano public railroad crossing. The railroad right-of-way is active as passenger rail service (LOSSAN and Amtrak) and freight operators (BNSF Railway) utilize this railroad line throughout the day

Construction of the BESS facility would require many large equipment and maintenance trucks to cross the Rancho Capistrano crossing. Construction vehicles and equipment may not appropriately fit the geometrics of the crossing, as it was designed, posing a safety risk to the public and the operating railroads

- Environmental: Any water or fire extinguishing compounds used to combat the fire will become easily contaminated with heavy metals and absorbed into the region's soil, adversely impacting the local ecosystem
- Water Quality: The project's proximity to the Oso and Arroyo Creek waterbed further exacerbates potential water quality issues, contaminating the San Juan Creek Watershed, which flows to the Pacific Ocean just miles away
- Erosion: The proposed project site is immediately adjacent to an unimproved area of Oso Creek that is experiencing high velocity/volume flows near an active railroad
- Economic: A fire at the proposed project site would likely lead to the closure of the railroad and the Interstate-5 corridor. Even the temporary closure of these key transportation routes would severely impact the Orange County economy.

As the State Senator for California's 37<sup>th</sup> Senate District, representing over 1 Million residents, I strongly urge the California Energy Commission to carefully and thoroughly consider these adverse public safety, public health, environmental, and economic concerns throughout the review process. The health and safety of California residents should always take precedence over any potential benefits proposed by this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steven S. Choi".

Senator Steven S. Choi, Ph.D.,  
37<sup>th</sup> Senate District