

**DOCKETED**

<b>Docket Number:</b>	24-OPT-02
<b>Project Title:</b>	Compass Energy Storage Project
<b>TN #:</b>	263480
<b>Document Title:</b>	Maria Higgins Comments - Against Lithium Battery Facility
<b>Description:</b>	N/A
<b>Filer:</b>	System
<b>Organization:</b>	Maria Higgins
<b>Submitter Role:</b>	Public
<b>Submission Date:</b>	5/29/2025 12:56:49 PM
<b>Docketed Date:</b>	5/29/2025

*Comment Received From: Maria Higgins*

*Submitted On: 5/29/2025*

*Docket Number: 24-OPT-02*

## **Against Lithium Battery Facility**

Dear Members of the California Energy Commission,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed Compass Energy Storage Project, a 250-megawatt lithium-ion battery energy storage system (BESS) slated for construction on a 13-acre site at the northern edge of San Juan Capistrano, adjacent to Laguna Niguel. The location and nature of this project present significant and unmitigable risks to public safety, environmental health, and community well-being.

### **Site-Specific Hazards:**

• **Proximity to Residential Areas:** The proposed facility is approximately 1,500 feet from homes in Laguna Niguel, placing residents in immediate danger in the event of a fire or explosion.

• **Limited Emergency Access:** The site has only one narrow entry point that crosses an active train path, severely restricting emergency response and evacuation routes.

• **Geological Instability:** The area is bordered by hills with known landslide risks, increasing the potential for structural failure and complicating emergency response efforts.

### **Documented Risks of Lithium-Ion Battery Facilities:**

• **Fire Hazards:** Lithium-ion batteries are susceptible to thermal runaway, leading to fires that are difficult to extinguish and can reignite days later. For instance, a fire at the Moss Landing battery facility in California burned for days, releasing toxic substances and prompting evacuations.

• **Toxic Emissions:** Fires involving lithium-ion batteries release hazardous substances, including hydrogen fluoride (HF), a highly toxic gas that poses serious health risks upon inhalation.

• **Environmental Contamination:** A study following the Moss Landing fire found elevated levels of heavy metals such as manganese, cobalt, and nickel in nearby marsh soils, indicating significant environmental contamination.

### **Environmental and Public Health Concerns:**

• **Proximity to Sensitive Ecosystems:** The project site is adjacent to Trabuco Creek, an environmentally sensitive watercourse that flows to the ocean. Should a fire occur, firefighting efforts could introduce contaminated water and chemicals into the creek, harming aquatic life and water quality.

• **Air and Water Pollution:** In the event of a fire, toxic gases and contaminated runoff could adversely affect air and water quality, posing health risks to nearby communities and ecosystems.

### **Community Opposition and Regulatory Concerns:**

• Lack of Local Oversight: The project's pursuit of approval through the CEC's Opt-in Certification process under Assembly Bill 205 effectively bypasses local governance, denying the cities of San Juan Capistrano and Laguna Niguel the ability to enforce zoning regulations and ensure community safety . ¼

• Community Resistance: Both cities have formally opposed the project, citing safety, environmental, and quality-of-life concerns. Residents have expressed fears over increased wildfire risk, potential exposure to toxic substances, and the project's proximity to homes and natural areas . ¼ ¼

Conclusion:

Given the site's limited emergency access, geological instability, proximity to residential areas and sensitive ecosystems, and the documented risks associated with lithium-ion battery facilities, I urge the California Energy Commission to reject the proposed Compass Energy Storage Project. The health, safety, and well-being of our communities must take precedence over industrial development.