

<b>DOCKETED</b>	
<b>Docket Number:</b>	24-OPT-02
<b>Project Title:</b>	Compass Energy Storage Project
<b>TN #:</b>	263531
<b>Document Title:</b>	Steve Knoblock, Mayor of San Clemente Comments - Opposition to Proposed Compass Energy Storage Project
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<b>Organization:</b>	Steve Knoblock, Mayor of San Clemente
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*Comment Received From: Steve Knoblock, Mayor of San Clemente*  
*Submitted On: 5/30/2025*  
*Docket Number: 24-OPT-02*

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

*Additional submitted attachment is included below.*



May 28, 2025

California Energy Commission

Docket Number: 24-OPT-02

Project Title: Compass Energy Storage Project

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

Dear California Energy Commissioners,

As Mayor of the City of San Clemente, I am writing to express my strong 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-iron 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 construction 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.
- **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.

- 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 Mayor of the City of San Clemente, representing 62,313 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 'SK', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Steve Knoblock  
Mayor