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Subject: 24-OPT-02 Compass Energy Storage Project
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To: California Energy Commission

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Project Title: Compass Energy Storage Project

As a concerned resident of the City of Laguna Niguel, I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed battery energy storage system ("BESS") facility, and to seek your attention and opposition to same. The project applicant, Compass Energy Storage LLC ("Compass") is proposing to construct, own, and operate an approximately 250-megawatt BESS facility on a 13-acre project site along the northern portion of the City of San Juan Capistrano immediately adjacent to the eastern border of Laguna Niguel. CA.

The project site, which is less than 1,500 feet from several residential neighborhoods in Laguna Niguel, is confined within a designated general open space hillside surrounded by native plants and significant vegetation, brush, and two recreational nature trails. Immediate below this land is the 5 Freeway! This close proximity to residential areas and commuters heighten the safety and fire risk to the community.

Our community has met at the proposed site on July 2, 2024, followed by a subsequent meeting on Nov. 13, 2024, to unite in opposing this BESS Application. There has been subsequent community meetings organized by non-profit, BLESSIN (www.blessinoc.org) to continually educate the public and oppose this project. Today, May 29, 2025, there is a CA Energy Commission (CEC) public meeting which many concerned residents and local government officials are present in-person and/or over Zoom.

The proposed location of Compass' project site poses significant and immediate wildfire risks and sanctuary for the wildlife. An incomplete list of wildlife, 18 of which are endangered species, are as follows: Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Belding's Savannah Sparrow, Pacific Pocket Mouse, Western Yellow Billed Cuckoo, Stephens Kangaroo Rat, Arroyo Toad, Braunton's Milk Vetch, and the California Black Rail. We must protect our wildlife and plants.

The BESS facility would be composed of lithium-iron phosphate batteries, which can be incredibly dangerous if they overheat, causing the battery to catch fire. Lithium battery fires burn hotter and faster than other fires and cannot be easily extinguished. Lithium batteries can reignite twenty-one (21) days after extinguishing the fire, presenting a long-lasting and persistent threat. Should the lithium batteries overheat and catch fire, the proposed project site's natural vegetation, steep terrain and surrounding landscape pose a significant and immediate fire threat.

In the past ten years, there have been twenty-three (23) wildfires within a five-mile

radius of the proposed project site. Given the nature of lithium battery fires, firefighters are forced to take a containment approach. Should a fire break containment, all nearby homes and businesses would be in immediate fire danger. The imminent fire risk posed by the BESS facility threatens residents' safety and further exacerbates the state's homeowner's insurance crisis, making it even more difficult for residents to obtain adequate homeowner's insurance policies, compounding the already dire situation.

Below are examples of recent 2024-25 fires caused by lithium-ion battery fires in the news and synopsis of same:

* <https://apnews.com/article/battery-storage-plant-fire-california-moss-landing-7c561fed096f410ddecfb04722a8b1f8>

* <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/10/us/california-battery-plant-fire.html>

A California Battery Plant Burned. Residents Have Gotten Sick, and Anxious.

Heavy metals detected in the soil have also created health...

* <https://www.sanjuandailystar.com/post/a-california-battery-plant-burned-residents-have-gotten-sick-and-anxious>

A California battery plant burned. Residents have gotten sick, and anxious.

* <https://www.singletonschreiber.com/newsroom/news/a-california-battery-plant-burned-residents-have-gotten-sick-and-anxious>

Media Mention

The New York Times 2/11/25

The recent [Moss Landing Battery Fire lawsuit filed against Vistra](#) by Singleton Schreiber & Erin Brockovich was recently covered by *The New York Times* in their article, "A California Battery Plant Burned. Residents Have Gotten Sick, and Anxious".

The article covers the [negative environmental & health effects](#) that residents are feeling in the aftermath of the [2025 Moss Landing Battery Fire](#); how current tests prove the presence of heavy metals (including cobalt, nickel, copper) that exceed EPA risk levels; how these metals could be detected over five miles away from the site in the air, water, and soil; how the fire has increased concerns over the safety of lithium-ion battery storage plants despite California's push for clear energy; and the potential economic impacts the fire may have on agriculture and farmworkers.

* <https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/lithium-ion-battery-fire-in-escondido-prompts-large-response/3615328/>

Evacuation orders lifted in Escondido after lithium-ion battery fire at SDG&E facility that also prompted school closures.

The fire was located in the 500 block of Enterprise Street in Escondido, just a few blocks from where Interstate 15 crosses paths with state Route 78

[By [Danielle Smith](#) • Published September 5, 2024 • Updated on September 7, 2024 at 1:20 pm]

You will read in one article about the January 16, 2025 Moss Landing lithium battery facility caused stillbirths in cows and other animals at the ranches affected by the fire. If the toxic fumes caused animals to have stillbirths, imagine the health and safety risks to humans.

In addition to the heightened risk of wildfires, the proposed BESS project site presents significant environmental and public health risks. Lithium batteries emit toxic gases within seconds of igniting, leading to air pollution and public health risks. Any fire, regardless of size generates a significant risk for our first responders' health should this project be approved.

Should 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 significant public health risk for the surrounding communities. 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 and population. The project's close 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.

I strongly urge the California Energy Commission ("CEC") to carefully and fully consider these adverse fire, economic, environmental, and public safety risks as they evaluate the Compass' Application. The health and safety of California residents should always take precedence over any potential benefits proposed by this project. I respectfully request that the CEC DENY, REJECT and DISMISS this project Application, and unequivocally prioritize public safety and community quality of life.