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*Comment Received From: Nancy Cloward
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**Serious Community Concerns Regarding Proposed Lithium BESS
in San Juan Capistrano**

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

May 29, 2025

Subject: Serious Community Concerns Regarding Proposed Lithium BESS in San Juan Capistrano

Dear California Energy Commission,

I am writing to express deep concern regarding the proposed lithium Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) facility in San Juan Capistrano. While I fully support the transition to clean energy, the location chosen for this project poses serious and unacceptable risks to public safety, environmental health, and community well-being.

The site in question lies within a known high fire hazard zone impacting both San Juan Capistrano and Laguna Niguel. The dangers associated with lithium battery storage are well-documented—particularly the difficulty of extinguishing fires once they ignite. Such an incident could escalate rapidly, overwhelming emergency services and threatening lives, homes, and essential infrastructure and most important putting our first responders lives in danger.

The proposed location is also alarmingly close to several schools, including Capistrano Valley High School, JSerra Catholic High School, Saddleback College, Niguel Hills Middle School, and multiple public and private elementary schools. Additionally, the area is home to senior living facilities for dementia patients, equestrian stables, and livestock farms, all of which are vulnerable in the event of a fire or toxic release.

Equally troubling is the environmental threat posed by the facility's proximity to Trabuco Creek, which flows directly into the ocean. A hazardous event here could pollute our waterways and devastate marine life along the coast.

The potential for closures of the I-5 freeway and nearby rail lines during an emergency would further strain regional infrastructure and could severely delay emergency response and evacuation—potentially with life-and-death consequences.

Finally, it is incredibly disappointing that the church that owns this land would consider selling it to Compass for the development of a BESS facility in such an unsuitable and densely populated area. This decision reflects a troubling lack of regard for the safety and long-term welfare of the surrounding community. We expect institutions—especially those grounded in moral and ethical stewardship—to act in the best interest of the people they serve, not facilitate high-risk industrial development near homes, schools, and environmental resources.

For all of these reasons, I urge CEC leaders and relevant authorities to deny approval of this project and explore alternative locations far removed from sensitive community and environmental areas.

Thank you for your time and attention to this critical issue. I welcome any opportunity to engage further and advocate for a safer path forward.

Sincerely,
Nancy Cloward
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