

<b>DOCKETED</b>	
<b>Docket Number:</b>	24-OPT-02
<b>Project Title:</b>	Compass Energy Storage Project
<b>TN #:</b>	263701
<b>Document Title:</b>	Michelle Erwin Comments - Compass Energy Storage Project Should Be Denied
<b>Description:</b>	This comment was presented to the California Energy Commission staff during the May 29, 2025, Compass Energy Storage Project Meeting and is being officially docketed to maintain its inclusion in the public record.
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<b>Organization:</b>	Michelle Erwin
<b>Submitter Role:</b>	Public
<b>Submission Date:</b>	6/3/2025 6:21:22 AM
<b>Docketed Date:</b>	6/2/2025

Good Evening Commissioners,

My name is Michelle and I was born and raised here. I'm a **12th-generation Southwestern Californian and a 3rd-generation Californian** on the rest. My family's history, like many others in this area, runs deep—and so does our responsibility to protect this land.

The Compass Energy Storage Project does not meet your standards, the community's standards, or the ethical standards we expect from those tasked with stewarding California's future.

Let me be clear: this project should be denied on **multiple CEC-aligned grounds**.

The proposed Compass Energy Storage Project is fundamentally incompatible with our community's safety, values, and legal frameworks. I urge you to deny this project based on the following critical points:

### **1. Violation of Local Ordinances and Zoning Laws**

- On **April 2, 2024**, the City of San Juan Capistrano enacted **Urgency Ordinance No. 1116**, imposing a temporary prohibition on new commercial Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) within the city. ([sjc.granicus.com](http://sjc.granicus.com))
- This ordinance was extended on **May 7, 2024**, through **Urgency Ordinance No. 1119**, and further extended on **March 18, 2025**, via **Urgency Ordinance No. 1124**, maintaining the prohibition until **March 18, 2026**. ([sjc.granicus.com](http://sjc.granicus.com))
- The proposed project directly contravenes these ordinances, reflecting a disregard for local governance and community planning.

### **2. Rejection of Rezoning Request**

- On **November 1, 2022**, the City Council of San Juan Capistrano denied the initiation of a Rezone Study necessary for the project's approval, citing incompatibility with existing land use regulations. ([sjc.granicus.com](http://sjc.granicus.com))
- Subsequently, in **February 2024**, Compass Energy Storage withdrew its applications from the city, opting to seek state-level approval through the California Energy Commission (CEC), effectively bypassing local authority. ([City of Laguna Niguel](http://CityofLagunaNiguel.com))

### **3. Proximity to Residential Areas and Safety Concerns**

- The project site is **less than 1,500 feet** from residential neighborhoods, schools, and parks.
- Lithium-ion BESS facilities have documented risks of thermal runaway and fires, as evidenced by incidents at the Moss Landing Power Plant and Gateway Energy Storage.
- Placing such a facility near densely populated areas poses unacceptable risks to public safety.

### **4. Environmental and Cultural Impact**

- The site is within the ancestral lands of the **Acjachemen Nation** and near the historic **Mission San Juan Capistrano**. ([California Energy Commission](#))
- The area has historically served as a community hub, hosting youth camps, scouting events, and other gatherings, contributing to its cultural significance.
- The potential environmental impact on the **San Juan Creek watershed** and surrounding ecosystems has not been adequately addressed.

#### **5. Lack of Tribal Consultation**

- There is no public record indicating that the **Acjachemen Nation** has been consulted or has granted approval for the project, as required under **AB 52** and **SB 18**.
- Proceeding without meaningful tribal consultation violates state laws and undermines the rights of indigenous communities.

#### **6. Potential Conflicts of Interest**

- There are concerns regarding **Compass Energy Storage LLC** making significant donations to local institutions, including community colleges, which may be perceived as attempts to influence public opinion and silence opposition.
- Such actions raise ethical questions about the integrity of the approval process.

In conclusion, approving this project would not only violate local ordinances and state laws but also compromise public safety, environmental integrity, and cultural heritage. I implore the Commission to uphold its commitment to lawful, ethical, and community-centered decision-making by denying the Compass Energy Storage Project.

On behalf of generations past, present, and future, I urge you to do what's right: **Stop this project before it starts.**

Thank you.