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Project Title:	Compass Energy Storage Project
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To: CEC

From: Elizabeth Cobb, San Juan Capistrano Resident

Docket Number: 24-OPT-02

Project Title: Compass Energy Storage Project, TN# 263263

Subject: Notice of Informational and Environmental Scoping Meeting for the
Proposed Compass Energy Storage Project

Comments submitted electronically:

[Compass Energy Storage Project | California Energy Commission](#)

The following comments to be considered as part of the preparation of a draft EIR to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the Project.

1. Project Goal

- a. The CEQA document shall include the Project goal to provide safe energy storage supply so as to not harm and degrade the property and surrounding communities of San Juan Capistrano, Laguna Niguel and Mission Viejo. There needs to be some measure of the Project evaluation and consideration of significant and unavoidable impacts relative to the safety the Project presents. While providing energy supply is one Project goal, there is a balance of considering the safety for those who are directly and indirectly impacted in the event of a disaster or abandonment of the Project.

2. Project Scope – Land Use

- a. The proposed project is described as battery energy storage system (BESS) that would be capable of storing up to 250 megawatts of electricity for four hours (up to 1,000 megawatt-hours). The project would be composed of lithium-iron phosphate batteries (Tesla Megapack 2XL is proposed), inverters, medium-voltage transformers, a switchyard, a collector substation, and other associated equipment to interconnect into the existing San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E) Trabuco to Capistrano 138-kilovolt transmission line located approximately 500 feet from the project site and approximately 90 feet from the project property.

The Project boundary is considerably larger than the footprint of the Project site plan. What would prevent the balance of the site (the soccer fields, the church, parking, and landscape grounds) from being redeveloped with more battery energy storage systems? What would keep the whole site from eventually being

battery storage? Through this process, the CEC is not subject to local jurisdictional land use and development standards that would typically be in place for a proposed use to ensure orderly development. Therefore, the Project should identify development standards that limit coverage, building height, and setbacks from surrounding uses, sensitive habitat and sensitive receptors. While the CEC does not regulate land use, the CEC can require land use controls to be recorded against the property as part of mitigation to ensure the Project does not expand, modify or change from what was presented, analyzed and mitigated in the CEQA document for the Project. If the Project is not in compliance with land use controls, the owner/operator is responsible for correcting or found in default. A default in compliance with land use controls should be a revocation of their permit. Again, the communities of San Juan Capistrano, Laguna Niguel and Mission Viejo are left with great uncertainty of the Project's future without local jurisdictional controls and should be addressed as part of the Land Use section of the CEQA document.

- b. How does this Project proposed use in open space not qualify as spot zoning, where the Project is significantly different from the surrounding area. Approval of this project would be favoring a landowner and their business transaction over the benefit and safety of the general public in San Juan Capistrano, Laguna Niguel and Mission Viejo.

3. Public Safety concerns to be addressed in the CEQA analysis.

- a. The Project shall prepare for analysis an Emergency Evacuation Plan in the event of an emergency of a fire created by the Project, or emergency created with hazardous exposure. This Emergency Evacuation Plan shall identify the radius of impact, and sensitive receptors affected. Delays created with the Emergency Evacuation Plan shall be identified for existing, cumulative and build-out conditions, with required mitigation measures to address the significant impacts created with delays from the Project.
- b. The Project shall prepare an Emergency Response Plan in the event of a fire within the area that would threaten the facility and require protective measures. These measures shall consider the required public service requirements so as to not compromise the service provided to existing, interim and buildout conditions of surrounding habitable and commercial development.

- c. The Project shall evaluate a designated vehicle access to serve the Project that is grade separated from the rail so as to not impede regional and local rail services as part of construction, along with accommodating daily operations and for Emergency Response Plan. The Project should evaluate two new vehicle access connections that would serve the Project, providing improved response times and separate the use from the church in the event of an emergency or disaster.
- d. The Project landscape plans show a hedge of trees around the proposed the facility. Please address how this can be accommodated while maintaining fuel management zones to defend against fires and retain on-site fires. In the example projects, there is a consistent theme of concrete and no landscaping. This is understandable, considering keeping it free from fire hazards and possibly other intrusions of pests.

4. Hazardous Materials

- a. Evaluate the consequences of longevity of the battery storage system, and where expired batteries are disposed.
- b. With the Compass Energy Storage Project be a lease arrangement, what surety does the City of San Juan Capistrano have that should Compass Energy Storage is abandoned would be restored to its natural state.

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