

<b>DOCKETED</b>	
<b>Docket Number:</b>	24-OPT-02
<b>Project Title:</b>	Compass Energy Storage Project
<b>TN #:</b>	263832
<b>Document Title:</b>	PAUL HENKIN Comments - NO to the Compass BESS in San Juan Capistrano
<b>Description:</b>	N/A
<b>Filer:</b>	System
<b>Organization:</b>	PAUL HENKIN
<b>Submitter Role:</b>	Public
<b>Submission Date:</b>	6/4/2025 1:00:20 PM
<b>Docketed Date:</b>	6/4/2025

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*Submitted On: 6/4/2025*

*Docket Number: 24-OPT-02*

## **NO to the Compass BESS in San Juan Capistrano**

SDGE wants to build a 250 MW battery energy storage facility (BESS) in San Juan Capistrano.

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Too many large BESS facilities are being built in wildfire-prone areas like the ones in Escondido, Valley Center, and Otay Mesa, and a few others, that caught fire.Â In fact, the SDGE facility in Escondido caught fire despite smoke and heat detectors.

Technology by itself won't save us. They should have thought of these things first, but the small risks they advertise are rapidly becoming huge risks.

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Possibly the biggest danger is the burn temperature.Â Lithium-ion battery fires can reach extremely high temperatures, with some reports indicating they can burn at an average of 5,000°F. This is significantly hotter than gasoline-powered fires, which typically burn around 1,500°F.

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250 MW is too big near a residential area.Â Also 1000 feet from a park, but more significantly,Â next to the LOSSAN train tracks which service Camp Pen and its cargo needs.Â Considering that lithium fire can potentially melt train tracks, this is not a risk we should take.Â Also, burning lithium puts out toxic gases.Â In the Otay Mesa battery fire (also 250MW,) the evacuation zone was 1/4 mile.Â The shelter-in-place order was 1/2 mile more, which would cover residential areas in both San Juan Capistrano and Laguna Niguel.Â

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SDGE says they will put the battery containers outdoors (like the one in Escondido that caught fire.) How will outdoor battery containers limit a fire spreading?Â It may be a smaller fire but it is now a bit closer to where it can escape the facility.Â Also, they tend to get overheated more easily if they are outdoors.Â

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SDGE has also been accused of generating excess energy and selling it at a discount to other states while our higher rates pay for the BESS facilities.

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You know the risks and the community best. Please don't give in to the legal or other manipulation.

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My latest issue with lithium-ion batteries is the danger to all of us with our normal ways of life:

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I wrote last September: "The weather has been noticeably cooler for a few days. You would think that this would help the wildfire control. Yet this morning, the 14th, the three big fires near LA and OC, are still raging virtually uncontained: the Bridge fire at 53K acres, 3% containment; the Airport fire at 23K acres, 9% containment; the Line fire

at 38K acres, 25% containment. I think the huge Park fire, which we know was started by an EV, was still burning too.

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Temperatures for 9/11 in San Dimas (Bridge fire) got down to the upper 50â€™s; San Bernardino (Line fire) and Rancho Santa Margarita (Airport fire) got down to the 60â€™s.

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These fires should be on the way out. It is time, maybe past time, to study whether EVâ€™s and battery storage facilities (BESS) are contributing to the firesâ€™ staying power, especially with lithiumâ€™s ability to spontaneously combust multiple times.

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AND THESE FIRES ARE STILL GOING! Depleting our water, costing money, using firefighter resources and lives.

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Also, the EV truck fire on Aug. 19 in Placer County took 50K gallons of water to put out â€” about 4 times what a family of 4 uses each month. So in a water-poor area, flammable EVâ€™s and battery storage (BESS) do not make sense.

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Pretty much all batteries are flammable to some degree as is gasoline or hydrogen (or even donkey crap if handled wrong.) What makes lithium-ion batteries so dangerous is their ability to combust spontaneously and at a relatively low temperature 248 degrees F (unlike gasoline at 495 degrees F) and the difficulty in putting out these fires.

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Another thing that really alarms me is that the BESS companies seem to care about economics more than safety. I saw a KGTV 10 news interview on 11/24/2024 where Jason Anderson, the President of Clean Tech San Diego (a non-profit helping to advance BESS tech) says that despite all the BESS fires at older tech facilities, there are no plans to upgrade or replace them â€” it would be economically unfeasible (nothing about safety.)

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I do not see why these facilities cannot be placed in non-wildfire prone areas like Borrego Springs, Ranchita (I believe) or Ocotillo Wells, or zones like near the Salton Sea, the nearby desert areas (maybe even crossing County lines.)

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Another reason to reject BESS placement outside of the coastal zone is that roads in the back-country are not developed enough to handle mass evacuations. Many areas have tiny roads or just one access road which can easily be blocked and trap people and animals. Smaller communities also tend to lack shelter-in-place facilities.

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In addition, the insurance cost of homeowners near a BESS facility stands to be canceled or increased in that area, which is fairly discriminatory, especially if you have livestock or agribusiness. Are we all going to have to import our food at a higher price?

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Here's what I wrote about BESS earlier:

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BESS in a wildfire zone is the silliest idea I've heard of for a while. Here are some of my thoughts on this:

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Lithium "used in EV batteries" unstable metal "causes spontaneous fires, repeat, spontaneous, you can't put out, toxic fumes, mass evacuations, oh, and the fire just reignited draining fire department resources. And the response from the Big-BESS-Biz: "We got better technology now." Isn't that what they said about the Titanic?

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I would recommend an enhancement or judicial recommendation for those who start BESS wildfires, to include those who knowingly situate a BESS facility in a high-risk area (including near civilization) with inadequate precautions. This should be an extra year for each death and an extra fine to make up for firefighter time and resources.

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The Battery Storage (BESS) fire in Otay Mesa burned for about a week. Firemen were monitoring it even longer instead of being elsewhere, and they evacuated people within a mile.

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There are proposals for larger BESS facilities in San Marcos and Poway near a major hospitals, school, and residences, within a few hundred yards in San Marcos and 1/2 mile in Poway. Lithium ion batteries put out toxic fumes like phosphorous pentafluoride and are a huge wildfire hazard and would draw away fire dept resources to monitor fire for weeks.

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Whoever approves these things should designate safe areas for these away from houses, schools, and hospitals and wildfire zones, environmentally sensitive areas or water sources which they would pollute.

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What I mean is that I doubt the EPA and all would take it too kindly if the toxics from a BESS fire fell on a national monument after all the years and effort to plan it.