

**DOCKETED**

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<b>Project Title:</b>	Compass Energy Storage Project
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<b>Document Title:</b>	Lawrence Ward III Comments - 24-OPT-02 and Compass Energy Storage Project NOP Comments
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*Comment Received From: Lawrence Ward III  
Submitted On: 6/4/2025  
Docket Number: 24-OPT-02*

## **24-OPT-02 and Compass Energy Storage Project NOP Comments**

*Additional submitted attachment is included below.*

**From:** [Larry Ward III](#)  
**To:** [Energy - Docket Optical System](#)  
**Cc:** [Energy - Public Advisor's Office](#); [clerk@cityoflagunaniguel.org](mailto:clerk@cityoflagunaniguel.org); [tbourne@sanjuancapistrano.org](mailto:tbourne@sanjuancapistrano.org); [jfederico@danapoint.org](mailto:jfederico@danapoint.org); [assemblymember.davies@assembly.ca.gov](mailto:assemblymember.davies@assembly.ca.gov); [senator.choi@senate.ca.gov](mailto:senator.choi@senate.ca.gov)  
**Subject:** 24-OPT-02 and Compass Energy Storage Project NOP Comments  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 3, 2025 8:04:39 PM  
**Attachments:** [image.png](#)  
[image.png](#)

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## Dear Elected Leaders and California Energy Commission,

This is regarding the proposed 250 Megawatt Battery Energy Storage Facility (BESS) that is proposed off of I-5, between San Juan Capistrano and Laguna Niguel. On May 29th and June 3rd, there were zoom meetings for public comment, however many residents are still not aware. There has been a profound lack of information for the community.

Although there are benefits of having a battery storage facility, in my opinion, the potential risk—especially given the vulnerability to wildfires -- is not worth it. Not everything "green" is good....

It is unfathomable to me that after the Lahaina, Los Angeles, and countless other fires, the site designated is very close proximity to a level 1 trauma center, Interstate 5, the Amtrak Train, hundreds of homes, schools, multiple retirement communities, and so much more. I am not against battery storage, supporting the power grid but in this location I find a profound lack of wisdom in this decision.

***In November 2022, the City Council of San Juan denied the Applicant's requested Rezone study, thereby preventing the project from moving forward. Following City Council denial, the Applicant informed City staff of its intention to bypass the City approval process and pursue State approval via the California Energy Commission ("CEC"), as allowed under recent State legislation designed to expedite the construction of renewable energy projects.*** In February 2024, the Applicant formally withdrew its City applications.

This facility, which would house massive amounts of lithium-ion batteries near homes, open space, and historic sites, poses unacceptable risks to our health, safety, and environment. I strongly oppose the proposed Compass Energy Storage Project (Docket 24-OPT-02) in San Juan Capistrano. This facility poses unacceptable fire and environmental risks to nearby neighborhoods and to Trabuco Creek, a critical natural habitat and waterway.

As residents of **South Orange County—including San Juan Capistrano, Dana Point, and Laguna Niguel—we are united in opposition** to this project.

### **The Dangers Are Real:**

- Lithium-ion battery fires are notoriously difficult to extinguish and can release toxic gases (Moss Landing/Otay Mesa)
- Fire-prone areas like ours are especially vulnerable to a chain reaction catastrophe (Lahaina/Los Angeles)
- Similar facilities across the country have already experienced explosions and evacuations.

### **Our Communities Deserve Better:**

- We value safety, clean air, open space, and smart development—not industrial hazards.
- There has been little to no meaningful community engagement or transparency around this project.
- We believe energy innovation should not come at the cost of public safety.

### **To Our Elected Officials:**

We call on you—**Mayor Troy Bourne (San Juan Capistrano), Mayor Ray Gennawey (Laguna Niguel), Mayor Jamey Federico (Dana Point)**, and our **State and Federal Representatives**—to stand with the people you serve. We ask that you:

- **Halt this project immediately.**
- **Call for a full environmental review.**
- **Ensure proper public hearings and community input.**

This is not just about one city—it's about the future of our entire region. We're not against progress, but we are against recklessness. Local fire fighters, public servants, Doctors, professionals, families, children are all in alignment.

**Please hear us, and please act.** Our families, homes, and natural environment are counting on you.

If you are not familiar, here are several sites with more information:

City of San Juan

<https://www.sanjuancapistrano.org/.../Battery-Energy...>

California Energy

<https://www.energy.ca.gov/.../informational-and...>

Blessin OC (Group in opposition to the site--I am not affiliated)

<https://blessinoc.org/bess/>

Facts:

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO Fire Hazard Zone

<https://www.sanjuancapistrano.org/.../Fire-Hazard...>

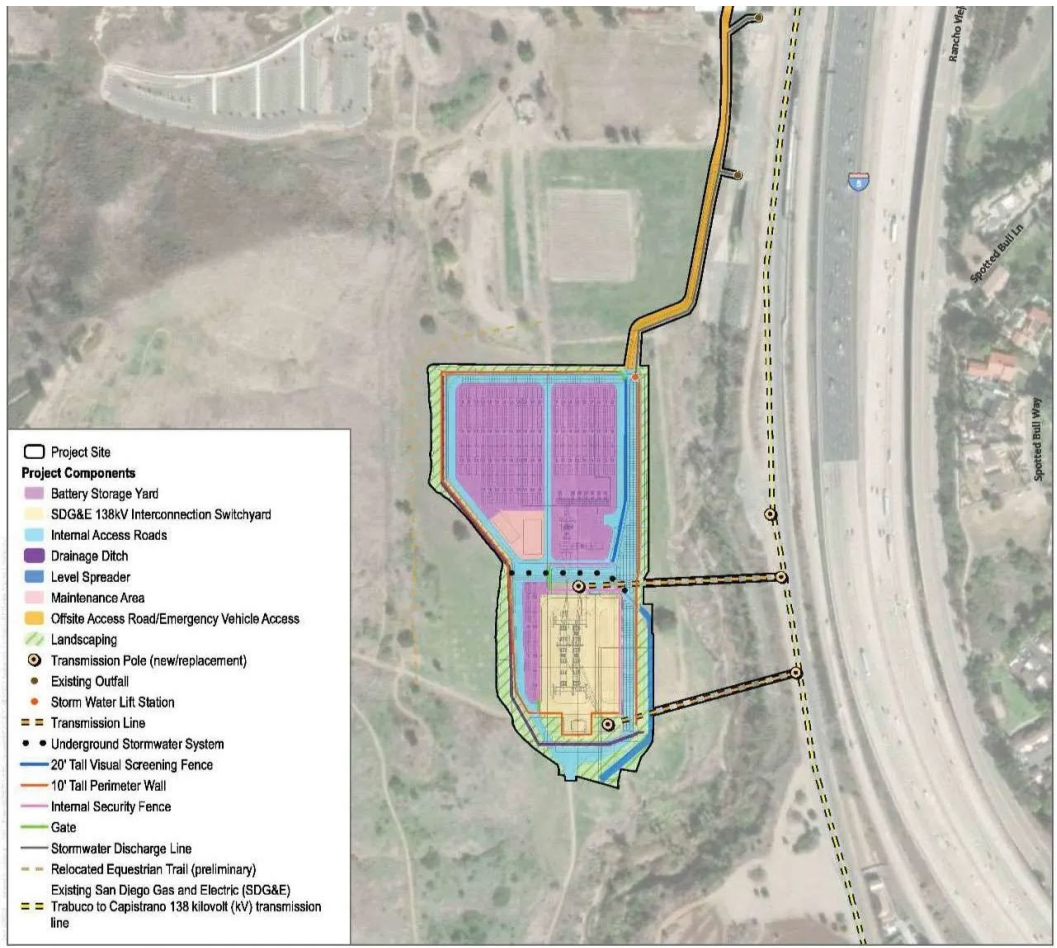
Otay Mesa Fire burned for 7 days straight:

[https://response.epa.gov/site/site\\_profile.aspx...](https://response.epa.gov/site/site_profile.aspx...)

Moss Landing Fire forced 1000 to evacuate, profound impact.

<https://www.nytimes.com/.../california-battery-plant-fire...>

In closing, I love our community. Having this open space during 2020 was beyond a blessing during Covid. The area where the site is proposed is not worth the risk. Please speak up if you have something to say.



SOURCE: Bing Maps 2023; Sargent & Lundy 2023



**FIGURE 2-1**  
Site Plan

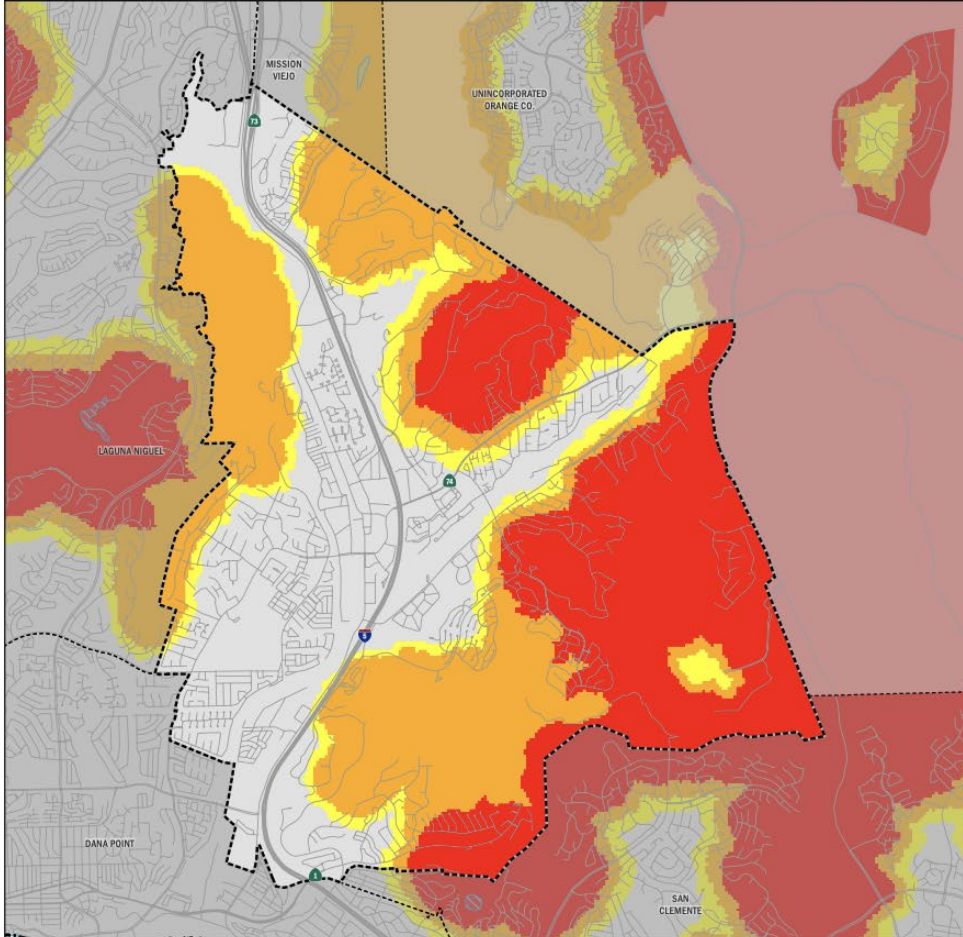
Compass Energy Storage Project



# Local Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zones

As Identified by the  
State Fire Marshal

March 24, 2025

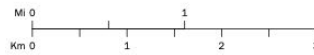


### Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) in Local Responsibility Area (LRA), as Identified by the State Fire Marshal

Very High High Moderate

### Fire Hazard Severity Zones in State Responsibility Area (SRA), Effective April 1, 2024

Very High High Moderate



Projection: NAD 83 California Teale Albers  
Scale: 1:39,000 at 11" x 17"

Incorporated City Waterbody  
Unzoned LRA

Government Code section 51178 requires the State Fire Marshal to identify areas in the state as moderate, high, and very high fire hazard severity zones based on consistent

statewide criteria and based on the severity of fire hazard that is expected to prevail in those areas. Moderate, high, and very high fire hazard severity zones shall be based on fuel loading, slope, fire weather,

and other relevant factors including areas where winds have been identified by the Office of the State Fire Marshal as a major cause of wildfire spread.

The State of California and the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection make no representations or warranties regarding the accuracy of data or maps. Neither the State nor the Department shall be liable under any circumstances for any direct, special, incidental, or consequential damages with respect to any claim by any user or third party on account of, or arising from, the use of data or maps.

Gavin Newsom, Governor, State of California  
Wade Crowfoot, Secretary for Natural Resources, CA Natural Resources Agency  
Joe Tyler, Director/Fire Chief, CA Department of Forestry and Fire Protection  
Daniel Berlant, State Fire Marshal, CA Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

Data Sources:  
CAL FIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZSRA23\_3, FHSZLRA\_25\_1)  
CAL FIRE State Responsibility Areas (SRA25\_1)  
City and County boundaries as of 10/22/24 (CA Board of Equalization)

Sincerely,

Lawrence Ward III

Laguna Niguel, CA 92677  
808-214-8954