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June 4, 2025

To: California Energy Commission

From: Collin Cobb

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RE: Compass Energy Storage Project

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Commission,

Please consider and provide explanation to the following questions I have regarding the Compass Energy Storage Project to be developed in San Juan Capistrano.

1. NUCLEAR ALTERNATIVES

It seems nuclear energy is a viable alternative to a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) such as the Compass project and would be more beneficial as it could supply power reliably and continuously rather than the four-hour period the Compass project is slated for. Additionally, the current administration in Washington is an advocate of nuclear power and is easing the process and timelines for construction of nuclear power plants. This will facilitate the availability of nuclear power and should reduce the cost to provide it as more sites are developed. Computer companies are realizing the increasing power demand of their computer supercenters in providing access to artificial intelligence (AI). To fill this need, companies are looking towards nuclear power both at large and small scales to fulfill the need to provide 24/7 uninterrupted power¹.

QUESTION(S): With the prospect of a resurgence in nuclear power coming, will this BESS facility be profitable and necessary? If nuclear power is available at a lower cost outside of California, will San Diego Gas and Electric purchase power from these facilities rather than utilize the BESS?

2. DECOMMISSIONING AND HAZARDOUS WASTE CLEANUP

Should Compass Energy Storage LLC file for bankruptcy or the Compass project become non-profitable or unnecessary, who is responsible for the decommission and hazardous waste cleanup of the facility? Will the landsite be returned to its original state? Hopefully, the burden of these expenses are not left to the residents of City of San Juan Capistrano. Especially, since the city has been adamantly against the Compass project at the proposed location.

QUESTION(S): Will a monetary retainer be required to be held by Compass Energy to decommission and provide hazardous waste cleanup should it file for bankruptcy, become unprofitable, or unnecessary?

3. TOXIC FUMES AND EVACUATION PROCEDURES

At the May 29th, 2025 Informational and Environmental Scoping Meeting, the Moss Landing Battery Storage Fire Incident of Jan. 16th, 2025 was discussed. In the discussion, an evacuation area comprising of an eight square mile area was mentioned. A fire professional representing Compass Energy said the current best practice is to let any fire at a facility burn itself out. Online research has provided the fire at Moss Landing to have lasted several daysⁱ. Given the location of the Compass Project, this would severely impact the transportation corridors of rail and freeway lines which are located adjacent to the project. More concerning is location of Providence Mission Hospital. This is the only hospital servicing most of South Orange County and is located just a little over two miles from the project.

QUESTION(S): In the unfortunate event of an accident at the Compass Project should occur and an evacuation area be established, how will transportation needs continue through the region be addressed? More importantly, should Providence Mission Hospital be in this perimeter, how would patients be evacuated and to what other facilities? During the evacuation period, how will the emergency medical needs of not only those located in the evacuation perimeter be addressed but those located further south of the evacuation perimeter? With at least a twenty-minute drive to the next facility located to the south in Oceanside, this could result in a life-threatening situation for those needing urgent care. How would these emergency needs be met during an evacuation?

ⁱ CNBC, "Google agrees to fund the development of three nuclear sites", May 7th, 2025

ⁱⁱ MIT Technology Review, "What a major battery fire means for the future of battery storage", Feb. 13th, 2025