

DOCKETED	
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Filer:	Renee Longman
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California Department of Transportation

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June 4, 2025

California Energy Commission
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

File: LDR/CEQA

12-ORA-2025-02815
I-5, PM 11.869

Dear Ms. Longman,

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the review of the Notice of Preparation for the Compass Energy Storage Project for the California Energy Commission (CEC). The mission of Caltrans is improving lives and communities through transportation.

The project proposes battery energy storage system (BESS) that would be capable of storing up to 250 megawatts (MW) of electricity for four hours (up-to 1,000 MW hours). Regional access to the site is provided by Interstate 5 (I-5). Caltrans is a commenting agency on this project and has the following comments:

1. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) has updated the Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) map in the unincorporated areas of Orange County. According to the Local Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zones Map as identified by the Director of CAL FIRE, the facility's proposed location is in a high fire-risk area. Any wildfire whether originating from the facility or exacerbated by its presence could threaten nearby communities, strain emergency response resources, and disrupt regional mobility. Given the proximity to key transportation routes, it is essential that a comprehensive wildfire risk assessment be conducted, taking into account the historical fire patterns, prevailing wind conditions, vegetation density, and evacuation capacity.

The OC Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map can be found at the following link:
<https://ocds.ocpublicworks.com/service-areas/oc-development-services/planning-development/current-projects/all-districts-projects/orange-county-fire-hazard-severity-zones-map>

2. The Draft EIR's Transportation section does not include any discussion of transportation impacts on Active Transportation. We recommend the section to include how bicyclists and pedestrians are impacted especially given there are

several bicycle facilities close to the project. In addition, it should also address mitigation steps that will be taken to account for these impacts.

3. Caltrans identifies Prosperity as one of five new goals that align with California State Transportation Agency's (CalSTA) Core Four Principles. These goals can be found in the 2024-2028 Caltrans Strategic Plan. Prosperity utilizes a strategy, among others, of advancing equitable and reliable multi-modal transportation solutions that cultivate healthy and livable communities. The outcome is to improve multimodal access to destinations. Due to the close proximity to the active LOSSAN Rail Corridor, please consider providing a discussion on how the proposed project aligns with Caltrans 2024-2028 Strategic Plan's goals, (available at the following link: <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/risk-strategic-management/documents/2024-28-caltrans-strategic-plan-final-a11y.pdf>).
4. Potential impacts to Caltrans Right of Way (ROW) from project-related temporary access points should be discussed. Mitigation for significant impacts from the proposed development should be identified, if required.
5. Project work that requires movement of oversized or excessive load vehicles on State roadways require a transportation permit that is issued by Caltrans. To apply, visit: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/transportation-permits>
6. Prior to construction, coordination may be required with Caltrans to develop a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) to maintain safe and efficient traffic operations. If operational tasks require lane closures, it will most likely need to be outside of peak hours and as such an encroachment permit may be necessary.

When more information about the construction periods is known, please relay that information to Caltrans District 12.

7. Ensure the creation of emergency plans that include emergency routes and paths, can alleviate congestion in the event of an emergency and allow Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to easily access the site.
8. Any project work proposed in the vicinity of the State Right-of-Way (ROW) would require an encroachment permit and all environmental concerns must be adequately addressed. If the environmental documentation for the project does not meet Caltrans's requirements for work done within State ROW, additional documentation would be required before approval of the encroachment permit. Please coordinate with Caltrans to meet requirements for

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any work within or near State ROW. For specific details for Encroachment Permits procedure, please refer to the Caltrans's Encroachment Permits Manual at: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops/developserv/permits/>

Please continue to coordinate with Caltrans for any future developments that could potentially impact State transportation facilities. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Joseph Jamoralin at Joseph.Jamoralin@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



[Scott Shelley \(Jun 4, 2025 16:58 PDT\)](#)

Scott Shelley
Branch Chief, Local Development Review-Climate Change-Transit Grants
Caltrans, District 12