

DOCKETED	
Docket Number:	24-OPT-02
Project Title:	Compass Energy Storage Project
TN #:	264011
Document Title:	Rev. Fr. Bill Tragus Comments - stop proposed battery storage energy sight in San Juan Capistrano
Description:	N/A
Filer:	System
Organization:	Rev. Fr. Bill Tragus
Submitter Role:	Public
Submission Date:	6/4/2025 11:38:29 PM
Docketed Date:	6/5/2025

Comment Received From: Rev. Fr. Bill Tragus

Submitted On: 6/4/2025

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stop proposed battery storage energy sight in San Juan Capistrano

California Energy Commission

Re: Docket #: 24-OPT-02

1516 Ninth Street

Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Members of the California Energy Commission,

My name is Rev. Fr. Bill Tragus. I am the head priest of St. Basil Greek Orthodox Church located less than a mile of your proposed Battery Storage System; Docet#24-OPT-02. As the lead pastor of our Church community and as a priest that knows and prays with many of our towns leaders, I must inform you that the community is terrified of the known dangers and negative impact your plans to build a battery storage facility in the middle of San Juan Capistrano will have on all of us who live, work, and go to school here.

Destroying a town by threatening citizens health, devaluing our homes, filling homeowners with anxiety about cancelled homeowners insurance, threatening our lives with likely toxic fires that will contaminate our air, soil and water; while putting the only freeway artery we have to evacuate in jeopardy is no way to help the environment. There are much better locations where these dangers do not exist where this facility can be placed.

It has been made clear by the information that has been presented by you to the community that these threats are real. So much so, that Compass Energy Storage Project does not find it safe to have their own workers to be on site. As you have presented to the community, they plan to have this facility managed remotely to ensure the safety of their employees, with no regard for the safety of people in our community, many of whom are living and going to school hundreds of feet away.

The health and lives of the most vulnerable citizens of our local community are at significant risk due to your proposal. I often visit the sick and elderly in the Silverado nursing home and memory care, which is located next to your proposed site. There are several schools within a mile or less of the displayed affected areas. These children will not be able to evacuate in a timely manner, especially with the lack of transportation infrastructure. When the inevitable disaster happens, and the Compass Energy Storage facility does finally ignite, these vulnerable citizens may not be able to evacuate, and very likely will be harmed by the exposure to the toxic substances that will be unleashed into our community.

The site you have chosen to build upon poses risks to local ecosystems. These include

local creek beds that run into the ocean, open spaces with native flora and fauna, and the people of San Juan Capistrano and surrounding communities. All these precious resources are threatened by potential hazards from accidental leaks, fires, or toxic chemical releases. San Juan Capistrano is a community rich in natural and historical resources, and it is crucial to ensure these assets are protected for future generations.

There is a proven record that the same type of battery energy storage systems you wish to build have inherent risks, including thermal runaway and fire hazards. Given the proximity of this facility to residential areas, schools, and businesses, the safety measures in place may not adequately mitigate potential threats to the community.

Building this facility near many low-income neighborhoods, schools, senior housing and next to the homes to many immigrant families who are here in search of a better life would be devastating for these families who are at risk of losing their only homes and relied upon livelihoods, As well as their community and sources of support. There will be no way for them to recover their losses.

San Juan Capistrano, Mission Viejo, and Laguna Niguel residents must have a say in projects that could drastically affect our environment, safety, and way of life. I respectfully ask the California Energy Commission to deny approval of this project as currently proposed and explore safer, more suitable alternatives for renewable energy storage.

Sincerely,
Rev. Fr. Bill Tragus, M.Div. B.S.
Protopresbyter
St. Basil Greek Orthodox Church
31612 El Camino Real
San Juan Capistrano, Ca 92675