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Comment Received From: John R Paluka
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Urgent Addressing Noise and Community Impact Risks for the Compass BESS Project (Docket 24-OPT-02)

Dear Members of the California Energy Commission,

I am a resident of the Laguna Height community in Laguna Nigel, located approximately 1,500 feet from the proposed Compass Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) facility in San Juan Capistrano. Our community is situated on a hill above the project site, making us especially vulnerable to operational noise that will travel uphill and impact our quality of life.

Key Risks:
â€¢ Persistent, Tonal Noise Pollution:
Industry evidence and acoustic studies confirm that BESS facilities generate significant continuous noise, primarily from cooling fans, inverters, and transformers. This noise is often tonal (a distinct hum or drone), which is more perceptible and disruptive than other types of noiseâ€”even at lower decibel levels.
The risk is heightened for communities like ours that are both close to, and elevated above, the facility, as noise travels more easily uphill and over open terrain.
â€¢ Insufficient Mitigation by Default:
Standard perimeter sound walls are often inadequate for elevated receivers. Without robust, site-specific mitigation, the hum and operational noise can exceed acceptable limits, especially at night when background noise is lowest.
â€¢ Quality of Life and Health Impacts:
Continuous exposure to tonal noise can cause sleep disturbance, stress, and a decline in property values. These impacts are well-documented and must be proactively addressed.

Mitigation Measures Needed:
To protect our community, I urge the CEC to require the following as conditions of project approval:
1. Comprehensive, Site-Specific Noise Modeling:
a) Modeling must account for our communityâ€™s elevation and distance, not just flat-ground scenarios.
b) Models should simulate worst-case operational scenarios (all fans running during hot weather, nighttime conditions).

2. Best-Practice Noise Mitigation:
a) Acoustic enclosures and silencers for all major noise sources (fans, inverters, transformers).
b) High-performance sound barriers (not just perimeter walls) placed as close as possible to the noise sources and, if needed, between equipment rows for maximum

effectiveness.
c) Fan speed management with variable controls, especially at night, to minimize noise during quiet hours.
d) Equipment orientation to direct noise away from sensitive receptors.
e) Manufacturer-provided acoustic upgrades for all equipment.

3. Independent, Ongoing Noise Monitoring:
a) Require independent post-construction noise monitoring at multiple locations, including elevated communities, during different operational and weather conditions.
b) Mandate corrective action if noise exceeds regulatory or modeled limits, especially the 45 dBA nighttime standard or lower if warranted by local ambient conditions.

4. Transparent Public Reporting:
a) All noise studies, monitoring data, and mitigation plans must be made publicly available, with opportunities for community input and review.

Conclusion:
The BESS projectâ€™s benefits for the grid must not come at the expense of our communityâ€™s health and well-being. I respectfully request that the CEC require robust, site-specific noise mitigation and enforceable, transparent monitoring as a condition for any approval. Only through these measures can the risks to nearby, elevated neighborhoods be responsibly managed.
Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.