| DOCKETED | |
|---|---|
| **Docket Number:** | 24-OPT-02 |
| **Project Title:** | Compass Energy Storage Project |
| **TN #:** | 265490 |
| **Document Title:** | Staff Site Visit Report |
| **Description:** | Staff site visit report for the July 16, 2025 site visit. |
| **Filer:** | Lorenzo Cano |
| **Organization:** | California Energy Commission |
| **Submitter Role:** | Commission Staff |
| **Submission Date:** | 8/8/2025 4:41:24 PM |
| **Docketed Date:** | 8/8/2025 |

# Site Visit Report

## PROJECT INFORMATION

| | |
|---|---|
| **DOCKET NO.** | 24-OPT-02 |
| **PROJECT NAME** | Compass Energy Storage Project |
| **PROJECT LOCATION** | 29251 Camino Capistrano<br>San Juan Capistrano, California |
| **SITE VISIT DATE/TIME** | July 16, 2025/11:30 |
| **PROJECT MANAGER** | Renee Longman |
| **SITE VISIT TEAM LEAD** | Kevin DeLano |
| **SITE VISIT REPORT NUMBER** | CESP_24-OPT-02_20250716_SVR |

## CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION TEAM

| NAME | TITLE |
|---|---|
| Kevin DeLano, PG | Engineering Geologist, Siting, Transmission, and Environmental Protection (STEP) |
| James Ackerman, PG | Engineering Geologist, STEP |
| Ardalan Sofi, Ph.D, PE | Mechanical Engineer, STEP |
| Justin Wood | Biologist, Aspen (STEP Contractor) |
| | |

## REASON FOR SITE VISIT

☐ Compliance Inspection ☐ Complaint Inspection ☐ Emergency/Incident Response

☐ Construction or Demolition ☐ Follow-up ☒ Other (Information for Certification)

## BACKGROUND

Compass Energy Storage LLC (applicant) proposes to construct, own, and operate an approximately 250-megawatt (MW) battery energy storage system (BESS) in the City of San Juan

Capistrano. The proposed site is located on a stream terrace adjacent to Oso Creek on the east. A steep embankment of over 400 feet lies to the west. According to previous geotechnical investigations, there are numerous large landslides west of the site and smaller landslides are caused by stream erosion along Oso Creek.

**PURPOSE OF SITE VISIT**

Staff from the CEC project team traveled to the proposed Compass Energy Storage Project site to observe site conditions and to ask and/or identify site specific questions of applicant staff and consultants. Based on desktop review of application materials, of primary concern to Kevin Delano was geologic hazards such as the upland landslides threatening slope stability on the west side of the project site and stream erosion from Oso Creek undermining the terrace on the east. James Ackerman was concerned with the proposed level spreader introducing stormwater onto areas that are susceptible to slumping as a result of stream erosion. Ardalan Sofi was interested in nearby receptors to noise produced from the proposed project. Justin Wood of Aspen Environmental Group (Aspen), on behalf of CEC, observed the site for questions concerning biological resources.

**Figure 1: Site Plan of the Compass Energy Storage Project Area**


## CEC STAFF OBSERVATIONS

This report is based on all CEC staff observations on July 16, 2025. CEC staff asked for permission to access the project site from the applicant and were provided with an access time and meet-up location. Members of the applicant's team (identified below) escorted the CEC onto the project site. Prior to the meet-up time, CEC staff observed the project site from public vantage points. Please refer to Attachment A, Site Visit Timeline, for additional information.

CEC staff were escorted onto the project site by the following members of the applicant's team:

- Justin Amirault (Project Manager, Engie North America)
- Jessica Oo (Biologist, Engie North America)
- Erin Phillips (Planning/Permitting, Dudek)

- Tommy Molioo (Biologist, Dudek)

**Bluff Trail**

Kevin DeLano and James Ackerman accessed the Bluff Trail via Treethrone Circle. Photos were taken from an elevated position of the proposed project site and surrounding area. Of primary interest was the landslide headscarp below the Bluff Trail that exposed the marine sedimentary rock of the Mio-Pliocene age Capistrano Formation (Photograph 3).

**Proposed Level Spreader Area**

One of the areas that CEC staff were concerned about was the proposed level spreader site (Photograph 3). CEC staff is concerned that stormwater introduced from the level spreader could exacerbate the condition of slumping along the Oso Creek stream embankment in response to erosion. Much of this area was covered with tall grasses, shrubs and small trees. While there, CEC staff also observed the "ravine" identified in the updated aquatic resources report (Dudek 2024b). Although this feature was identified as having high erosion potential, CEC staff suspects this is lateral spreading associated with the slumping of the Oso Creek stream embankment (Photographs 6 thru 8). The feature bottom was irregular, showed no signs of sediment accumulation, and varied from approximately 1 to 2.5 feet in depth. CEC staff also observed an area of streambank slumping along Oso Creek.

**Large Area of Oso Creek Stream Streambank Slumping**

Another area of primary concern was the large-scale slumping of the Oso Creek streambank, immediately east of the Peace Gardens (Photographs 9 & 10). According to a 2021 geotechnical/geomorphic evaluation report, lateral migration of Oso Creek in this area averaged 12 feet and was a maximum of 45 feet annually between 2014 and 2021. The report also noted that the stream morphology was described prior to the 1970s as about 6 feet deep, sloping with little to no lateral migration. Current conditions are incised to depths of 50 feet with steep embankments (Geosyntec 2021). Based on the design plans (Dudek 2024a), the current location of the streambank in this area is within 60 feet of the proposed facility.

**Storm Drain Inlet Near Subway Channel Structure**

The proposed location for discharge of on-site stormwater pumped from the underground storage system is the stormwater inlet immediately west of the concrete channel structure (Photograph 12)

**Photograph 1: View east of proposed project location taken from the top of the western embankment. Note the location is currently being used as a community garden (Peace Garden).**

IMG_8365.JPG, Taken by James Ackerman, July 16, 2025

**Photograph 2: View southeast from the top of the western embankment. Close-up of Oso Creek stream erosion downstream from proposed site.**

IMG_8364.JPG, Taken by James Ackerman, July 16, 2025

**Photograph 3: View west of a landslide headscarp west of the project site exposing the marine sedimentary rock of the Mio-Pliocene age Capistrano Formation. Kevin DeLano in the foreground.**

IMG_8372.JPG, Taken by James Ackerman, July 16, 2025

**Photograph 4: View southwest of Bluffs from project site, near the community gardens. Landslide scarp in left background**

IMG_8389.JPG, Taken by James Ackerman, July 16, 2025

**Photograph 5: View south of proposed level spreader area. Justin Wood, Aspen biologist in right foreground.**

IMG_8390.JPG, Taken by James Ackerman, July 16, 2025

**Photograph 6: View south of ravine identified in Aquatic Resources Delineation, obscured by foliage. Possible lateral spreading feature.**

IMG_8394.JPG, Taken by James Ackerman, July 16, 2025

**Photograph 7: Close-up of possible lateral spreading feature.**

IMG_8395.JPG, Taken by James Ackerman, July 16, 2025

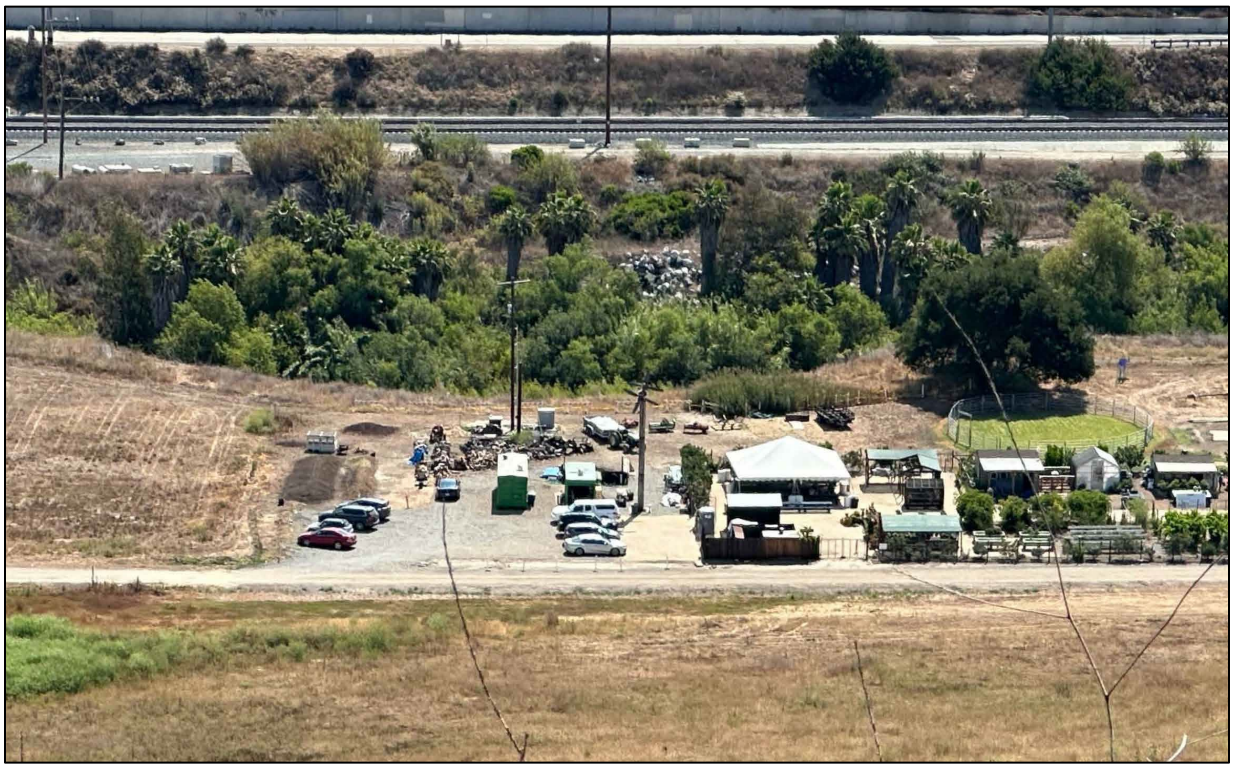
**Photograph 8: View south of possible lateral spreading feature. Justin Amirault (Engie) in foreground for scale of depth.**

IMG_8396.JPG, Taken by James Ackerman, July 16, 2025

**Photograph 9: View north-northwest of slumping resulting from Oso Creek streambank erosion, immediately east of the project site.**

IMG_8410.JPG, Taken by James Ackerman, July 16, 2025

**Photograph 10: Close-up view of large streambank slumping near current Peace Gardens and proposed Compass facility.**



IMG_8365-Closeup.JPG, Taken by James Ackerman, July 16, 2025

**Photograph 11: View north-northeast of subway channel structure**

IMG_8421.JPG, Taken by James Ackerman, July 16, 2025

**Photograph 12: View south-southwest along the subway channel structure. Storm drain inlet proposed as the discharge point for on-site stormwater is on the mid right behind the clipboard.**

IMG_8423.JPG, Taken by James Ackerman, July 16, 2025

## CONCLUSIONS

CEC observations made during this site visit to the proposed Compass site confirmed some of the concerns regarding slope stability and streambank slumping impacts along Oso Creek. These issues will be pursued further in supplemental data requests to the applicant.

## CEC STAFF ACTION ITEMS/REQUESTS

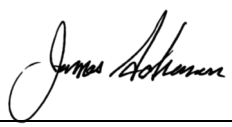
CEC staff will include observations in supplemental data requests to the Compass Energy Storage Project applicant.

## REFERENCES


Geosyntec 2021 – Geosyntec Consultants (Geosyntec). Geotechnical and Geomorphic Evaluations, Compass Energy Storage Project, San Juan Capistrano, California. June 29, 2021. From: application submittal (TN 264480). Geotechnical Evaluation Report (TN #255561-6) References Part 3. Docketed June 27, 2025. Accessed online at: https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Lists/DocketLog.aspx?docketnumber=24-OPT-02

Dudek 2024a – Dudek (TN 255577-3). Appendix 2A_Project Design Layout And Elevations. Docketed April 8, 2024. Accessed online at: https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Lists/DocketLog.aspx?docketnumber=24-OPT-02

Dudek 2024b – Dudek (TN 259938). Data Request Response 3_Attachment 1_Updated Aquatic Resources Delineation Report. Docketed November 6, 2024. Accessed online at: https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Lists/DocketLog.aspx?docketnumber=24-OPT-02


| **SIGNATURES** | |
|---|---|
| Kaycee Chang | 08/08/2025 |
| Kaycee Chang on behalf of Renee Longman, Project Manager | Date |
|  | |
| James Ackerman, Engineering Geologist | Date 08/08/2025 |

**ATTACHMENT A – SITE VISIT TIMELINE**

**PROJECT INFORMATION**

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|---|---|
| **DOCKET NO.** | 24-OPT-02 |
| **PROJECT NAME** | Compass Energy Storage Project |
| **SITE INSPECTION DATE/TIME** | July 16, 2025 |

**1035:** James Ackerman and Kevin DeLano arrive at Bluff Trail, accessed via Treethrone Circle.

**1045:** James Ackerman and Kevin DeLano observe landslide headscarp just below top of bluffs.

**1105:** James Ackerman and Kevin DeLano leave Bluff Trail.

**1130:** James Ackerman and Kevin DeLano arrive at Saddleback Church guardhouse, security personnel directs staff to Peace Garden parking lot.

**1135-1140:** James Ackerman and Kevin DeLano arrive at Peace Garden parking lot, meet Erin Phillips and Tommy Molioo of Dudek. Justin Amirault and Jessica Oo of Engie North America, Ardalan Sofi of CEC, and Justin Wood of Aspen follow. Justin Amirault presents an introduction of the Compass Energy Storage Project.

**1145:** Justin Amirault begins site walk.

**1200:** Arrive at area for proposed level spreader.

**1210:** Investigate ravine identified in aquatic resources delineation report (suspect this is lateral spreading associated with streambank slumping).

**1230:** Arrive at area of most extreme Oso Creek streambank erosion.

**1250:** Arrive at stormwater inlet location that is proposed to discharge stormwater from the project located immediately west of the concrete subway channel structure.

**1310:** Leave Compass project site.