DOCKETED	
Docket Number:	24-OPT-02
Project Title:	Compass Energy Storage Project
TN #:	268049
Document Title:	Mark Price Comments - Strategic Alternative Compass Energy Storage Project Siting at Camp Pendleton
Description:	N/A
Filer:	System
Organization:	Mark Price
Submitter Role:	Public
Submission Date:	12/26/2025 4:59:41 PM
Docketed Date:	12/26/2025

Comment Received From: Mark Price
Submitted On: 12/26/2025
Docket Number: 24-OPT-02

Strategic Alternative Compass Energy Storage Project Siting at Camp Pendleton

This briefing outlines a strategic alternative to the current siting of the Compass Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) project in Laguna Niguel by proposing exploration of relocating the project to Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton. Camp Pendleton is already advancing a $42 million, California state-funded zinc-ion battery energy storage project designed to provide approximately two weeks of backup power for base operations, with commissioning anticipated in 2027, as reported by PV Magazine USA in December 2024. This investment demonstrates that Camp Pendleton is actively preparing the infrastructure, operational protocols, and emergency response capabilities required to safely host large-scale energy storage systems.

There is strong federal precedent for siting commercial renewable energy and energy storage infrastructure on federal property. The United States Department of Energy (DOE), through its Clean Energy Initiative, has supported similar projects at Idaho National Laboratory and the Nevada National Security Site. These examples indicate DOEâ€™s willingness to partner with other governmental entities to deploy large-scale energy infrastructure where national, state, and local interests align. As such, DOE could become a significant ally in facilitating the relocation of the Compass BESS to Camp Pendleton and potentially assisting with project funding or technical support, even though the site is not a DOE facility.

From an operational and safety perspective, co-locating the Compass Project at Camp Pendleton offers notable advantages. The base will already maintain emergency response systems, trained personnel, and operational procedures for its own battery installation. Leveraging these capabilities could reduce redundant infrastructure, streamline permitting, and improve overall project efficiency. Additionally, Camp Pendleton lies within San Diego Gas & Electricâ€™s service territory and directly adjoins Orange County. While the proposed site would be several miles from the currently paused location in South Orange County, the logistical and grid-integration impacts may be minimal. An independent engineering assessment would be required to confirm whether SDG&Eâ€™s operational objectives can be fully met with a facility sited at Camp Pendleton.

Local governments, SDG&E, and Compass project stakeholders may be able to access DOE assistance through the University of California system, which has maintained a decades-long relationship with DOE through national laboratory management and extensive federally funded research programs. DOE also has a long-standing working relationship with the U.S. Department of Defense, particularly through national security and nuclear programs, which could assist in securing approvals to site the Compass BESS on Department of Defense property at Camp Pendleton. In exchange, DOE may

have an interest in access to operational data from a large-scale (approximately 250 MW) battery energy storage system to support research on grid-scale energy storage performance.

The relocation concept also preserves project continuity and offers potential cost savings. ENGIE, as the current vendor of record, couldâ€”if interestedâ€”be retained for a Camp Pendleton installation. This would allow the project to leverage existing preliminary design work and the firmâ€™s demonstrated qualifications, while avoiding the costs, delays, and risks associated with re-procuring engineering and design services. Emergency response responsibilities would shift to Camp Pendleton, alleviating demands on Orange County fire and emergency services, while still allowing for future cooperative agreements if desired.

In summary, relocating the Compass BESS project to Camp Pendleton presents a strategic, technically plausible, and politically pragmatic alternative to the current siting effort. This approach leverages existing state and federal investments, established regulatory and safety frameworks, potential federal partnerships, and vendor continuity, while also offering educational and workforce development benefits. If technically feasible, it provides a clearer and less contentious path forward for meeting South Orange Countyâ€™s long-term energy reliability and resilience needs.

Please note that I am a concerned citizen of Orange County only and am not an employee of, nor a contractor to, any entity involved in the Compass Project.