DOCKETED	
Docket Number:	24-OPT-02
Project Title:	Compass Energy Storage Project
TN #:	268113
Document Title:	Cathleen Pryor Comments - Opposition to the Compass project and a prolonged suspension period
Description:	N/A
Filer:	System
Organization:	Cathleen Pryor
Submitter Role:	Public
Submission Date:	1/3/2026 12:11:48 PM
Docketed Date:	1/5/2026

Comment Received From: Cathleen Pryor
Submitted On: 1/3/2026
Docket Number: 24-OPT-02

Opposition to the Compass project and a prolonged suspension period

January 3, 2026

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Re: Compass Energy Storage Project 24-OPT-02

We appreciate the effort Engie/Compass is making to find another location. We are insisting they do just that, but grateful at the same time. Initially, we were told there were 17 sites selected before this site was selected for its proximity to the transmission lines. Hopefully, now knowing what they needed to have known before taking this project to the CEC, they will find an isolated desolate area that has the support of local government.
Local government in American is respected for its efficiency, ethical decision making and care for the general public. Local government in our County which includes the County Supervisors, sees the safety of its residents, the beauty of the area and the prosperity of the communities as priorities. They earn the support of the community every day. I donâ€™t believe Engie/Compass understood this. The general public takes an active role in ensuring our communities are safe, beautiful and prosperous.
When Engie took their application to the California Energy Commission after being told by the City Council of San Juan Capistrano the request for a permit would be denied, it appears they thought community support was not necessary. (Engie is a French company with the Chinese Communist party as a significant shareholder.) Our Homeownerâ€™s Association was told the lithium, the lithium batteries, and containers would come from â€œsomewhere in Asiaâ€□. There are not too many possibilities. Because China is the largest exporter of lithium batteries, second largest exporter of lithium, probably the largest exporter of containers, and the largest exporter of cement, China is probably supplying the components and would have a definite interest in this project going forward. But these people do not appreciate democracy in the same way Americans do. The Chinese government does not seem to have any interest in what the public says nor do they encourage public participation, and the French are fine with taking directives from the unelected people in Brussels. How are they going to know what is going to happen when the decision of local government officials is ignored or disregarded?
Now they know.
The opposition is growing. There are people and public agencies waiting to dig into the Environmental Impact Report when it is released and will tear it to shreds. No assumptions will go uncovered and those will not be taken as facts. No speculative

remarks will pass as facts. It is just impossible to prove these lithium battery storage facilities are safe or that the fires can be extinguished. But if these facilities are located far from residential communities, critical infrastructure, vulnerable senior spaces and schools with children especially the handicapped and special needs children, then they could be considered as good projects. Evacuation is required when fire either self-starts or invades the facility. Evacuation plans need to be carefully evaluated. Hopefully, no battery storage facilities will ever be permitted in high fire or very high fire zones.
We encourage the CEC to consult with local government before undertaking the horrendous task of overseeing an application for one of these gigantic facilities. The CEC can help all of the struggling, impoverished communities and counties who are interested in improving their economies, creating jobs and supporting our green energy goals but do not have the staff to properly permit these facilities.
California has millions of acres of open land that could possibly be used for these facilities, not endanger any communities or infrastructure, and would add to the local economy.
We are looking for an announcement the agreement with Saddleback Church has been terminated not just allowed to expire or lapse. Further, for the CEC to decide this location will never be considered for a lithium battery storage facility. All developers need to review the dockets to guide them on how to evaluate a location and, we hope, the CEC would recommend they start with local government. It will save everyone time and money.
Again, the sooner a new location is identified, the better for the general public. A suspension is only a short-term solution and makes people suspicious the longer it takes. Engie should know we appreciate their help in developing green energy solutions to our electrical needs but the public could become more hostile if this suspension does not result in identifying a new location fairly quickly. We want to be transparent and fair. Moreover, we do not want them to waste more money and time, ours, the CECâ€™s, and theirs.

Respectfully,

Cathleen Pryor
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