

**DOCKETED**

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*Comment Received From: Andrew Perea  
Submitted On: 8/6/2024  
Docket Number: 24-OPT-02*

## **Compass Energy Storage Project - Oppose**

*Additional submitted attachment is included below.*

California Energy Commission

Docket Number: 24-OPT-02

Project Title: Compass Energy Storage Project

RE: Opposition to Proposed Compass Energy Storage Project (24-OPT-02)

Dear California Energy Commissioners,

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed battery energy storage system (BESS) facility located in the City of San Juan Capistrano. My home is located in the City of Laguna Niguel and is about 1500 feet from the project location. The area between our neighborhood and the project site is covered with dense, dry brush on a steep hillside. A recreational trail is located on top of the ridge. We have had several fires on this hillside in the 25+ years that we have lived in our home.

Compass Energy Storage LLC is proposing to construct, own, and operate an approximately 250-megawatt BESS facility on a 13-acre project site along the northern portion of the City of San Juan Capistrano adjacent to the eastern border of Laguna Niguel. This project site is zoned Planned Community District TBD. The current zoning of the site does not allow for battery energy storage systems to be developed in that zone. The City of San Juan Capistrano has expressed their opposition to the project. I am aware that AB 205 granted the State the ability to override local planning and zoning laws, but I sincerely hope that the Commission looks at the entirety of the project and its environs and realizes this is not the right use for this site.

The BESS facility would house lithium-iron phosphate batteries. As recently experienced in the cities of Otay Mesa and Santa Ana, these facilities can be incredibly dangerous if batteries overheat and catch on fire. Lithium battery fires are difficult to extinguish. The Otay Mesa BESS facility fire burned for over a week. A fire at the project site creates a huge risk to our neighborhood as the site is adjacent to an overgrown, steep hillside. In addition, should a fire occur at the site, firefighting efforts would require battling the fire with several million gallons of water which would in turn create toxic runoff which would contaminate the adjacent creek which flows into the Pacific Ocean.

As you probably aware, obtaining fire insurance in the state of California has gotten very expensive, if you can even obtain fire insurance. Locating the BESS facility adjacent to a dry brush hillside would make obtaining fire insurance even more difficult.

Lithium battery fires also produce highly toxic gases such as hydrogen cyanide, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide and methane, leading to air pollution and public health risks. When the fire broke out at the Otay Mesa BESS facility site nearby residents were advised to evacuate or shelter in place.

I am aware that an environmental impact report (EIR) will be prepared as part of the discretionary review of this project. I am requesting that I receive notification of all required public notices and documents pertaining to the preparation of the EIR including scoping meeting, initial study, draft environmental impact report, response to comments and final environmental impact report. I would also like to be notified of any public meetings conducted by the Commission or applicant pertaining to the San Juan Capistrano BESS facility. The Commission has not yet determined the Compass Energy Storage application to be complete. I am also requesting that I be notified when the Commission determines the Compass application to be complete thus starting its 270-day review period.

I am mystified how Compass Energy Storage was able to get the California Energy Commission to grant them confidentiality for Appendix 1B Property Owner Information on their project application. The justification that the applicant provided for their request to maintain property ownership confidentiality states “if such names and addresses are released into the public domain, there is the potential for fraudulent use or abuse of such personal information”. Compass however provided no justification or facts to support such claims of abuse. Nevertheless, the Commission granted the applicant’s request.

My contractor recently obtained a building permit to replace windows on my home. The building permit required my contractor to list my name and address on the permit. Building permits, as well as other land use entitlement applications, are subject to public records disclosure. Based on Compass Energy Storage’s justification for confidentiality wouldn’t all homeowners and business securing permits be subject to such potential fraud and abuse?

I think everyone is aware that the land for the proposed BESS facility is currently owned by Saddleback Church. Did the Church request that their name be kept off State permits to avoid controversy? I am very disappointed that Saddleback Church has decided to enter into escrow to sell their land to Compass Energy Storage to construct the battery energy storage system. The site is in such close proximity to homes, native flora and fauna, a creek and a steep hillside that is susceptible to fire. Did the church really believe that this was the best use of the site or did they just sell out to the highest bidder regardless of local planning and zoning laws?

I strongly urge the California Energy Commission to carefully and fully consider these adverse fire, economic, environmental, and public safety risks as they evaluate Compass Energy Storage's proposed project. The health and safety of the local residents should always take precedence over any potential benefits proposed by this project. I respectfully request that the California Energy Commission reject this project application and unequivocally prioritize public safety and community quality of life.

Sincerely,

Andrew Perea