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Comment Received From: Jennifer Miller
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Opposition of the proposed Compass Energy project in San Juan Capistrano, CA

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

To: California Energy Commission Board Members

This notification is to clearly make you aware that I am not in favor and adamantly oppose the location of the 250-megawatt Lithium-Ion Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) in San Juan Capistrano, California.

My family home is located within a quarter mile, uphill and directly adjacent, of the proposed development location. My city's (Laguna Niguel) council and residents, as well as the neighboring communities of San Juan Capistrano, Mission Viejo, Dana Point, Laguna Hills find the deceptive, covert, and calculated methods being used by the developer, COMPASS Energy Storage LLC with their intent to bypass public comments and deceitfully gain direct approval from the California Energy Commission Board Members appalling. Please do not allow this developer to use you as a pawn to go around standard processes because of an oversight in AB205, which creates a loophole in the law. It was not the intent of the assembly bill.

I live in the drift hazard and evacuation zone pathway from incidents occurring at this facility. Most general population will say they have fires which are not extinguishable. The industry uses the term "thermal runaway" to avoid using the word fire. Whatever terminology is used, thermal runaway is a large problem and is not avoidable. During thermal runaway, batteries will burn uncontrollably, emit toxic fumes, emit flammable vapors and pose explosion hazards. Incidents will always require evacuation from surrounding area for public safety. There are thousands of residential homes, businesses, schools, public transportation ways (interstate and railway), as well as the only major hospital (Providence Mission Viejo) that services most of south Orange County. Tens of thousands of people will all be at risk due to the proven hazards these facilities generate. All other lithium-ion battery storage sites are in completely isolated areas to avoid the negative impact to

residents. The location proposed is protected agricultural land, located in the hills of San Juan Capistrano.

These facilities are prone to failure due to their nature. The batteries will overheat and result in fire, or “thermal runaway” as their industry calls it. Our extreme seasonal temperatures will not benefit lithium-ion batteries and will enhance the chance and cause overheating. Thermal runaway can occur due to exposure to excessive temperatures, external shorts due to faulty wiring, or internal shorts due to cell defects. Thermal runaway events result in the venting of toxic and highly flammable gases and the release of significant energy in the form of heat. Vented gases are hot enough to melt metal. If ignited, these gases can cause enclosed areas to over pressurize, and if unmitigated, this overpressure can result in an explosion and severe damage to the battery and surrounding equipment or people. Since 2018, there have been over 40 significantly large fires of lithium-ion battery storage facilities. These thermal runaway events are impossible to extinguish with water and sometimes will burn for weeks causing closure and displacement due to evacuation and shutdowns. Our fire personnel have no effective way of stopping these events.

Just this week, Vistra Corp’s battery storage facility at Moss Landing in Monterey County in California experienced its 4th incident, resulting in a major evacuation. As I write this letter, the fire is still burning, emitting toxic gasses and shut down an eight (8) mile stretch of Hwy 1. The location of the proposed battery storage project in San Juan Capistrano, if approved, is approximately 500 feet from Interstate 5 and an incident at the facility will certainly close down a comparable section of busy highway. This will be a significant impact to Orange County and the state of California. It is not a question of “if it will happen?” because it will. The prudent question is “when?” Lithium-ion battery cells generate heat, even under normal operating conditions. This is a

negative impact to the environment, residents and wildlife within the area.

Furthermore, these facilities generate a nonstop noise issue. They require their own equipment to charge and cool the batteries, which creates an extremely loud buzzing or humming noise 24/7 that can be heard in neighboring area. This will substantially affect the quality of living for hundreds of residents and depreciate our property value. This proposal is within one (1) mile of Providence Mission Hospital and Saddleback Community College. The continuous noise will also impact the natural wildlife found on the proposed site of the project and within the area. Hawks, Migratory birds, Egrets, Herons and small animals, livestock and pets. The developers have provided you a signed document saying they are exempt but in prior experiences the equipment needed to run these facilities exceeds established dba levels and are not intended 24/7. Noise is a significant issue to quality of life.

The operation of these lithium-ion battery storage yards also brings environmental hazards. Runoff from daily use of water for cooling batteries and runoff from cooling exploded burning thermal runaway batteries will contaminate the nearby creeks, canals and pollute groundwater which also may affect nearby City and Residential wells. As required for all other hazardous materials that are subject to spills, no containment and capturing of contaminated water will occur at the facility. It will contaminate soil and ground waters. This facility does not provide long term jobs or energy benefit for City of San Juan Capistrano or Orange County. Once built, these systems are usually remotely monitored, which is very disconcerting when an incident occurs and response is delayed. The energy saved goes directly to SDG&E and doesn't guarantee power for the surrounding communities during blackouts. Only millions of dollars in profit for the developer.

Most fire jurisdictions have NO ability to address the incidents occurring at these facilities. They can only take precautions by evacuating surrounding residents, businesses, hospitals, nursing homes, and schools. Emergency evacuations will shut down roads and major exit routes such as Interstate 5 and Amtrak & Metrolink railways. This can be for days until they can get control of a thermal runaway fire, flammable and toxic gasses.

The frequency and intensity of incidents at these battery storage facilities is very disconcerting. There needs to be accountability by the state government agency that is approving by overriding local county and city government. Please do not approve this application without a fair and thorough public review. At minimum, an extension of the review period is necessary.

Thank you for hearing my concerns,

Jennifer Miller
Laguna Niguel, California