

DOCKETED	
Docket Number:	24-OPT-02
Project Title:	Compass Energy Storage Project
TN #:	262451
Document Title:	Jerry & Joy Dunton Comments - San Juan BESS Project Battery Project
Description:	N/A
Filer:	System
Organization:	Jerry & Joy Dunton
Submitter Role:	Public
Submission Date:	3/26/2025 5:40:42 PM
Docketed Date:	3/27/2025

*Comment Received From: Jerry & Joy Dunton
Submitted On: 3/26/2025
Docket Number: 24-OPT-02*

San Juan BESS Project Battery Project

Subject: Opposition to Compass Energy Storage LLC's Proposed Battery Energy Storage Project

Dear Compass Energy and City of San Juan Capistrano

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed Compass Energy Storage LLC battery energy storage system (BESS) project in San Juan Capistrano. While I fully support efforts to improve grid reliability and expand renewable energy infrastructure, this particular project poses serious concerns related to public safety, environmental impact, land use compatibility, and property values.

1. Safety and Fire Risk

Lithium-iron phosphate battery systems, like those planned for this project, have been involved in thermal runaway incidents, where overheating leads to uncontrollable fires and the release of toxic gases. Given the project's proximity to Interstate-5, residential areas, and community spaces, an accident could result in significant safety hazards for nearby residents and first responders. Unlike conventional fires, battery fires are difficult to extinguish, requiring specialized firefighting resources that may not be readily available.

2. Environmental and Health Concerns

Battery energy storage facilities require extensive cooling and ventilation, which can lead to heat emissions, noise pollution, and potential air quality degradation. In the event of a failure or fire, toxic chemicals could be released into the air or groundwater, posing a long-term risk to both public health and the environment. The lack of clear mitigation measures for such incidents is deeply concerning.

3. Incompatible Land Use and Community Impact

The proposed project is planned for a highly visible and developed area, adjacent to a major freeway and residential neighborhoods. Industrial-scale infrastructure of this nature is typically more suitable for remote or industrial zones, not locations with heavy traffic and community activity. The presence of a large-scale energy storage facility in this area would fundamentally alter the character of the neighborhood.

4. Negative Effect on Property Values

Numerous studies have shown that the construction of large-scale energy storage

facilities near residential areas can negatively impact property values. The aesthetic and industrial nature of the 13-acre facility may deter homebuyers and businesses, reducing the appeal of the surrounding community and potentially lowering property tax revenues for the city.

5. Consideration of Alternative Solutions

Rather than concentrating 250 MW of battery storage in a single location, alternative solutions such as distributed energy storage systems should be explored. A decentralized approach would not only reduce the potential impact on any one community but could also enhance grid resilience without placing an undue burden on San Juan Capistrano.

For these reasons, I urge you to reject the Compass Energy Storage Project in its current form and consider alternative locations or smaller-scale solutions that better align with the community's needs and safety standards. I appreciate your time and consideration of this critical issue and look forward to further discussion.

Sincerely,

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