

Members of Council
Prince Edward County
Shire Hall
Picton, Ontario
K0K 2T0

January 9, 2023

Dear Members of Council

RE: Proposal for a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), County Road 5, Picton

Compass Renewable Energy Consulting is proposing to develop a 250MW battery storage project at HWY5 and Fry Road. They are requesting a Municipal Council Support Resolution in support of this project.

Unfortunately, there will be no Environmental Advisory Committee in place in the County until at least February which could (and should) review this proposal and provide advice to Council. Thus, I am writing as the former Chair of the Environmental Advisory Committee to Prince Edward County. Unfortunately I am unable to appear before you in person the evening of January 10th at your next meeting.

Storage solutions for renewable green energy will be an integral part of a strategy to reduce Green House Gas emissions in our battle against Climate Change. BESS operations are growing at an annual rate of 20 percent. However I believe this proposal is completely incompatible with two of the County's strategic goals

1. **Financial Sustainability.** Ensure Financial sustainability with a financial plan that allows us to achieve our financial objectives. As a 24 year fund manager, I would add that financial sustainability should include assessments that ensure we do not take risks that put our financial sustainability in jeopardy.
2. **Adapting to Climate Change** Ensure public safety and the protection of municipal assets, championing the protection of rural habitats and the natural environment and wherever possible reduce the climate impact of our decisions to put the County in the best possible position to adapt to Climate Change.

The development proposed would be the 8th largest in the world¹

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_energy_storage_power_plants

My concerns are as follows:

1. On page 9 of Compass Renewable's presentation, they note that Ontario has had experience with BESS only since 2015 and that the total installed capacity in the province is 200 Megawatts. **The vast majority of projects they highlight are 2-4 megawatts NOT 250.**
2. **There is a serious lack of detail in Compass's narrative.** They make reference to local solar capacity and industrial demand but with no data indicating the magnitude of this supply and demand. They make reference to tax revenues for the County but with no detail. They make reference to jobs but with no discussion beyond construction (a sector where existing builders are struggling to find employees). How many jobs are we talking about? What is the nature of the jobs given our desire to diversify our economy?
3. **They mention they have consulted with the fire department but provide no information as to the fire department's feedback.** I have had two former members of the EAC advise me that members of the fire department have advised them that they could do little in the event of a fire but stand back and watch and let the fire burn out. There have been 50 fires associated with BESS since 2017
4. **Does the County have an evacuation plan for its 25,000 residents** in the event of a serious fire such as those that have occurred in South Korea, Arizona and Australia?
5. Compass has experience in Renewable energy but provides **no illustration as to its specific experience with BESS** or that of the future operators. **At the public open house they conceded they had no experience in the area They also conceded they did not know what system they would be using** – thus how can we assess associated risk and seek independent advice?
6. Angus Ross, an insurance consultant and former member of the EAC notes that **the insurance industry is increasingly risk averse when it comes to insuring these businesses.** Key insurance providers have exited the market. What liability insurance does Compass or the ownership structure for the BESS carry in the event such risks come to pass. What happens if in future the insurance industry refuses to provide insurance? Given the entity will be foreign owned and controlled, we could find ourselves having to seek redress in UK courts.
7. **Why is this BESS being proposed on Prime Agricultural Land?** Aside from its incompatibility with Goal 7 of the County, this is also incompatible with our Official Plan?

8. In the event of a fire and water is used as a suppressant, **how will the County address the consequent toxic infused waste water?** What are the costs of any cleanup? What are the potential effects on community health from toxic air?

9. The power that would be purchased is not certified as “green”

As a professional fund manager of 25 years I was in the business of ensuring that my investors were appropriately compensated for the risks they were assuming. This proposal provides no assurance (or detail for that matter) to assure the community that we would be adequately compensated for the considerable not to mention unknown risks we would be assuming.

I urge Council to reject this proposal.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane Lesslie".

Jane Lesslie, CFA
Former Chair, Environmental Advisory Committee, Prince Edward County.