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1 Application: 15-AFC-01
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3 Witness: Irene Valencia
4 Exhibit No.: 6001
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7 **STATE OF CALIFORNIA**
8 **CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION**
9

10 IN THE MATTER OF:

DOCKET NO. 15-AFC-01

11
12 APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION OF
13 THE **PUENTE POWER PROJECT**

**TESTIMONY OF IRENE VALENCIA ON
BEHALF OF THE CALIFORNIA
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
ALLIANCE**

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22 Shana Lazerow (State Bar No. 195491)
23 Gladys Limón (State Bar No. 228773)
24 COMMUNITIES FOR A BETTER ENVIRONMENT
25 120 Broadway, Suite #2
26 Richmond, CA 94804
27 Tel: 510-302-0430 x18
28 Fax: 510-302-0438
Email: glimon@cbeal.org,
slazerow@cbeal.org
Attorneys for the California Environmental
Justice Alliance (CEJA)

1 My name is Irene Valencia, and I live at 2400 E. Pleasant Valley Road, Space 98, Oxnard
2 CA. I have lived in Oxnard my whole life, and at this address about 19 years. Professionally, I
3 am in the mental health field, working with K-12 students who have social-emotional issues.
4 Because I am regionally based, not assigned to a specific school, I have the opportunity to
5 interact with people throughout the area.

6 I am concerned about pollution impacts on my community, my family and on me. I feel
7 that living in Oxnard, we are exposed to significant amounts of pollution.

8 My family is very much affected by asthma. When I was growing up, my aunt and uncle
9 lived in Port Hueneme by the Ormond Beach plant. For the last decade or so, they have lived at
10 5th Street & S. Victoria Avenue, close to where Edison Mandalay plants are, and where the new
11 NRG plant would be. My three cousins, who are 20, 18 and 15, all have asthma. The two older
12 girls were diagnosed with asthma early on, when they were about three years old. The family had
13 to care for their condition, and I remember hospitalization incidents. The youngest sister started
14 having respiratory problems about five years ago. All three attended school in Oxnard, including
15 Oxnard High.

16 My cousins love to play at the beach. I have seen them riding their bikes right off 5th
17 Street, where the Mandalay plants are. I am concerned about the amount of pollution they are
18 exposed to, living and going to school near the plants.

19 The part of Oxnard where I live is surrounded by agricultural fields. The junior high I
20 attended, especially the track where we ran, was adjacent to agricultural fields where pesticides
21 were being spread. My sister and mother both suffer from severe allergies, and I suffer from
22 migraines. While many attribute migraines to stressful work conditions, my migraines started
23 before I got into the field of mental health. I strive to control the stress levels I experience, and to
24 live a healthy life, but I can't control the pollution in the air I breathe.

25 I have considerable experience working with families throughout the region. I interact
26 regularly with children in Ventura County: Ojai, Simi Valley, Fillmore, Westlake Village as well
27 as Oxnard. My assessment is that, compared to the region as a whole, Oxnard communities are
28 very underserved in health care, mental health and education. Rather than a new gas-fired power

1 plant, Oxnard needs investment in more services for families that are going to positively impact
2 their well-being.

3 There are real benefits from relying on renewable energy. Rather than investing in
4 something that is only going to negatively impact the community, I believe we need investment
5 in educating the community in ways they can live healthy lives. I think it is time NRG gave back
6 to the community that has had to live with its power plants for all these years.

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9 DATED: January 17, 2017

By:

/s/

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Irene Valencia