

## DOCKETED

<b>Docket Number:</b>	15-AFC-01
<b>Project Title:</b>	Puente Power Project
<b>TN #:</b>	215450
<b>Document Title:</b>	MR Taruc Expert Testimony Opposing PPP
<b>Description:</b>	Expert Testimony by Mari Rose Taruc
<b>Filer:</b>	Grace Chang
<b>Organization:</b>	FFIERCE
<b>Submitter Role:</b>	Intervenor
<b>Submission Date:</b>	1/18/2017 4:57:35 PM
<b>Docketed Date:</b>	1/18/2017

## **Stop the Puente Power Project From Accelerating Environmental Racism and Climate Change**

Testimony by Mari Rose Taruc, AB32 Environmental Justice Advisory Committee Co-chair and FACES (Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity) Board Chair

Over the last year, I have been engaged in monthly dynamic discussions of the State-convened AB32 Environmental Justice Advisory Committee (EJAC) in developing California's Scoping Plan to reach the 2030 climate targets. It requires steep cuts in climate pollution-- probably 10 times stronger than what we've done so far, even though California is already a global climate leader. Hundreds of climate scientists and policy advocates in and out of California's Air Resources Board are busy computing possibilities to finalize a plan by Spring 2017. So when I heard that the CEC is considering this massive fossil fuel Puente Power Project (P3), I was shocked. I thought: that couldn't happen in California-- not in this day and age with Governor Brown bullish on climate action, not with our state legislators championing climate equity laws, and not with CalEPA and sister agencies deepening their commitment to environmental justice (EJ).

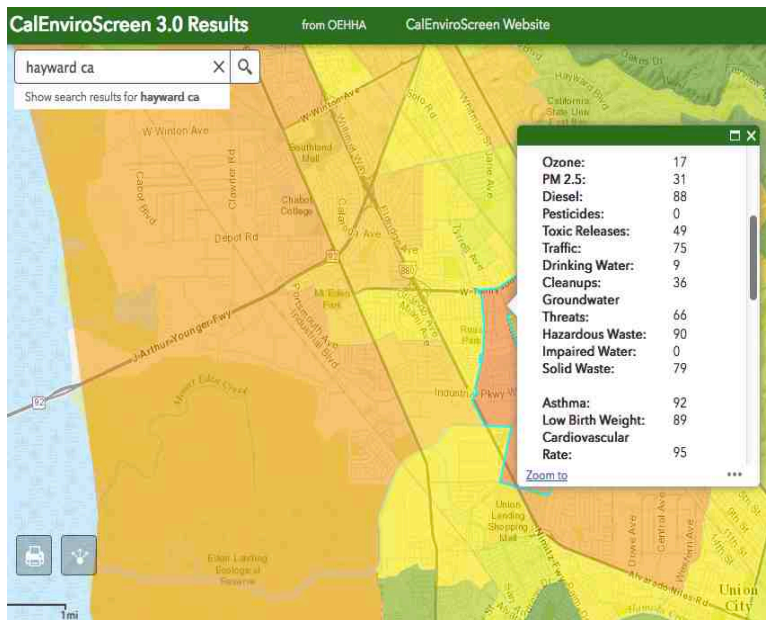
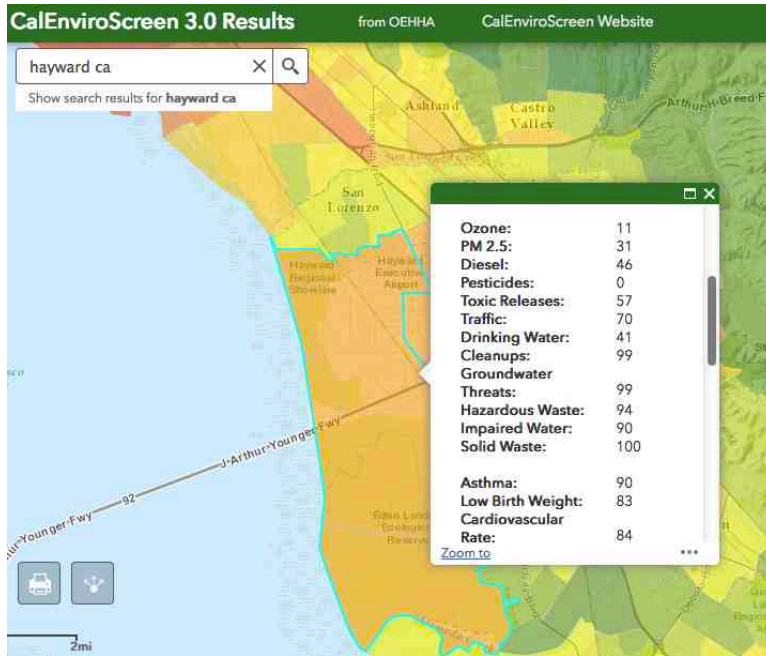
### **P3 GOES AGAINST OUR CLIMATE AND CLEAN ENERGY LAWS**

While CEC staff looked at some local environmental laws for this project, it omitted the big statewide climate and clean energy laws that would apply to such a project, namely SB 32 (Pavley 2016, greenhouse gas emissions reductions for 2030), AB 197 (Garcia 2016, air pollution reduction from large stationary sources) and SB 350 (De Leon 2015, 50% renewables by 2030). CEC needs to analyze P3 through the lens of these 3 climate and energy laws at the bare minimum. Within the context of these strong mandates to reduce emissions from polluting facilities like power plants, there is no room to build the P3 project because it would burn huge amounts of fossil fuel extracted natural gas, accelerate climate change and steer us off course in achieving California's climate targets. Furthermore, the point of SB 350 as well as hundreds of millions of dollars in CA climate investments into efficient and renewable energy is to wean us away from gas-powered electricity, and instead innovate clean technology that harnesses the sun and wind's natural power. The CEC needs to calculate how much clean power we need to generate to meet SB 350 totals and weigh how P3 helps or hurts those goals.

### **P3 DEEPENS THE PROBLEM OF ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM**

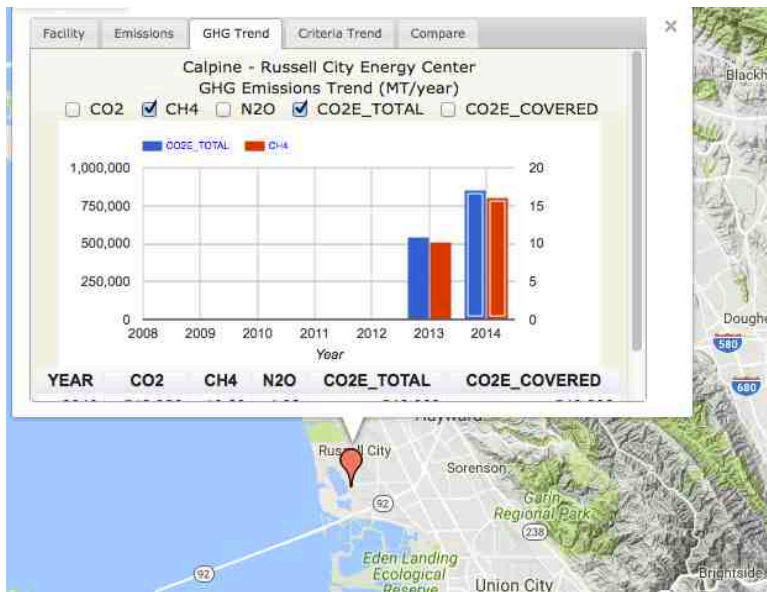
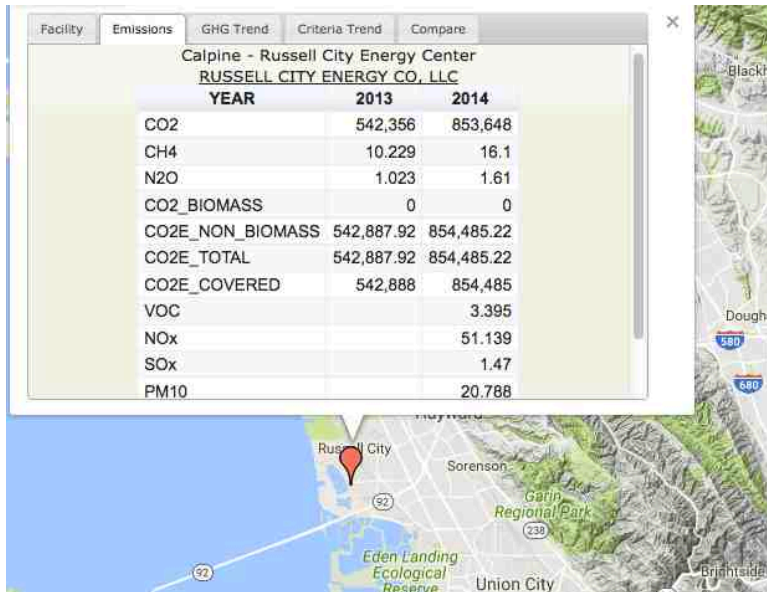
In passing AB 32 in 2006, legislators committed to climate action and improving air quality for climate-vulnerable Environmental Justice communities. AB 197 further acknowledged the need to reduce air pollution from large smokestacks because of the negative health impacts on fence-line communities, primarily low-income Black, Latino and Asian communities. Several years of work by the CalEPA, OEHHA (Office of Health Hazard Assessment) and EJ advocates, produced the CalEnviroScreen cumulative impacts tool to identify and prioritize areas for clean up. It is completely illogical and inappropriate to propose to site P3 in Oxnard, which is an identified highly polluted and high poverty community under CalEnviroScreen. Oxnard is high on the state's list for environmental protection and mitigation--certainly not for increased toxic exposure with a large polluting power plant.

I actively work with the Filipino community in Union City and Hayward who live next to the large Calpine power plant, and who suffer high asthma rates in the top 90<sup>th</sup> percentile of the state. It would be unconscionable to allow another toxic assault of a power plant to do the same to the families of Oxnard through P3. We should be cleaning up and bringing relief to these impacted communities in Hayward, Oxnard and others, not making conditions worse with bad projects like P3.



As background: In 2013, the Calpine power plant spewed over 542 thousand tons of greenhouse gases into the air, and alongside it co-pollutants like PM 2.5, known to cause

respiratory problems. Even though Calpine should have been reducing its emissions, it managed to sidestep California climate laws and increase its pollution sharply the next year to over 853 thousand tons. How did over-generation and spikes in pollution happen? What health effects did this have, especially to people of color already sick or vulnerable to asthma? Who paid for this cost in dollars and in health? The Calpine plant is a perfect example of environmental racism, illustrating the danger these power plants pose to the public and why we need to phase them out--and certainly not build new ones like P3. Let us learn from this example and not let these grave historical mistakes be repeated.



My Environmental Justice work with youth in Union City teaches them tools to identify hazards as well as engage in solutions to improve their communities. They have started growing vegetables in the community garden we built. They are learning about climate and clean energy

programs that give them hope that someday soon Calpine won't be needed anymore. That is the path set forth by California's climate trailblazers. As an EJ leader I know we need to walk that path straight without distraction. Big polluting projects like P3 veer us dangerously off course from the future that we have set for California, and the measures we must take, already codified in our laws. I urge the CEC to shelve this bad project and instead fulfill the mandate to clean up and bring relief to the most polluted communities, and grow clean power there too!