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Deny Puente Application

California Energy Commission
Statement for the Record
Puente Power Project (15-AFC-01)

David L. Caskey
Port Hueneme

I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this proceeding. I first became aware of the Puente permit request late in the process, when I bought a home in Port Hueneme in April 2016. While I was concerned about Oxnard's history of coastal degradation from industrial usage, as well as the presence of the power plants, I was also aware of the unique requirement in California law not only to coastal preservation, but where possible, to coastal restoration, for the current and succeeding generations.

The chance to live in coastal California was a dream come true. Community opposition to the Puente application led me to the public resources of the California Energy Commission. Thanks to the commission I was able to learn about the plan to reduce once-through ocean water cooled plants, as well as the complicated mix of entities that, other than the CEC, manage electrical power needs-the utility customers, the energy providers, CAISO, the environmental regulators, and the Coastal Commission.

Unable to attend earlier hearings, I attended the workshop session in Oxnard on coastal flooding studies and risk models, submitted a statement, and signed up for the public record. I commend the Commission for its transparency and ease of public access. In a short time I have been able to learn quite a lot, not the least of which is the incredible amount of effort by all parties, not to mention the expenses incurred. I realize my ability to digest all this is limited, but I will try.

NRG has a timetable to sell power to SoCal Edison by replacing several old plants from the early 70's with a smaller, less damaging gas powered plant, that still would be at oceans edge. Over a long time frame NRG seems to have taken great effort to do this in a responsible way-but at this point in the process, seems to oppose any more requests for information because of potential delay to its construction schedule and contracts with SoCal Edison.

The power requirement for this plant is driven by surge power needs inland and the existing infrastructure of the grid. The CEC has asked for a study to see if a smaller inland natural gas powered plant could meet that need. Legitimate questions have been raised about other ways to meet those surge requirements using battery storage and without fuel fired facilities.

The coastal location means that both the environmental and economic impacts are potentially severe. The City of Oxnard is opposed, for economic reasons in that it degrades coastal access and use, and because of health concerns of its residents, including higher than normal rates of asthma.

The coastal location is wildlife and species sensitive, and while much research has been conducted, more has been requested. Shoreline change, storm threats and sea-levels will always be issues for the potential life of any coastal site, including Puente, as will its inevitable disposal.

California leads in its commitment to environmental responsibility, renewable energy and addressing climate change like no other entity in this nation. California, by law, is unique in protecting its coast.

The CEC must take a hard, honest look at the cost vs. benefit question. In this case the cost is allowing a natural gas fired plant on the beach, when the surrounding community is pretty united in its opposition. The benefit is a reliable power source that will work with existing infrastructure.

The bar is just too high in this case. The coastal location and the commitment to natural gas, with its methane risks in production and storage, just does not justify the economic benefit.

I urge the CEC to deny this application.

Sincerely,

David L Caskey