

DOCKETED

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Ginger Gherardi IH Comments on Mission Rock

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

Comments to California Energy Commission

Ginger Gherardi, Santa Paula Councilwoman

7/28/16 Hearing

Thank you for returning to Santa Paula to take comments on the proposed Calpine Peaker Plant at Mission Rock Road. I have a series of concerns – some of which may have already been mentioned – but that I feel need to be addressed.

The most basic concern is where is the justification for this project? Because Calpine owns this property does not mean it is an appropriate location for a power plant or the best use of the property. It is my understanding that this project was not solicited by the CEC and that Calpine does not have a contract with the Edison Company. This proposed project is just “speculation” at the expense of the public living and working in Santa Paula. Specific justification for the necessity of this plant should be required from the California Energy Commission before the matter is considered further.

Below are some of my concerns that need to be addressed by the CEC

100 Year Flood Plain

1. Why would the Commission knowingly site an energy plant in a 100 year flood plain?
2. Why would you place a \$300 million project in a location where it is sure to get damaged?
 - a. A 10' berm is inadequate to protect the site from flooding – recent rains (not even 100 year floods) wiped out part of the airport, came up from the rivers and flooded over the highway 126 bridge and the railroad tracks in various locations.
3. Three Santa Paula firemen were seriously injured –two no longer able to work- from an explosion at a nearby wastewater plant. How would you assure that there were no explosions or fires or leaks from the 20 Lithium-ion battery units?
4. How will you prevent ammonia storage tanks or other hazardous materials from moving on site or being swept into the river during a flood or massive rain event (which occurs periodically)?
5. How will you guarantee that none of these hazardous chemicals will find their way into the riverbed or into our water table – where our drinking water comes from?

Noise

1. How much noise does the equivalent of 5 jet engines make and how many hours per day will they run?
 - a. Normal noise measurements are inadequate – you cannot simply take noise measurements on site and then a certain amount of feet away.
2. Will these engines be running at night? What hours? – How many hours? What time of the year can we expect this plant to be in operation?
 - a. A claim was made that solar energy is inadequate because it can only be used in daylight hours and not during inclement weather. Does this mean the plant is expected to run at night?
 - b. Santa Paula is in a valley and the noise simply echoes up the hillsides and this is especially noticeable in the evening when the ambient noise level is lower. Does everyone in town have to be disturbed or have their sleep disturbed by the sound of these engines?

3. What impact will the noise of these engines have on the wildlife using the river basin or the birds, nesting or otherwise?

Airport

1. The Santa Paula Airport Association is on record as opposing this plant because of the low altitude flown by many pilots landing at the airport, coming in from the Saticoy Bridge area due to visibility issues and fog and the fact that this is a non-towered airport. They noted that there have been 3 fatalities in the last few years due to interactions with standard height electric lines. They expressed severe concern about adding 36 more transmission lines from 80' to 200' tall which could interfere with pilots attempting to land or take off from the airport.
2. Will the California Energy Commission or Calpine assume the liability for any such accidents or property damage directly as a result of these new transmission lines?

Visual Pollution

1. While transmission lines may be beautiful to some people, they are really ugly to me, with the newer sturdier cement monstrosities even uglier than the old wooden poles. Why would we want to take a beautiful, pristine agricultural area and cause visual blight with 36 ugly transmission lines ranging from 80 to 200 feet in the air?
2. It is my understanding that this plant will be lighted all the time, whether in operation or not, creating another intrusion into the normally quiet and dark agricultural area. But, perhaps more importantly, has there been an evaluation of the impact of a lighted facility on the wildlife – birds and animals who use the river at night for water or for nesting?

Environmental Justice

1. What is the need for this plant? If there is a need, why isn't it being located where the demand is coming from rather than a predominantly agricultural, low income, minority community. We, in Santa Paula have learned the hard way that we can be taken advantage of when we were "given" the jail and the regional landfill, but we expect the State to make sure our citizens are treated equitably and "give" the Peaker plant to somebody else.

Conclusion

A lot has been said about the Mission Rock Peaker Plant being an emergency use plant to generate electricity only when needed and that will, therefore, have minor impacts on air quality and on Santa Paula residents for only a couple of days per year.

That is patently untrue and I would hope the California Energy Commission recognizes that the impacts of this proposed Peaker Plant will affect the public living and working in Santa Paula 365 days per year. The ugly visual impacts of transmission lines will be there 365 days per year, whether the plant is operating or not. The risks to pilots landing or taking off from the Santa Paula airport will be there 365 days per year. There are risks to wildlife 365 days a year, as well.

There has been no justified need for this plant and certainly no need in the Santa Clara Valley. If there is unmet electrical demand, the California Energy Commission should site a plant where the demand is located.