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Via E Filing
January 30, 2015
Carlsbad Energy Center Project (07-AFC-06C)

Karen Douglas, Commissioner and Presiding Member
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Power of Vision January 30, 2015 Status Report

Power of Vision appreciated the opportunity to discuss some of our issues with the proposed amended Carlsbad Energy Center project with Energy Commission Staff and applicant at the workshop held in Carlsbad Jan 12-13. We were under the impression there would be an opportunity to have a clearer and more in-depth dialogue with the applicant, NRG, and CEC staff concerning the transmission lines adjacent to the I-5 corridor, and were disappointed that such discussions did not take place. As residents of Carlsbad, our intention in these proceedings is to make sure the amended CECP complies with residents' goal of improving the view shed currently occupied by the Encina Power Station (EPS). We applaud the intention of the applicant to demolish the existing EPS site and remediate the property to a level of use to be determined in the future. With the old EPS gone, the view-shed corridors will change dramatically, shoving the amended CECP into the forefront. Power of Vision's intention is to ask the CEC to require the applicant to screen the project to a high degree, realizing its intrusion on the ocean views of thousands of Carlsbad residents, visitor and drivers on the I-5.

Power of Vision agrees with staff recommendation that "The ultimate solution, however, shall include replacement tree canopy of sufficient heights and density or provide substantial visual screening of the tall amended CECP features, including exhaust stacks and transmission poles; and to substantially replace any existing tree canopy on the eastern CECP boundary lost to highway expansion. The solution developed under condition of Certification VIS-5 shall not preclude relocation or undergrounding of transmission poles or other features if necessary to provide the stipulated visual buffer."

Since the widening of I-5 is a known project, with letters from CalTrans docketed December 22, 2014, TN# 203474 detailing their preferred alignment, Power of Vision asks the Commissioners,

as a Condition of Certification, to have the project owner underground the transmission lines **during construction** of the amended CECP rather than at a later date. The economies of scale would suggest the cost of such an undertaking will be less for the applicant now, than in the future. Undergrounding the transmission lines, now the dominant feature of the view-shed would completely solve the issue of visual blight to the surrounding residents and motorist. CEC, during the workshop and in subsequent comments on the PSA, stated their interest in solutions to screening the transmission lines. POV's solution is to underground the lines or move them from the Eastern edge of the project to the Western edge of the project.

Power of Vision also agrees with staff recommendation that the project owner must complete planting and seek the approval of the CPM prior to start of project operation.

Power of Vision identifies the following currently known areas of concern for consideration at the Evidentiary Hearings: Air Quality, Alternatives, Land Use, Transmission Line Safety & Nuisance, Noise, Transmission System Engineering, and Visual.

At the recent workshop, the issue was raised as to how intervenors can be informed of communications between the project owner and the CPM and COP. We are still awaiting a clarification on this issue.

Power of Vision would prefer that no power plant were to be constructed and operate in Coastal Carlsbad. The eventual shutdown and removal of Encina would have provided the City and its residents an opportunity to rehabilitate coastal lands to uses more in keeping with the surrounding area. Having said that, POV is not opposing the licensing of the amended CECP. We recognize the proposed project is a better project than the approved CECP, but we are committed to insisting on improvements that would benefit the aesthetics of the proposal. We appreciate that the EPS dismantling and remediation will be a tremendous benefit to residents. Once that is done, however, attention will be drawn to the proposed project and its industrial nature. Therefore, the applicant has a responsibility to design the project to improve the aesthetics and beach setting of the site. If the applicant intends to pursue development of the remediated EPS site, it is their best interest to mitigate the visual blight that will be caused by the six smoke stacks and especially the transmission lines that will be highly visible.

The California Energy Commission is in a position to dramatically alter the Carlsbad Coastline with the approval of the proposed amended CECP and Encina tear down. It is a golden opportunity to require the applicant to screen unsightly smokestacks and underground transmission lines. It is a win-win opportunity for energy needs in the San Diego region and to mitigate the unsightliness of the proposed project. Carlsbad has always been a good neighbor by providing for the needs of the region. We are home to two freeways, a trash transfer station, water treatment facilities, an airport and trains stations that all benefit the region. Please use your authority to require the applicant to underground the transmission lines and effectively screen the project.

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