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Comment Received From: David Campbell
Submitted On: 9/17/2013
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Comments opposing the HECA project

To the members of the California Energy Commission:

I wish to speak against the proposed HECA plant on the following grounds:
Health:
1. Considered in its totality, HECA is not a clean energy provider. The passage of trains or trucks or both, bringing 1,100 tons of coal /day from New Mexico will result in increased exposure by the San Joaquin Valley to pollutants including diesel exhaust, and coal dust, which normally contains heavy metals such as mercury and chromium. This plume of contamination will stretch from mines 700 miles away to our back yard, and result in additional dependence on coal, the nation's dirtiest fuel.
Locally, up to and including the actual location of HECA and roads that service it, coal dust from trains, trucks, and unloading facilities threatens high quality farmland, degrading the land and the crops grown on them, and poses a risk of making some local crops unmarketable. Residential areas of Bakersfield adjacent to or at least downwind from the tracks would also experience increased exposure to toxic dust.

2. The southern end of the San Joaquin Valley already suffers from a severe concentration of air pollutants. In my teaching career, I experienced days when children were not allowed on the playgrounds at recess out of concern for their lungs. Jared Blumenfeld, EPA's Regional Administrator, acknowledged the gravity of the situation when he (January 25, 2012) stated: "Four times more people die in the San Joaquin Valley from air pollution than they do from traffic fatalities." Furthermore, The American Lung Association State of the Air report for 2012 ranks Bakersfield worst city in the US for short-term particle pollution and year-round particle pollution. While Co2 may be "sequestered," other gases will be released. The poor quality of our air should not be additionally compromised .

Cost
1. Where is the evidence of compelling demand for this electricity, which is a requirement under the Energy Policy Act of 2005? Have figures been cited to indicate that local electrical rates would be lowered as a result of the HECA plant?
Much of the electricity that is generated will be used in fertilizer production or in powering the injection of CO2 into the oil-bearing rock. This power will not be available to bring lower-cost energy to the valley. So it seems reasonable to think that this project, that uses taxpayer funding in part, is principally of benefit to industry, not to residential and commercial consumers.
2. In addition, there has been research on the contamination of a number of local water district supplies by agricultural chemicals (fertilizer and pesticides). Is this the time to be pouring more oil-based compounds on valley ag land?
3. If there is a need for this electricity, was adequate research done into generating this electricity with renewables such as wind and solar? These clean energy sources do not come with the environmental cost of HECA and equally important, can provide long term employment.
4. Is the county prepared to absorb the cost involved with disposing of solids from the HECA project? If disposal shortens the life of our landfills or the waste products are found to require a toxic waste disposal system, who will fund this?
Submitted by David Campbell

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

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