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HECA Project

Please do not allow the HECA facility near the community of Buttonwillow.

My back-story, after 22 years of living in the San Joaquin Valley portion of Kern County, I developed chronic asthma 11 years ago. I moved to the mountain communities of Kern near Lake Isabella to stay near the communities I loved but away from some of the worst air quality in the nation. I have been disheartened to see the San Joaquin Valley's pollution creep incrementally up the canyon and into the Kern River Valley. I will have to move again or die as a result of this pollution.

The idea that an area that has never attained EPA air quality standards would even be thought of as a place to put a coal-fired plant of any kind is really insane. Four hundred trucks a day bringing coal will impact roads and traffic flow. There is no such thing as clean coal and the aftermath of mining for coal is something no intelligent being should tolerate. I am not just worried about the impacts to Kern County communities but also to the environment in New Mexico or wherever else the coal is stripped from the earth.

Again, this is a bad project with so many logical flaws. The injection wells near an aquifer that serves the entire southern San Joaquin Valley just doesn't make sense. A real risk to a metropolitan area of 400,000 is a sudden escape of tons of CO₂. As CO₂ collects in low elevation pockets it can kill rapidly as happened in Africa at Lake Nyos, Cameroon in August of 1986. The 1,700 people killed along with thousands of cattle and wildlife would be a pittance compared to what could happen in the lowlands of the Buena Vista basin.

The area is home to many endangered species that continue to suffer sprawling development with no real effort to protect habitat. Blunt-nosed Leopard Lizard, Giant Kangaroo Rat, Tipton Kangaroo Rat, San Joaquin Kit Fox, Kern Mallow, and many other sensitive species cannot survive this continued onslaught next to their last refuge. Every agreement to protect the species seems to be "mitigated" away for economic reasons. The economy of a dead planet is non-existent.

Please do not approve the Buttonwillow HECA project. Thank you.