

DOCKETED

Docket Number:	08-AFC-08A
Project Title:	Hydrogen Energy Center Application for Certification Amendment
TN #:	200687
Document Title:	Comments on DEIS and PSA
Description:	Comments to DOE and CEC on HECA
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Submitter Role:	Intervenor
Submission Date:	10/1/2013 10:02:04 AM
Docketed Date:	10/1/2013

HECA Neighbors
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October 1, 2013 *

HECA Neighbors has a few extra comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Hydrogen Energy California and also to California Energy Commission re the Preliminary Staff Assessment, Docket No. 08 AFC 8A. Our additional comments follow:

Air Quality:

Bottom line is the air we breath will be worse. The tons of new emissions from HECA's activities will be inhaled in the neighborhood. And we will be inhaling this far more than folks in Stockton. It makes no common sense to justify fixing buses and things as far away as Stockton and claim that will improve what we breath here at home. The DOE and CEC need to challenge the legality of the offsets and credits used by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District and examine if these clever offsets and credits will equal a benefit to the air we actually breath in Kern County. Locals certainly question if the air district is fulfilling its mission statement of controlling air pollution.

Also, HECA purchased so many air credits, what is left to support our local industry? What is left and at what price if a cold storage, for example, is needed for grapes or cherries in our farming industry? This lack of remaining air inventory and the impact of what it may now cost our local industry needs to be addressed.

AQ-SC10 is inadequate. You need to remove the last sentence in each paragraph under both railcars and trucks which exempts HECA from inspections of rail or road if loads are enclosed. What is the procedure if the load is leaking from the BOTTOM? Great example is the bottom leak mess of coal that already exists in Wasco that the SJVAPCD is so reluctant to address. It would be a travesty to allow HECA to refuse to address a mess in Buttonwillow because the top was fully enclosed.

Odors 4.1-59

Neighbors have a problem with the statement that H₂S odors are not likely to create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people, and thus are not likely to be significant problematic odors. How about protecting the farm workers who are there? Per OSHA, even in low concentrations, H₂S can irritate eyes, nose, throat and respiratory system. Asthmatics may experience breathing difficulties. Repeated exposure may cause eye inflammation, headache, fatigue, and weight loss. Is HECA excused from protecting the public from exposure to these concentrations "given the low population surrounding the site"? People live nearby and labor crews and others work in those neighboring fields. Staff must correct and mitigate the odor issue.

Water:

HECA Neighbors appreciates that Staff recognizes that pumping 7500 acre-feet /year could exacerbate overdraft in the Kern County sub basin.

Farmers in the Buena Vista WSD typically get around 2.5 acre-feet of water per year from canal water. But this 2013 water year, water was in such short supply that farmers were asked for their opinion. Farmers were asked by BVWSD if NO water should be put into canals this year and save it for a bigger delivery next year. Final decision, and something that has not happened in decades, was to briefly fill the canals and deliver only .7 acre-feet. The remainder of what is needed to grow a crop (approx. 4 acre/feet/year) had to be pumped from the ground. This, of course, puts a greater demand on ground water. With Isabella dam in great need of repair, we can not store an abundance of water in Isabella IF we get a wet year. At the moment, Isabella is under 20% of capacity. So we must rely on an over drafted water basin for irrigation. HECA is a disproportionate user of water. At 7500 acre feet/year on 480 acres, that is well over 16 acre-feet of water!!!! And the farmers use only about 4 acre-feet to grow a crop.

The water quality of so-called degraded, brackish water HECA proposes to use from BVWSD is usable water. From farmers' observation, the crops grown in the area of the proposed well fields are healthy and productive. Several farmers have observed the fields in question and know these crops are healthy. Even crops normally not salt tolerant are grown here and look productive and healthy.

HECA Neighbors supports ALL the requests of the Kern County Board of Supervisors Part 2, table 3 dated July 23, 2013, which is attached.

Added notes for clarity..

Land Use-1 No Eminent domain by any entity, including the Federal Government

Haz 1 The air monitor should be installed in Tupman and tied into San Joaquin real time air advisory network.

Haz 2 Reverse 9-1-1 Should be augmented with sirens along Adhor Rd from Freeborn to Morris Rd and Stockdale between I-5 and Wasco Way. Field workers need an alert to immediately evacuate in an emergency, and reverse 9-1-1 can not notify them.

Traffic 3 and 4 add passing lanes and /or passing corridors on Stockdale Highway and Enos Lane.

Traffic 5 More in-depth study of East bound off ramp from I-5 onto Stockdale. Very dangerous and needs to be altered. Safest would be connecting the off ramp all the way to the truck stop.

PART 2. OTHER ADDITIONAL REQUESTS SPECIFIED BY THE BOARD

At the July 23, 2013 Board of Supervisors hearing (incorporated by reference as noted in the opening paragraphs to this letter), the Board made several specific requests for inclusion in the Final Staff Assessment (FSA), to be issued by the CEC. Those requests are as follows:

Table 3. Additional Requests Per Kern County Board of Supervisors on July 23, 2013		
Topic	Request	Suggested Category for inclusion in FSA
Agriculture-1	Bonding. Analyze the potential for HECA to enter into a bonding agreement to set aside funds to mitigate any potential damages to local farm crops that are directly related to the HECA Project.	Land Use
Land Use-1	Eminent Domain. The Kern County Board of Supervisors reiterates that Kern County is NOT supportive of the use of eminent domain in association with any component of the HECA Project.	Land Use Traffic/Transport Facility Design
Hazards-1	Air Monitor: Consider installation of an Air Monitor at local schools within a 5-mile radius of HECA project.	Hazards Public Health
Hazards-2	Reverse 9-1-1. Insure that mitigation for reverse 9-1-1 system is included.	Hazards Public Health
Hazards-3	Explosion Potential. Include a more in-depth analysis of the explosion potential of the HECA Project; particularly the fertilizer component.	Hazards Public Health
Hazards-4	Anhydrous Ammonia for Fertilizer Only. Include mitigation measure to ensure and verify that the anhydrous ammonia will only be used for production of fertilizer and will not be sold off site.	Hazards Land Use Public Health
Traffic-1	Tupman Road: Repair and replace Tupman Road after completion of project construction.	Traffic and Transportation
Traffic-2	Hwy 119 and Tupman Road Intersection: Make improvements to intersection; including but not limited to: (1) Install a right-hand turn lane at west-bound Hwy 119 and Tupman Road; (2) Install a traffic signal or warning beacon Intersection at Hwy. 119 and Tupman Road	Traffic and Transportation
Traffic-3	Stockdale Highway: Mitigate potential hazards related to fog on Stockdale Highway by adding passing lanes and/or a passing corridor. Ensure Traffic Study reviews this topic and other similar hazards.	Traffic and Transportation
Traffic-4	Highway 43 (Enos Lane): Work with Caltrans to add additional lanes and/or a passing corridor. Ensure Traffic Study reviews this topic and other similar hazards	Traffic and Transportation
Traffic-5	Interstate 5 and Stockdale Highway: Work with Caltrans to improve this overpass and increase safety for vehicles on the County road which are competing with vehicles that are ingressing/egressing from the Interstate.	Traffic and Transportation
Traffic-6	Construction and Operation Route. Include mitigation which specifies the specific route that project vehicles must use during project construction and operations.	Traffic and Transportation
Traffic-7	Road Improvement Costs: Ensure mitigation measure is worded to ensure that HECA will pay the "cost" of all listed improvements; do not tie mitigation measure to a specific amount because commodity prices fluctuate and may increase prior to completion of the necessary improvements.	Traffic and Transportation
Traffic-8	Bus Stops: Every home along HECA's transportation route (Stockdale Highway, Highway 43/Enos Lane, etc.) is an established bus stop for the local primary schools. School buses stop to pick up students at their homes in this rural area and these bus stops should be protected.	Traffic and Transportation
Waste-1	Waste Diversion Rates. CEC to work with CalRecycle regarding the impact of HECA's waste disposal on Kern County state-mandated diversion rates.	Waste Management

