

DOCKETED

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HECA Comment Letter on CO2 sequestration

Additional submitted attachment is included below.



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December 14, 2015

VIA ONLINE SUBMISSION

Karen Douglas
Commissioner, Presiding Member
California Energy Commission

RE: COMMENT LETTER—HECA APPLICATION RE-INITIATION REQUEST

Dear Ms. Douglas:

I am the General Manager of West Kern Water District ("WKWD") and write this comment letter on behalf of WKWD in regards to Hydrogen Energy California LLC's ("HECA") Request to Reinitiate its Application for Certification proceedings.

WKWD owns and operates a public water system adjacent to the HECA facility. This public water system utilizes groundwater from the underlying aquifer. Before re-initiating the application proceedings, WKWD encourages the Energy Commission to clarify that HECA's new proposal to sequester carbon dioxide beneath the project site will be required to comply with appropriate federal regulations.

HECA originally envisioned that a substantial portion of the carbon dioxide generated by the project could be sequestered in nearby oil fields as part of enhanced oil recovery operations in partnership with Occidental of Elk Hills, Inc. ("OEHI"). Based on that assumption, Condition GHG-3 of the June 2013 Preliminary Staff Assessment and Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("PSA/DEIS") directed HECA and OEHI to plan the sequestration efforts so as to meet U.S. EPA regulations governing Class VI carbon sequestration wells. (40 CFR part 146 subpart H commencing with subsection 146.81.) Those regulations govern the entire lifecycle of carbon injection wells including site selection, construction, monitoring, closing, and emergency remedial response. The regulations are meant, in part, to ensure that sequestered carbon dioxide does not contaminate adjacent aquifers.

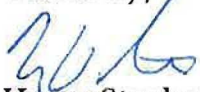
As HECA has explained in previous filings, its partnership with OEHI is no longer a viable option. Instead, HECA proposes to sequester carbon dioxide below the project site. Before reinitiating application proceedings, the Energy Commission should clarify that HECA will be required to meet sequestration regulatory requirements that OEHI and HECA had been expected to meet collectively.

HECA itself acknowledged the need to meet the Class VI carbon sequestration well requirements in its current request. Therefore WKWD simply requests that the Energy Commission remain mindful of the extensive planning and verification processes created by the federal regulations, and work with HECA to ensure that such regulations are followed.

WKWD has a long history of working with California's critical industries, including local power plants. As one of the few water suppliers in the State that serves both residential and industrial customers, WKWD understands the need for the type of environmentally conscious power generation that HECA has the potential to provide. But as all parties have acknowledged throughout this application process, the sequestration of carbon dioxide must be done in a safe manner.

WKWD encourages the Energy Commission to review and revise GHG-3 to clarify that, despite a change in location, HECA will be required to issue an appropriate carbon dioxide emissions sequestration plan before issuance of the Final Staff Assessment/Environmental Impact Statement.

Sincerely,



Harry Starkey
General Manager

cc: Joseph D. Hughes, Esq.