

## DOCKETED

<b>Docket Number:</b>	08-AFC-08A
<b>Project Title:</b>	Hydrogen Energy Center Application for Certification Amendment
<b>TN #:</b>	210595
<b>Document Title:</b>	Comments from the Kern County Planning & Community Development Dept.
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*Comment Received From: Lorelei H. Oviatt*

*Submitted On: 3/2/2016*

*Docket Number: 08-AFC-08A*

**Comments from the Kern County Planning & Community Development Dept.**

*Additional submitted attachment is included below.*

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**PLANNING AND COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

Planning  
Community Development  
Administrative Operations

March 7, 2016

**File:** Hydrogen Energy, California (HECA)  
Zone Map No. 120

California Energy Commission  
Attn: Hearing Committee Members  
1516 9th Street, MS-15  
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

**RE: Hydrogen Energy California – Amended Application for Certification (08-AFC-8A)  
Applicants Request to Reinstate the AFC – Hearing March 7, 2016**

California Energy Commission Representatives:

Kern County is in receipt of the notice from the California Energy Commission regarding the November 30, 2015 Motion to the Committee to request to Reinstate AFC Proceedings. These comment pertains to the amended application submitted to the California Energy Commission (CEC) on May 2, 2012 for the Hydrogen Energy California. LLC (HECA) Project and other documents docketed.

The November 30, 2015 filing by the applicant includes a section on Compliance with County General Plan and Zoning Ordinance that states “ HECA hereby confirms that it will limit the manufacture of products to those for agricultural use only.” That statement does not conform to the allowed uses in the zoning ordinance. The important factor is manufacture of fertilizer for agricultural use not the “manufacture of products for agricultural use only.” The request is that HECA be held to the allowed zoning ordinance language for the A ( Exclusive Agriculture) Zone District which is to restrict its manufactured products of urea or other chemicals for use in “ **Fertilizer manufacture and storage for agricultural use only** “ as shown in Section 19.12.030 as requiring a Conditional Use Permit.

The filing now also states that instead of utilizing the CO<sub>2</sub> for Enhanced Oil Recovery, the proposal is to “... permanently sequester CO<sub>2</sub> beneath the Project site utilizing Class VI wells permitted by the U.S Environmental Protection Agency ( EPA). “ While the previous component of CO<sub>2</sub> movement to an oil field operation and use in Enhanced Oil Recovery was determined to be accessory to the oilfield operation and an allowed use, the use of a Class VI well for injection of CO<sub>2</sub> under the property site is not an allowed use in the zoning ordinance in the A ( Exclusive Agriculture ) zone district. The injection of CO<sub>2</sub> into the ground, even with Federal EPA Class VI well regulations, should be consistent with a county zoning ordinance determination. Neither the project, the well or the land itself will be owned or leased by the Federal government and, therefore, Federal preemption of land use authority does not apply.

The applicant has had no meetings or discussions with the department on this matter or any other zoning matters. The Zoning Ordinance provides in Section 19.08.030 through 19.08.030 Determination of Similar Use that a request, with appropriate fees, may be made to the Planning Director for an official determination that any proposed use not expressly authorized or permitted is similar to a use listed in the ordinance. The presentation of information to make the case for a Determination of Similar Use is the responsibility of the applicant.

March 1, 2016, ZTEK Corporation docketed comments that request that their technology be included or encouraged for inclusion in the project or even as a stand alone project adjacent to the HECA site. As stated in the letter this technology ( Ztek Energy Renewable of California) includes manufacturing hydrogen as a transportation fuel and energy storage. The proposal is incomplete and unclear as to specific details. However, the manufacture of transportation fuel is not allowed in the A zone and would require a General Plan Amendment and Zone Change to an industrial use.

Kern County encourages alternative energy and is a leader in the field. However, the process of adding and subtracting elements and components of this project by the applicant, DOE and others, sometimes monthly, renders this process unclear to the county and confusing for the public. A full, complete and stable project description is needed to allow appropriate evaluation of the project, its consistency with the General Plan and Zoning and potential environmental impacts.

Please take this information into account when considering the request to terminate the application to ensure a public process that has integrity and respect for local government authority.

Kern County appreciates our long relationship with the California Energy Commission and appreciates the public transparency of the process.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at the contact information listed above. You may also contact the Planner coordinating County review of this project, Craig Murphy at [Cmurphy@co.kern.ca.us](mailto:Cmurphy@co.kern.ca.us).

Sincerely,



Lorelei H. Oviatt, AICP, Director  
Kern County Planning & Community Development Plant

CC: County Counsel  
Clerk of the Board  
Congressman Kevin Mc Carthy, Senate Majority Leader  
Congressman David Valado  
Hydrogen Energy California, LLC c/o Latham and Watkins LLP  
California Energy Commission – John Heiser