

To CEC Regarding HECA
Docket 08 AFC 8A
July 12, 2012



Parts were read at the Tupman meeting July 12, 2012

My name is Chris Romanini and our family is the 4th generation to farm in the Buttonwillow area. We have been stewards of the land for over 100 years and want to pass to the 5th generation a healthy, viable future in farming. As neighbors of HECA's proposed plant, we have concerns.

Permitting process: In attempting to collect data, I have had a difficult time locating agencies and people permitting this plant. Please make it easier for us to be involved. I'm requesting a flow chart of permits needed, agencies processing the permits, contact people with phone numbers, and a time line.

Rail: Where will it be? It is impossible to comment on how it will affect our ranch if we don't know where it is planned. When will they present their rail route for the Buttonwillow area?

Eminent domain: HECA states they do not have the power of eminent domain. Will the CEC promise that eminent domain will not be forced on us for this project by any government or public entity or by HECA?

Traffic: I can't imagine the huge volume of vehicles. They will be passing our farms, competing on the road with our slow moving farm equipment, flocks of walking sheep, and school buses, sometimes in dense Tule fog. If rail brings the coal, the roads will still be clogged with employees, coke trucks, waste removal, and fertilizer business. Will you require that they specify a route? Who will enforce them keeping to the route?

Health: Kern County has the worst air in the nation. And once HECA cranks up, our air will decline further. Some of our employees and my family members have asthma, cardiovascular disease, or cancer. The closer you get to the facility, the more concentrated the toxics and particulate matter will be, and thus the higher our health risks. I am requesting that HECA show they are a good neighbor. Require them to construct an independently monitored air monitoring station on the exterior perimeter of their plant so we know the degree of concentration we in the neighborhood are exposed to. (CEC pg 5 Issues Identification Report [IIR] says NO major health issue. I challenge that)

Fertilizer: It is scary to be a neighbor of huge amounts of hazardous, unstable, toxic chemicals stored under pressure. What happens when there is a leak or an explosion? Accidents happen. Contact is deadly. How safe is my family and our employees if a concentrated volume is released? (CEC pg 5 IIR says no issue with hazardous material I challenge this))

Production: We know pollution decrease crop production. As neighbors, their “stuff” will effect my production. ..so I lose income. There is also my potential loss from accidents. I’ll also lose production from low level emissions of toxics that can accumulation on our crops... dangerous things like mercury and other heavy metals. (pg 5 CEC IIR says NO socioeconomic issue I challenge)

Jobs: What if the consumer learns that HECA’s contaminates got onto our crops, and the consumer does not want to buy it any more? HECA talks about creating jobs. I’m requesting a study on how many jobs we will LOSE if words gets out that Buttonwillow’s crops are contaminated? Local crops include almonds, pistachios, grapes, tomatoes, onions, and alfalfa. (pg 5 IIR says NO socioeconomic issue. I challenge that)

Ground Water: What if the unforeseen happens.... a problem with their pipes, an earthquake, an accident, or an unknown that has not been regulated yet, or something else. Our ground water will be contaminated. Contaminated water is impossible to correct.

Land Use This is permanent loss of prime farm land. What will replace it?? Not only is HECA’s prime farm land lost forever, but the value of neighboring prime farm land is affected. And zoning. When does the CEC get the authority to permit a chemical factory on ag zoned land? They need a zone change. That needs to be handled by the county. (pg 5 CEC IIR say no issue with land use. I challenge that)

As the proponents return to their homes in far corners of the state and the east coast, we Buttonwillow families are left to breath and deal with the consequences of their stimulous funded dream. Please consider our risks.

Sincerely

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