

Dear Mr. Pozzuto:

When I attended the HECA hearing in Tupman (about 45 minutes from my home in Bakersfield), I was undecided about the proposed hydrogen plant in Tupman. **Since the hearing I have become convinced that this plant is a bad idea for Kern County.**

My chief reason is that the plant will add to the already bad air quality we experience in Kern County.

There is no earthly reason (other than financial gain) for this company to be transporting thousands of tons of coal daily into Kern County. There is no argument that the coal will add pollutants to our air and worsen an already bad situation. The area of the plant is zoned for agriculture, and contaminants will obviously be landing on crops in the fields near the plant. Daily truckloads of coal (powered by diesel, of course) will also add fuel contaminants to the air. Our kids already have high rates of asthma and respiratory ailments because of poor air quality. Our college graduates often leave Kern County, citing the chief reason as poor air quality.

The HECA plant will add to our problems. This plant is not a "clean energy" solution to our nation's energy problems; it is complicating our already terrible air quality problems.

In addition, the HECA plant will use "brackish" water (huge quantities of it) as a coolant on the theory that there are huge quantities to be had in this valley. As one farmer said at the hearing, slightly brackish water can be used on certain crops, especially when mixed with fresh water. This isn't necessarily waste water we are talking about. It is water already being used successfully for crops. And what will happen when the brackish water is gone? The plant will then begin to use fresh water, which is currently in diminished supply because of a drought that may well continue into the next century.

The HECA plant in Tupman is a bad idea for Kern County. Federal funding to support such a project is absolutely ridiculous in this place at this time. Environmental groups such as Sierra Club have it right when they maintain that this project will be damaging to the health of citizens as well as to the farming community in this area. The taxpayers' \$400 million investment could be much better spent funding solar panels on businesses and houses in Kern County. This is an energy solution my family and I could support with enthusiasm.

Sincerely,

Marjorie Bell
(Retired teacher)