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Dear California Energy Commissioners:

(Jackalynne Pfannenstiel, James D. Boyd, Arthur H. Rosenfeld Ph.D., John L. Geesman J.D., Jeffrey Byron)

As an anthropologist, I have been trained to take the long view on human experience and big questions such as energy use. So I would like to raise the following questions about the Russell City and Eastshore power plants proposed for construction in Hayward, California.

In northern California, and increasingly in the rest of our nation and the world as a whole, people are coming to understand that fossil fuel combustion is a very flawed technology, and one that is far too expensive in too many ways. Fifty years ago, we did not know the outcomes of this technology, but now we do. The carbon dioxide generated by Russell City, Eastshore, and other similar plants, will undermine the quality of life of humans for centuries to come. It is time for a "declaration of interdependence," time to also consider the quality of life of polar bears, redwoods, frogs, shore birds, and almost every other life form. In the worst case scenario, to which these plants would contribute, 20-30% of known species will become extinct by 2100 due to climate change from greenhouse gas emissions.

These fossil fueled power plants are in direct contradiction to **official California state policy**. In 2006, the State Legislature passed **AB 32**, California's Global Warming Solutions Act, and it was signed into law by Governor Schwarzenegger. This law creates a statewide cap on global warming pollution. We are committed to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions back to 1990 levels by 2020 (a reduction of 25% over business as usual). Furthermore, the Governor's Executive Order calls for a 80% reduction by 2050. The California Energy Commission's approval of new fossil fuel based power plants is not consistent with this state mandate to reduce CO2 generation.

Renewable, no-carbon energy technologies already exist to meet our current power needs, e.g. Professor Mark Z. Jacobson's work at Stanford. His model shows that wind energy, solar thermal plants, solar PV panels, and a modest amount of hydroelectric power, could meet our entire nation's electricity needs, with only a modest investment of capital (www.stanford.edu/group/efmh/jacobson/E85vWindSol).

Once built, Russell City and Eastshore towers will spew toxic fumes into the air, including vaporized heavy metals from the partially treated industrial waste waters used for cooling the plant. As someone who works and lives in Hayward, I am not convinced that adequate studies have taken place on the carcinogenic effects of these emissions. Neither has research been undertaken to assess the negative impacts of these emissions on vulnerable populations living nearby who have lung disease and other breathing problems. The system of "trading pollution credits" does not work for this kind of air pollution: it runs counter to the Clean Air Act. Shouldn't our objective be to clean up the air everywhere, not to make one place dirtier as another gets cleaned up? This clearly is a regional issue. What begins with these power plants in Hayward will end up in San Jose and the Santa Clara Valley, as prevailing winds carry the emissions southward. Yet San Jose residents are probably not even aware of these decisions that will put them at risk.

I am deeply concerned about new commitments to fossil fuel power plants on behalf of our children, and our children's children. Fossil fuel burning is bad for our world; it is much worse for theirs. If they are built, Russell City and Eastshore will contribute to the deterioration of the quality of life of every person and most life forms on earth. I believe that it is time for the California Energy Commission to make a firm commitment to renewable and clean energy sources for the people and businesses of California. Thank you for your attention to this letter.

Sincerely,

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