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Eric K. Solorio
Project Manager
Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection (STEP) Division
California Energy Commission
1516 Ninth Street, MS-15
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Solorio:

I write to you to discuss the proposed Pio Pico Energy Center (PPEC) power plant. It has been proposed that the PPEC power plant be located within the boundaries of the City of Chula Vista, more specifically within the territory of the Otay Valley Regional Park (OVRP) and within the confines of San Diego County's Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP).

My interest in this project stems mainly from my nearly 20 years of service with (and one-time chairmanship of) the Citizen Advisory Committee of the Otay Valley Regional Park and of my founding of a California non-profit public-benefit corporation called Friends of the Otay Valley Regional Park. I hasten to add that in this instance I write as a private citizen, not as a representative of a group. Still, it is well that you know that I have given much of my time and treasure toward development of the Otay Valley Regional Park as a project I dearly love and am committed to.

That love and commitment is the source of my strong, contemptuous opposition to the proposed PPEC power plant.

I have two main objections to the proposed PPEC power plant. First, I question the validity of statements providing a rationale for construction of a new power plant in this part of San Diego County. These statements have at times contradicted one another, creating an atmosphere of deep dubiety about this project. Second, and more important, the site recommended for construction of the power plant is utterly unsuitable for the development being proposed.

The California Independent System Operator is on record as having made contradictory statements regarding the continued need for the South Bay power plant, located on the shore of San Diego Bay. His latest declaration is that the plant is no longer needed. With this type of confusion existing in the minds of energy professionals, it is hard to give automatic credence to calls for construction of new power plants. This credence is even harder to lend when one remembers that the San Diego Gas & Electric Company recently won approval to construct the Sunrise Powerlink, which will transmit 1,000 megawatts of

electricity to San Diego County from the Imperial Valley. This amount of energy easily dwarfs the proposed output of the PPEC power plant, and would seem to obviate its need.

More crucial, however, has been the hasty and flawed process by which the City of Chula Vista has chosen the proposed site for the PPEC power plant. Proponents of the PPEC power plant readily admit that suitable alternative sites within the City of Chula Vista exist. (And far better sites are available in the southern parts of the City and County of San Diego.) The fundamental argument in favor of the site located within the Otay Valley Regional Park is that the location is convenient, near as it is to gas mains and transmission lines. But mere convenience seems an insufficient rationale for committing an act of environmental rape.

Chula Vista's recommended site for the PPEC power plant is, crucially, located in a public park and in the MSCP, which is supposed to be an inviolate preserve, necessary to the protection of vulnerable and threatened species. One boggles at the suggestion of placing a power plant in a park. Would anyone seriously suggest putting a power plant in Golden Gate Park? In Central Park? No, the suggestion is ghastly and ludicrous on its face, a vile abomination. It is hard to imagine why the City of Chula Vista has, for even a moment, considered this ill-conceived betrayal of the public trust.

As the letters to the California Energy Commission from the California Department of Fish and Game and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service attest, the site recommended for the PPEC power plant is an utterly inappropriate encroachment into parkland and sensitive habitat. If a power plant is constructed on the site proposed, the loss to the public will be incalculable and irreversible. This grotesque treachery against the people must be squashed.

As the proposed PPEC power plant site is so obviously a ridiculous error in judgment, one has to speculate on the motivations of those making such a gross mistake. Common opinion is that the City of Chula Vista, facing declining revenue in a poor economy, is somewhat desperate to collect the lease payments and tax revenues the PPEC power plant would generate. While it is possible to sympathize with Chula Vista's plight, it is well to remember that the surrender of virtue for monetary gain is everywhere considered whoredom.

I urge the California Energy Commission to deny the Application for Certification made by Pio Pico Energy Center LLC as approval would be an unnecessary and unmitigated disaster for the people of California, who deserve to protect their parklands and sensitive habitats.

Sincerely,

George Hanson
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