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08-AFC-12

DATE OCT 29 2009

RECD. OCT 30 2009

Jim Adams - RLCC No. 888

From: "Khorsand, Mohammad" <mkhorsand@co.fresno.ca.us>
To: "jadams@energy.state.ca.us" <jadams@energy.state.ca.us>
Date: 10/29/2009 4:30 PM
Subject: RLCC No. 888
CC: "Mtunga, Tawanda" <tmtunga@co.fresno.ca.us>
Attachments: AI No. 2.pdf

Hello James,

Attached is the staff report that was presented to the Agricultural Land Conservation Committee on October 13, 2009. Please note that on page 2 of the staff report (under finding No. 2) staff inadvertently stated that the subject land is not in agricultural production. However, the applicant's representative has subsequently informed us that the site has been historically farmed seasonally and that pistachio trees have been planted on approximately 150 acres of the property that is under contract.

During their deliberation of this item, the ALCC members asked the following questions or expressed the following concern:

The total acreage that will be used for solar& biomass project.

Applicant's representative responded 640 acres (please note that the project covers 640 acres, but 468 acres is under contract and is subject to this cancellation). The representative added that the project is a 107 megawatt renewable energy power plant, with two side-by-side solar fields with mirrors that concentrate energy on a tube with heat-transfer fluids that will generate energy to a steam turbine generator. At night, the plant will combust agricultural waste biomass energy to be able to generate energy 24 hours a day.

What type of biomass would be used, and where it would come from.

The applicant's representative responded that agricultural waste, mainly from pistachio and almond crops, as well as urban green waste from the surrounding lands would be used, and that they have done studies to ensure that there will be enough available fuel in the area. The applicant's representative also informed the Committee that there will be a new law that will be enforced beginning next summer that will prevent farmers from being able to burn waste on site. The power plant is working with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to make sure that the farmers in the area will be able to send it to the plant for processing, and to ensure that the plant produces the lowest emissions possible.

Department of Conservation's response

The applicant's representative stated that they have been in contact with legal counsel from the Department of Conservation (DOC), and stated that the DOC has not indicated any concerns with the project.

How dust from neighboring agricultural operations would affect the mirrors at the plant.

The applicant's representative responded that the plant is surrounded mostly by properties that are not in agricultural production, and they have done some studies that indicate that it would not pose a concern. The representative added, in the event that there is not enough direct sunlight; the plant's biomass feature would make up for the deficiency in production.

The amount of particulate matter has been high in similar projects, such as in Mendota and Firebaugh.

The applicant's representative stated that the plant is using a completely automated system that would minimize dust, and explained that the facilities mentioned are older and not as capable of reducing dust.

I will send you a follow up e-mail about some of the issues that we talked about this morning. The minutes will be forwarded to you when it is approved by the committee.

Mohammad Khorsand
PH # 262-4870