

## DOCKETED

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*Comment Received From: Marion Vargas*

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## **Concerns Regarding the HECA Project**

*Additional submitted attachment is included below.*

**From:** Marion Vargas [<mailto:mjdvargas@gmail.com>]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 22, 2013 6:07 PM  
**To:** Heiser, John@Energy  
**Subject:** Concerns re: the HECA project

3209 La Cresta Drive  
Bakersfield, CA 93305

July 22, 2013

Mr. John Heiser  
California Energy Commission  
1516 9th Street (MS-40)  
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

Re: Concerns regarding the HECA Project

Dear Mr. Heiser,

I am writing to you as a resident of Kern County to express concerns about the proposed HECA project.

While it is typically in the public interest to produce energy, in the case of this project it is not. The proposed project, with its unproven energy production technology, its real and potential hazards, puts at risk the health and safety of Californians, its air, water and agricultural resources.

The HECA proposal has changed over time. The increased amounts of coal that now would be used and the production of chemical fertilizer increase pollution and risk of environmental catastrophe. News of chemical fertilizer plant explosions, with their deaths and devastation and reports of research showing pollution of ground water and chemical residue on agricultural crops should serve as a warning. Concerns about the amount of water that HECA would use and the affect of this usage on ground water levels was noted in your agency's preliminary staff report. Ground water levels and water quality are already long standing concerns for Kern County residents and particularly our farmers, even without the impact of HECA upon that resource. Putting the viability of San Joaquin Valley agriculture at risk, puts at risk the industry that provides food to our entire nation and a good part of the world. The life of the HECA plant is expected to be 25 years, but the damage that could be done to our economic base and well-being would last much longer than that.

Kern County Departments of Roads, Fire, Public Health Services and Waste Management have expressed concerns about the environmental and economic costs involved with building and operating the proposed HECA plant. The magnitude of mitigation measures recommended by County Departments is an indication of the seriousness of their concerns. If there is so much to mitigate, maybe the the project is not in the best interest of our county and state.

When considering comments from those who support approval of the HECA proposal, it would be good to keep in mind that their support may be influenced by short term self interest. Even the San Joaquin Air Quality Control District would benefit from the funds paid in mitigation, including a percentage for administrative costs. Local governments would reap tax benefits and

local Chambers of Commerce laud potential employment and economic growth. There are drawbacks, however: the increased cost from infrastructure needed for the project, the cost of health and safety casualties, the cost and effects of the loss of water to agriculture and County residents, the loss of agriculture related jobs, the damage to roads from the gargantuan increase in road usage, the potential damage to the quality of our agricultural products, the loss of our fragile and slowly improving air quality, the unanswered question of what to do with all the waste that would need to be disposed of and who needs all of that chemical fertilizer anyway?

Energy production is the purported primary benefit and justification for the HECA project. Please promote, instead, safer, healthier alternative resources such as solar and wind energy and conservation measures to meet the growing need for energy production. These are viable and readily available resources with safer technology and immense production potential.

Thank you for your time and attention to my concerns. The decision of the California Energy Commission is so very important.

Sincerely,

Marion Vargas  
[mjdvargas@gmail.com](mailto:mjdvargas@gmail.com)