

## DOCKETED

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## **HECA project ill-conceived**

I am mystified as to the reason we are considering the HECA project.

The net amount of energy produced is minimal. Most of the energy produced will be used by HECA itself to produce chemical fertilizer. We taxpayers are paying a huge amount for a private business to start a fancy, complicated fertilizer factory that may end up costing us even more money in infrastructure, support, lost agriculture jobs and clean-up, AND produce precious little energy.

Huh?

The county already produces a considerable amount of energy through wind and solar projects which don't have the obvious downsides this project has. I won't enumerate all the health, safety and environmental concerns this scheme has. Many people will have already spoken to that issue.

While the safety issues are HUGE to me, I'll focus on the only reasons I can figure out we even entertaining this idea.

There are only two reasons I can think of:

1 - Political reasons: The current administration wants to be seen as supporting innovative technologies in energy production and this project fits the bill. The fact that it doesn't produce very much energy and is so potentially environmentally destructive and inefficient to boot, either didn't matter to them because it was all about perception-creation, OR....the political fallout when the project turns out to be dangerous, destructive and expensive, won't be very politically costly to them in an area that's already conservative. They can afford to lose voters in an area where they didn't have many anyway.

2 - Jobs: "Job creation" always seems to be the "can't fail" argument - the carrot nobody can resist.

How bad does an idea have to be before we understand there is a cost/benefit angle to it? The HECA project website says several hundred permanent jobs will be created after it is up and running. If I just take the DOE grant of 408 million dollars subsidizing this project and divide by the number of jobs, that means it's already costing us 2.04 million dollars per permanent job.

I realize that calculation doesn't count the "thousands" of temporary jobs that will be created, but permanent jobs are what will have permanent benefit anyway.

So in figuring our our job-creation costs, we ought to add in the likely costs of infrastructure support - 350 coal and gasification-waste-laden semis a day are going to require more than a little road repair and clean-up. And what about that gasification waste disposal problem they haven't quite solved yet? Is the DOE going to help the county find money for more landfill space? Or to pay the regulatory fines when EPA defines that waste as hazardous? Well, just add that to the "per-job-creation" cost.

Huh?

There is a serious possibility of an explosion when a site is producing 3,000 TONS of explosive fertilizer PER DAY. What are the costs of regular safety checks? What are the first responder costs to an explosion like the one that happened in Texas with a mere 30 tons of fertilizer?... or for clean-up?...or public health costs?

All the the afore- mentioned issues apply to the un-tested dangers of pumping CO2 underground. The county would have to foot a sizeable chunk of the costs for any response to an accident.

Which makes me wonder about something else...could the county be held liable for approving a project with so many questionable safety and environmental unanswered questions?

These are some real pricey jobs.

Sincerely,  
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