

DOCKETED

Docket Number:	08-AFC-06
Project Title:	Willow Pass Generating Station
TN #:	205839
Document Title:	Pamela Arauz Comments: Support the termination of proposed natural gas power plant in Pittsburg at California Energy Commission (CEC) Public Hearing
Description:	N/A
Filer:	System
Organization:	Pamela Arauz
Submitter Role:	Public
Submission Date:	8/26/2015 9:49:31 AM
Docketed Date:	8/26/2015

Comment Received From: Pamela Arauz

Submitted On: 8/26/2015

Docket Number: 08-AFC-06

Support the termination of proposed natural gas power plant in Pittsburg at California Energy Commission (CEC) Public Hearing

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

August 26, 2015

California Energy Commission
1516 Ninth Street, MS-29
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

Subject: Docket #: 08-AFC-06, Project Title Willow Pass Generating Station. Support the termination of proposed natural gas power plant in Pittsburg at California Energy Commission (CEC) Public Hearing.

We strongly support the Staff's Motion to Terminate Proceedings for Sun Valley (unincorporated Riverside County), San Gabriel (urban Inland Empire/San Bernardino County) and Willow Pass (Pittsburg/Contra Costa County). We strongly oppose the applicant's motion for yet another suspension. Terminating these proceedings is in the best interest of the Commission, agencies and the public.

I am a resident of Antioch, and I as hundreds of residents in the Bay Area, live and experience the environmental unjust impacts of pollution. I am a member of the Bay Area Refinery Corridor Coalition, and we are demanding that our cities, county and country move in the direction of clean, renewable industries versus dirty energy projects.

I am specifically submitting a comment on the proposed natural gas power plant on Willow Pass. Pittsburg is a medically vulnerable community, overburdened with pollution. The energy landscape and role of gas in that landscape, has changed drastically, as California is now a world leader in clean energy. We are now considering upping these commitments significantly through SB 350. Letting these power plants linger on, moves us backwards on clean energy and clean air goals just at the moment the state is moving forward.

Environmental high-impact areas

Pittsburg is a fenceline community, also referred to as a sacrifice zone. A community predominantly inhabited by low-income, minority populations that are impacted by heavy industrial pollution that affects the health and quality of life for residents. According to the 2010 Census, 56% of the population are racial minorities, and 16% live under the federal poverty level.

Data analysis by the Contra Costa County Health Services shows that between 2009 and 2011, Pittsburg had the highest rates of asthma emergency room visits in Contra Costa County. During that period, Pittsburg had over 100 cases of asthma hospitalizations per 10,000 Pittsburg residents. In comparison, the Orinda and Moraga area had less than 17 asthma hospitalizations per 10,000 people. In other words, Pittsburg had almost six times higher incidences of asthma per emergency room visits than other cities in the county. According to the

Contra Costa County Health Services, “This evidence supports the presumption that the community in Pittsburg is medically vulnerable.”

In addition to asthma, cancer rates in the area are abnormally high. According to Contra Costa Health Services, cancer deaths in Antioch are 200.8 per 100,000 residents, and in Pittsburg the rate is 180 per 100,000 residents, which is higher than the average county rate of 162.

According to the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), Pittsburg is in the top 15% of communities in the Bay Area that are most affected by air pollution. BAAQMD developed a new statistical measure for determining which communities experience the most direct health impacts from air pollution, called the Pollution-Vulnerability Index. This index incorporates cancer rates, rates of premature death, and increased healthcare costs. Using this index, BAAQMD found that Pittsburg is one of the most impacted communities in the Bay Area.

Also, the BAAQMD report dated April 2014 “Improving Air Quality in the Bay Area”, adds Pittsburg and Antioch to the Community Air Risk Evaluation (CARE) program. According to this report, the cities under the CARE program have the highest cancer risk, mortality rates, experienced high health costs from air pollution, and high levels of fine particulate matter (PM).

The California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment found that central Pittsburg is in the top 10% of California communities experiencing adverse health effects due to multiple sources of pollution.

Finally, Los Medanos Health Care District which provides healthcare services to Pittsburg, Bay Point, Clyde Clayton and unincorporated Antioch residents, states the following in the organization’s strategic plan for 2011-2016. “Health disparities in the district reveal a heightened prevalence and/or mortality of certain diseases and health conditions that affect residents of the district, including heart disease, cancer, asthma, etc.” and determines that possible sources of disparities include among others environmental pollution.

As impacted communities, we want to move in the direction of clean energy industries. We strongly support the Staff’s Motion to Terminate Proceedings for Sun Valley (unincorporated Riverside County), San Gabriel (urban Inland Empire/San Bernardino County) and Willow Pass (Pittsburgh).

Thank you commissioners for the opportunity to participate in the process.

Sincerely,

Pamela Arauz

*Member, Bay Area Refinery Corridor Coalition
Executive Committee, Sierra Club, Delta Group*