

DOCKETED

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Reject Calpine site proposal

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

California Energy Commission:

It has recently come to my attention that the CEC will be considering a site proposal by Calpine Corporation for an alternate (and/or additional) gas-fired power plant near Santa Paula to meet peak electricity demands in Ventura County. While this may currently be an unmet need for our area, I believe the suitability of their Mission Rock Road site as a choice to satisfy such a need is severely compromised.

Paramount in the CEC's review of this site should be a grave concern that the proposed site sits WHOLLY within FEMA's 100-Year-Flood Zone, clearly depicted on Ventura County's Flood Zone maps. I was living here during the historic floods of 1969 that wiped out the bridges over this river, both in Santa Paula and Saticoy. I can attest, as can many of our older Santa Clara River Valley residents, to the extreme hazard that being in this flood zone represents. I remember spending the whole summer driving to work by being diverted onto a temporary road in the river bottom alongside the leaning mass of the Saticoy Bridge!

Calpine recently suggested in testimony in front of the Santa Paula City Council that merely elevating their Mission Rock Road site above the 100 yr. flood levels would suffice as mitigation for this hazard. This is foolishly unrealistically; mitigation would likely require a series of protective levees to insure against undermining of their facility! Let's be clear, the Saticoy bridge failed for this very reason...and THAT was just a 50 year flood event!

Further, these mitigations would radically impact the integrity of riparian habitat adjacent to the facility and along downstream stretches of the Santa Clara River as well. The Santa Clara is still largely intact, and has long been considered Southern California's last and best wild river ecosystems. It is home to a number of endangered species, none more important than the Southern Steelhead Salmon. To survive, it needs NO MORE obstacles to negotiate than the ones we are already struggling to remediate, both in this section of the river and throughout the steelhead's ancestral home within the greater Santa Clara River watershed.

Also, please consider that the Nature Conservancy has been at work on a major habitat restoration project directly adjacent to Calpine's proposed site. This will become a critical link to the envisioned continuous riparian corridor called the Santa Clara River Parkway Project. They and several other conservancy groups are working hard along vast stretches of the Santa Clara to insure this becomes a reality; siting this energy plant in the middle of this critical riparian ecosystem makes no sense at all, and will be a real threat to the integrity of the Parkway Project's success.

These two areas of concern are, by themselves alone, more than enough reason, I think, to consider the Mission Rock Road site as UNSUITABLE for building critical energy infrastructure in our area. I hope that the CEC will reflect on this in their future deliberations.

Thank you for your time in considering these issues.

Respectfully submitted,
-Charles Spink
Santa Paula, CA