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DOCKET 07-AFC-4
DATE _____
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Docket No: 07-AFC-4

Dear Mr. Meyers,

I am writing you regarding the Preliminary Staff Assessment (PSA) to strongly oppose the staff recommendation that the proposed MMC peaker plant project on Main St. (Chula Vista, CA) should be certified. This project poses a serious public health risk to the community nearby. It is too close to schools (1300 feet away from an elementary school), too close to parks and recreational centers (1200 feet away) and too close to homes (350 feet away). The expansion of the MMC peaker plant would emit more particulate matter. This would be an unfortunate consequence that the local community would have to endure. Small particles emitted from the peaker plant can penetrate deeply into the air exchange regions of the lung bypassing the normal defense mechanisms of the lung sometimes causing irreversible damage to the heart and lungs. A recent study provided evidence that even short term exposure to PM2.5 causes increased risk of a heart attack (Dockers P, 2001). The risk of heart attack was about 1.5 times higher among those exposed to elevated PM2.5 in the two hours prior to the development of symptoms. Other recent data suggest that exposure to high PM2.5 levels may cause increased systemic inflammation, increased blood thickness, increased risk for blood clot formation. These symptoms are significant because they pose a potential risk for a stroke.

Numerous scientific studies have linked particle pollution exposure to a variety of problems, including: increased respiratory symptoms, such as irritation of the airways, coughing, or difficulty breathing; decreased lung function; aggravated asthma; development of chronic bronchitis; irregular heartbeat; nonfatal heart attacks; and premature death in people with heart or lung disease. Studies indicate the populations most affected by particulate matter are those who are young (such as the children in the elementary school nearby) and the elderly (such as the residents living across the street and are unable to move from this public hazard due to the increased cost of living in the county).

Other longitudinal studies indicate other irreversible health consequences of particulate matter. Particles were associated with admissions for heart failure (Wellenius et al 2006), respiratory disease (Medina-Ramon et al 2006), and heart disease (Barnett et al 2006). The association between PM2.5 and both all-cause and specific-cause mortality was over 1.3 million deaths in 27 US communities between 1997 and 2002 (Franklin et al 2006).

There are more studies I can continue to cite, but I am hoping that this message is clear. The expansion of the peaker plant poses a threat to not only the health of the community but is also a clear violation of the civil and human rights of the people who live in this community. I never imagined that we had to fight for our health. I thought that the right to clean air, the right to health was an inalienable right. I urge the CEC to put the health of the community first. This peaker plant is not needed in our community. The peaker plant violates the 2005 general plan of Chula Vista. More importantly, the peaker plant expansion poses health hazards and risks to a community that is medically underserved and already medically at risk for chronic diseases. The health costs and consequences if this peaker plant was expanded would be overwhelming.

The health data reported on the PSA is not representative of this specific community. This community is medically underserved and many do not have access to health care services and many do not have health care coverage. I recommend that the PSA be revised to include health outcomes representative of a medically underserved community and include age appropriate health outcomes of children and elderly (those whose health will be most affected by this expansion). Again, I can not emphasize strongly enough that this peaker plant is not an energy upgrade it is a threat to the health of the community. I urge you to oppose the MMC peaker plant expansion.

Sincerely,

Carina Lopez
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Chula Vista, CA 91915