

Docket Optical System - AGAINST the proposed new Oakley power plant - Docket Number: 09-AFC-4

From: Eve <apeaceactivist1@yahoo.com>
To: <publicadviser@energy.state.ca.us>
Date: 3/13/2011 4:35 PM
Subject: AGAINST the proposed new Oakley power plant - Docket Number: 09-AFC-4

DOCKET	
09-AFC-4	
DATE	MAR 13 2011
RECD.	MAR 17 2011

Re: Docket Number: 09-AFC-4

I am a member of Oakley Citizens for Responsible Growth [OCRG]. I attended the CPUC's All Party Meetings on Wednesday, 14th and Monday, 26th July 10, and would like to bring to your attention some very significant issues which were not addressed at that time. I sincerely hope that the following information, which was not addressed at your meeting, will lead you to the conclusion that neither of these power plants should be built in Oakley nor Antioch.

It would be greatly appreciated if you could give them your full consideration.

1. Contra Costa County is only one of nine Bay Area counties (11%); however, it generates approximately 50% of those nine counties' power. Therefore, Contra Costa County bears more than its fair share of energy-producing polluters already. As a matter of fact, on many occasions I have heard East Contra Costa County in general - and the Oakley/Antioch/Pittsburg area specifically - referred to as, "the sump of California."

Some current facts:

--Contra Costa County already hosts more than a dozen power plants, five oil refineries, several chemical plants, and many other industrial facilities. Oakley itself is downwind from all of these, making our bad air [1] all but poisonous to us, especially for those who suffer from the health issues as noted in 2. below. (Are there power plants and other polluting industries in Marin, San Mateo or San Francisco Counties? Of course, the answer is "no.")

--*"The most recent Toxic Release Inventory data shows that in 2007, the Bay Area's top four toxic emitters were in Contra Costa County."* [2]

--*"According to the California Air Resources Board (CARB) data, Contra Costa County has five times the number of facilities that emit "criteria" air pollutants per square mile than the California average."* [3]

2. Health Issues: there are several critical health issues that have not been addressed as yet to the satisfaction of either OCRG or the other Oakley and local area residents who have voiced serious concerns on this subject. Some issues are respiratory diseases including asthma, emphysema and COPD, as well as cancer, reproduction issues, to name but a few. Here are some examples:

- a. Health Impacts Linked to Power Plant Emissions

"The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] has found that air pollutants emitted from industrial sources, such as power plants, increase the likelihood of adverse cardiovascular and respiratory impacts, as well as cause and worsen chronic health conditions such as asthma." [4]

b. Children suffering from asthma

“Childhood asthma rates for children ages 5-17 in Contra Costa County is 23.7%, while the national average is 14.2%” [5]

c. Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

“Air pollution may be an important contributor to COPD” [6]

d. Cancer

*“Lung cancer has been linked to breathing polluted air, in addition to other factors. In fact, it has been shown that air pollution, mainly from vehicles, **industries and power plants**, raises the chances of lung cancer and heart disease in people exposed to it long term.” [7]*

*“Estimated toxic air pollution-related cancer risk in the Antioch area [which includes Oakley] is **30-60 times higher** than the level commonly deemed acceptable in California (assuming lifetime exposure)” [8]*

*“The incidence of stroke- and cancer-related deaths in Contra Costa County are both **significantly** higher than the state average” [9]*

*“Rates of breast cancer are **more disproportionate** for women in Contra Costa County over other women in the state, and especially amongst African-American women” [10]*

3. “State-of-the-Art” pollution

Radback Energy has touted the proposed new Oakley Generating Station as a “State-of-the-Art” project with a much lower level of pollution emissions, apparently 25-30% less. However, upon speaking to one of their representatives, Greg Lamberg, a couple of months ago, I was told that the annual pollution output for this proposed plant is approximately 1,000,000 [**one million**] tons. This was deemed satisfactory, but I begged to differ, so I calculated what the pollution output would be per hour: **One hundred and fourteen tons per hour** - yes, 114! This is deplorable and truly hard to believe that 114 tons per hour is deemed acceptable...in whose mind? Certainly not mine, nor OCRG's.

4. Union jobs

a. I sympathize with the union members who are out of work, believe me, but I feel it necessary to point out that those construction workers needed to build this new facility will only be employed temporarily. The project will be staffed by less than twenty people once it's built. Moreover, from what I've come to understand, the majority of those specialized workers don't even live here in Oakley.

b. Further, they will be building a soon-to-be “dinosaur,” as greener and renewable energy are the ways of the future - in actual fact, the future is upon us now. Why waste ratepayers' money and workers' time and energy on a project that will soon become extinct? With the impending imminence of the coming of cleaner, greener, renewable energy, that is indeed a waste.

5. PG&E rate hike

a. After pouring millions of dollars into the defeated California Proposition 16 (which was intended to remove the possibility of other, less expensive energy providers from coming to your door), we consumers are now threatened with a rate hike. This is (in my personal opinion) tantamount to extortion - i.e., now

that we have defeated Prop 26, we have to pay for PG&E's expense of deploying it upon us in the first place! Is this fair? No, of course it isn't, but how can this be avoided? By your good selves not allowing them to do this. It also makes no sense whatsoever for a multi-billion corporation to be so parsimonious.

b. As regards its multi-billion-dollar operation, doesn't it make more sense for PG&E to pick up the tab for its proposed projects, which is an investment in itself that will ensure them further income? Why should they be allowed to pass on such expenses to its customers, who are already paying through the nose for their power because they have the monopoly anyway?

6. Oakley Mayor Pat Anderson stated:

"I want to personally express my desire that the (inaudible) fellow council members and most importantly the vast majority of the Oakley taxpayers to urge you to support the purchase and sales agreement between Oakley and PG&E."

"I'm here today not only as a mayor but also on behalf of a broad cross-section of my constituents who also support this project: our labor community who has come forward in support of this wholeheartedly... who are experiencing approximately 40% unemployment in our region, our small businesses who are suffering in this economy, our public safety representatives who are facing budget cuts, and most significantly the residents of Oakley who deserve the economic benefits that are associated with hosting this new power plant..."

a. First of all, I must state firmly that she does not speak for me, a taxpayer and resident of Oakley, with any certainty whatsoever. Nor does she speak for any of the members of OCRG and that no poll or survey was ever taken, nor is there any statistical analysis that I am aware of. As far as *"the vast majority,"* well, I have yet to meet that majority.

b. On many occasions, we [OCRG and other concerned citizens] have spoken at city council meetings against the council's projects, but our voices have been completely ignored. We wish that just for once, the council would listen to us. We have brought up all of the above health and pollution issues to the council at various times, but our words have fallen on deaf ears. In my opinion, I don't think that the Oakley council wants to please its residents, but rather continue with their rigid agenda which includes the power station and go full speed ahead.

c. Without being able to quote actual figures, I personally feel convinced that there are also many other Oakley taxpayers and residents here who do indeed agree that enough is enough. There are many who don't even bother to attend council meeting any more just because they feel their opinions and voices don't count. We at OCRG would rather support other tax revenue-producing businesses that are friendly to our environment yet still allow Oakley to keep its "rural" feel without falling behind the times. Is that so wrong? Certainly a new power station does not fall under those provisions.

d. As for, quote, *"the vast majority of the Oakley taxpayers"* and, *"a broad cross-section of my constituents who also support this project..."* I would like to meet them, invite them to an OCRG meeting and speak with them personally, for I do not believe that such a broad cross-section exists. It seems to me that I always have my finger on the pulse of Oakley council's issues, as well as both its supporters' and its detractors'.

e. The Mayor stated, *"...who are experiencing approximately 40% unemployment in our region..."* According to the Employment Development Department (EDD): as of June 18, 2010, the unemployment figure in Contra Costa County was 10.9%. In Oakley itself, the figure drops to 7.9%. [11] I'm confused - are you?

f. The Mayor stated, *"...and most significantly the residents of Oakley who deserve the economic benefits that are associated with hosting this new power plant..."* I am not sure that I understand how

exactly Oakley's residents could benefit economically from a new power plant; however, I do see how they will suffer from even greater health problems, pollution and noise. I don't think that the residents of Oakley and Antioch "deserve" the negative impacts that these two proposed projects are guaranteed to deliver. In fact, I know for a certainty that the Oakley city council did receive the very informative health warning booklet but they have not disclosed that fact.

Well, I think I've taken up enough of your precious time, but as we (OCRG and other interested parties who attended) were unable to speak at the CPUC meeting, I thought it only fair to present my comments as a member of OCRG. For the record, I am speaking only as a member of said group in my own words and not on their behalf; however, I am sure that OCRG would endorse them.

Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to voice my concerns.

Sincerely,

Eve Diamond

Endnotes:

1. Incidentally, "malaria" is derived from the Italian, "mala aria=bad air"
2. See <http://www.epa.gov/region09/toxic/tri/report/07/tri-ca.html>
3. See Air Resources Board, Facility Search Engine, *available at* <http://www.arb.ca.gov/ei/disclaim.htm>
4. *See, e.g.,* U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Cleaning Up Common Pollutants, *available at* <http://www.epa.gov/air/caa/peg/cleanup.html>; California Air Resources Board, Asthma and Air Pollution, *available at* <http://www.arb.ca.gov/research/asthma.htm>
5. See Contra Costa Asthma Coalition, *available at* http://www.calendow.org/uploadfiles/CAFA3_CCscreen.pdf
6. EPA report of the environment-human disease and condition: <http://www.cfpub.epa.gov/eroe/index.cfm?fuseaction=list.listBySubTopic&lv=list.ListByChapter&ch=49&s=381>
7. Lung Cancer, Cardiopulmonary Mortality, and Long-Term Exposure to Fine Particulate Air Pollution, *Journal of the American medical Association* (Vol. 287, No 9: 1132-1141)
8. Bay Area Quality Management District, Regional Toxics Modeling and Cancer Risk Evaluation, CARE Task Force Meeting, Staff Power Point Presentation (Sept. 17, 2008). *See* U.S. EPA, Cleaning Up Common Pollutants, *available at* <http://www.epa.gov/air/caa/peg/cleanup.html>
9. and 10. See 8. Above Ibid
11. Contra Costa County and Oakley unemployment statistics: http://search.ca.gov/search?q=unemployment+contra+costa&output=xml_no_dtd&site=ca_edd&client=ca_edd_lmid&proxystylesheet=ca_edd_lmid

Peace! - Eve

"I should like to be able to love my country and still love justice" --Albert Camus

"Lord, take my soul, but the struggle continues" --Ken Saro-Wiwa's final words

Fight hate and promote tolerance/Imagine...Peace on Earth