

Power plant will put lives at risk experts warn.txt

From: Patrick Turney

Sent: Tuesday, September 01, 2009 9:55 AM

To: Weyman Lee

Cc: pat turney

Subject: Power plant will put lives at risk, experts warn

Dear sir,

I am writing in opposition to the proposed Russel City Energy Plant. Attached is a link that demonstrates that at least some governmental entities are very concerned about the health risk of these power plants.

The fact that your agency states that there is no known health risk is a blatant lie. Please correct these facts.

Thankyou

Patrick Turney

Hayward, CA 94542

<http://www.smh.com.au/environment/power-plant-will-put-lives-at-risk-experts-warn-20090821-etsl.html>

<http://www.greatfallstribune.com/article/20090522/NEWS01/905220312/DEQ+seeks+more+pollution+data+on+gas-fired+plant&theme=HIGHWOOD>

# Power plant will put lives at risk, experts warn

KATE BENSON MEDICAL REPORTER

August 22, 2009

THE State Government has ignored a report by its own staff that warns against building large projects near asthma hot spots and approved a 360 megawatt power plant that will put thousands of lives in danger, health experts said.

The \$200 million gas-fired plant, to be built near Appin in Sydney's south-west, was approved by the Planning Minister, Kristina Keneally, last week despite the findings of a 2006 parliamentary report urging the Government to avoid urban developments that make air quality worse in areas with high levels of respiratory disease.

Sydney's south-west has one of the highest rates of asthma in the state, with almost 2400 sufferers admitted to hospital each year. Air quality is poor because pollutants from traffic, the Port Botany shipping terminal, the Kurnell oil refineries and the international airport are shunted to the western and south-western suburbs by afternoon winds, remaining trapped in the Sydney basin for days.

The Department of Planning received more than 460 submissions opposing the plant, including one from the Mayor of Campbelltown, Russell Matheson, who has labelled its approval "an absolute disgrace".

"This development has been approved against the will of three local councils and their residents, with very little public consultation and no avenue for appeal," he said.

"It is an appalling planning decision" that would affect "the health and amenity of tens of thousands of people for generations to come", he said.

AGL has said the plant, at Leaf's Gully, would be used only to provide extra power on days there was excessive demand on the grid - about 54 days a year.

An environmental impact study found its emissions would not exceed State Government guidelines, but the chief executive of the Asthma Foundation NSW, Greg Smith, said residents with respiratory problems would still be severely affected by increased levels of carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, nitrogen oxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone and small particulate matter, which has been known to cause cancer, cardiac arrest, arrhythmias and cardiovascular problems.

"Sydney is the most polluted city in Australia and already has an acknowledged air pollution problem, which kills 600 to 1400 people each year.

He said three air pollution monitoring stations in the south-west were shut down three years ago, so there was no way to monitor air quality in the region.

An independent report, commissioned by residents in the Leaf's Gully Action Group, found the study had not taken into account the State Government's plans to build 155,000 new homes in the area in the next 12 years, and expressed fears the capacity of the plant would be doubled within three years.

Two-thirds of asthmatics in the south-west do not have their condition monitored regularly by doctors and about 13 per cent say their illness severely interferes with their lives.

"There is no government in the world which allows power plants in the basin of a major city, risking an increase in photochemical smog and the health of residents. We are going backwards when everyone else is going forwards," the Greens MP John Kaye said.

But a spokeswoman for Ms Keneally said the plant needed to be based in the Sydney basin to "avoid constraints on transmission" during peak demand periods.

"During peak demand periods the capacity of transmission lines may be fully consumed, limiting the ability of a power station outside Sydney to transmit electricity into the Sydney basin," she said.

The proposal had been rigorously assessed by doctors at the Prince of Wales Hospital and Medical Research Institute, she said. Only 93 of 481 submissions had expressed fears about air quality and health and the plant would be built five kilometres from the nearest town.

## THE PROBLEMS

- Gas-fired power plants emit carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, nitrogen oxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone and small particles.
- Sulphur oxide, and particularly sulphur dioxide, is rapidly absorbed by the respiratory tract, causing lung disease and breathing problems.
- Nitrogen dioxide is a deep lung irritant.
- Small particles lodge in the lungs and move to the bloodstream.
- Exposure to small particles has been associated with cancer, asthma, respiratory infections, heart attacks and arrhythmias.
- Large particles appear as dust, soot or smoke but Sydney lacks monitors that can detect particles less than 2.5 microns.

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## DEQ seeks more pollution data on gas-fired plant

BY KARL PUCKETT • TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER • MAY 22, 2009


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The state Department of Environmental Quality wants more details on how a developer arrived at projected pollution emissions from a natural gas-fired power plant proposed east of Great Falls.


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"We have to accurately account for plant emissions in order to determine the best emissions-control technology," said Brent Lignell, an environmental engineer for the DEQ's Air Resources Management Bureau.

Southern Montana Electric Generation and Transmission is applying for permission from the DEQ to construct a 120-megawatt gas-fired plant, instead of the coal-fired facility it originally planned for the Highwood Generating Station site about eight miles east of Great Falls.

On Wednesday, the DEQ sent a letter to SME that said its construction application was incomplete because of "insufficient analysis and/or lack of transparency in methods and calculations."

The letter asks SME to provide formulas and explanatory narrative on emissions calculations. The developer has until July 20 to respond.

"They are asking for some additional explanation, i.e. a road map," said Jeff Chaffee, vice president of Bison Engineering, a consultant on the project.

Lignell and Chaffee said the request for additional clarification isn't uncommon, adding it is part of the back-and-forth between the agency and developers following an initial construction application.

Chaffee said he's confident SME will be able to address the questions, noting the developer plans to respond in a week to 10 days.

According to SME's application, the annual emissions at the gas-fired plant would be an estimated 171 tons of nitrogen oxides, 380 tons of carbon monoxide, 20 tons of volatile organic compounds, 64 tons of particulate matter, 6 tons of sulfur dioxide, and 250,000 tons of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide.

Annual emission projections for the coal-fired facility were higher. For example, emissions of carbon dioxide from the plant would be 2.4 million tons. Particulate matter emissions at the coal-fired facility would be an estimated 366 tons, compared with 64 tons from the gas-fired plant.

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The DEQ wants to figure out how SME came up with its numbers so they can be reproduced and understood by the agency and the public, Lignell said.

Under permitting rules, both the coal- and gas-fired facilities are considered to be the same source of emissions, even though the coal-fired power plant is on hold, according to the DEQ.

As a result, SME still must quantify the impacts of the coal-fired plant, which could impact emissions limits for the gas-fired plant.

The DEQ also is asking SME for clarification about the relationship between the two facilities.

"The application states the gas plant will not operate when the coal plant boiler is in operation, but fails to address specifics such as nonboiler emissions or lag time following boiler shutdown," the DEQ letter states.

SME states in its application that the two plants would never operate at the same time.

Reach Tribune Staff Writer Karl Puckett at 791-1471, 800-438-6600 or [kpuckett@greatfalltribune.com](mailto:kpuckett@greatfalltribune.com).

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