



BAY AREA AIR QUALITY  
MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

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September 13, 2009

Weyman Lee  
Bay Area Air Quality Management District  
939 Ellis Street  
San Francisco, CA 94109

Dear Mr. Lee,

I have been a faculty member at Chabot College for ten years. Like many other Chabot College faculty, I have read the California Energy Commission's "staff assessment" of this plant and I have attended many hearings hoping to be convinced of the usefulness of this project. Unfortunately, just the opposite has happened. My concerns—as well as those of my college, my District, and my community—have only grown larger, and your organization and the Calpine corporation have failed to provide adequate reassurance that this plant is a) necessary, and b) will not harm us. Our most serious concerns are as follows:

- It is our understanding that the power generated by the Russell City Energy Center (hereafter identified as RCEC) is not for Hayward, but will be cabled across the Bay for use by residents on the Peninsula. Why hasn't Calpine made the Hayward public aware of this?
- Because the residents in close proximity to the proposed site of the RCEC are mostly low-income, majority minority, and English-second language speakers, we believe the siting of this plant in the proposed location will constitute an act of environmental racism. If 100 percent of the power generated by the RCEC is for residents of the Peninsula, but close to 100 percent of the toxins emitted by the plant are for Hayward's low-income residents of color, how could this NOT constitute an act of environmental racism?
- According to the "Maximum Impacted Receptor Center" map prepared by the California Energy Commission's staff scientists, Chabot College will be "ground zero" for falling toxins from the RCEC. How can you justify turning a California Community College and its students into targets for hundreds of tons of criteria pollutants annually? How can faculty like myself combat the serious degradation of the learning environment this plant threatens to cause?
- Why wasn't Chabot College properly notified of the plans to build a power plant in our neighborhood? Why wasn't our District properly notified? Why wasn't

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Alameda County properly notified? Is your organization aware of the service we have provided to our community for the past forty years? Is your organization aware of the Children's Center on our campus, and the fact that every day our campus is home to "sensitive receptors" that have gone unacknowledged in any health and safety assessment of the RCEC?

- The Chabot-Las Positas Community College District passed the Measure B bond a few years back, and Chabot is currently spending millions of taxpayer dollars to upgrade our facilities so we can serve our community better. Included in these improvements are solar-panel-covered parking lots—which generate twenty percent of the energy used by the campus, and LEED-silver certified buildings. What sense does it make to have spend taxpayer dollars on solar panels and green buildings only to dump hundreds of tons of criteria pollutants on them annually for the next thirty years?
- Many energy specialists have convincing figures showing that there is no need for this plant. Northern Californians are willingly conserving electricity, and their efforts have lessened our consumption significantly. How then, is a brand new plant justified? Why hasn't Calpine been asked to prove "need"?
- Chabot College is currently working to institute an Environmental Studies curriculum to ready our students for the quickly-approaching green economy. What kind of example with the RCEC—and by extension the Bay Area Air Quality Management District—set for Chabot students who will learn that power plants burning non-renewable natural resources like natural gas will hurt the global economy by contributing to global warming?
- The Calpine corporation has lobbied aggressively in the Hayward area to gain support for it's RCEC. It has done so not by convincing Hayward of the actual utility and safety of it's plant but by offering money. As you know, Calpine supported Measure A, contributed to the recent "Zucchini Festival," and offered to give ten million dollars to the City of Hayward. In the words of one of my eighteen year-old students, a Hayward resident who attended the last RCEC hearing at the Hayward City Hall, "is there anyone who supports this plant who hasn't been paid off by Calpine?"
- Calpine asserts that this plant will bring 650 much needed jobs to the community, and for this they have garnered the support of the builder's union. Why hasn't Calpine also made it clear that these jobs will last only eighteen months? Why hasn't the community been able to weigh the benefits of eighteen months worth of construction jobs against thirty years worth of increased levels of criteria pollutants in our air and water?
- How can we be even remotely sure that Calpine will be a trustworthy community partner when they are based in Houston—not San Jose, as they like to say—and

are currently under investigation by the Consumer Protection and Safety Division for an act of procedural non-compliance?

- How can we be sure that all necessary legal steps have been taken when your own organization now admits that "...the Air District did not issue a final Federal PSD Permit along with its state-law Authority to Construct, as is the District's normal practice"?
- Many of us at Chabot have read the CEC staff's assessment that ten deaths per million due to exposure to contaminants from the RCEC is an "acceptable risk" for the community to bear. Do you agree with this assessment, Mr. Lee? Can you draw an "X" through the faces of ten Chabot students and/or residents of the Hayward community and believe you have done my community a worthwhile service?

I could go on listing the concerns that are being articulated daily on my campus, at my District offices, and in my community. But if you have read this far, you have read enough from one correspondent. Before I sign off, however, I must tell you of a recent incident that took place at Chabot. I hope you will keep this story in mind as you consider whether or not to grant Calpine's PSD. While crossing campus recently, I was stopped by an elderly Asian-American man, a familiar figure at Chabot and a resident of the Eden Gardens neighborhood next door to campus. Although this gentleman is in his eighties and somewhat frail due to injuries he received defending America during WWII, he comes to Chabot often to keep himself fit by walking on our track. On this particular day, which fell just a few days after a public hearing on RCEC that he and I both attended, he was clearly agitated as he approached me. I watched with some concern as he struggled to write something down—something clearly important to him—on a small scrap of paper. When he finished, he handed me the slip, which gave, in shaky handwriting, his name and telephone number. "You call me!" he implored, with a voice full of emotion. "You call me when their trucks are coming! You call me when it's time to lay down in the road!"

I will never forget this gentleman's brave vow to combat a force he feels will do harm to his community. And unless the many concerns I have articulated above are alleviated, I will indeed call the gentleman—and others—when the construction trucks are coming. It is worth keeping in mind that the environmental racism many of us see at the heart of this project will be known to a much broader audience when the largely non-white student population of Chabot College and our surrounding neighborhood is laying down in the road.

Sincerely,



Diane Zuliani

Instructor, Grievance Officer, and former Faculty Senate President  
Chabot College