Otay Mesa pollution permit gets hearing

By Morgan Lee (staff/morgan-lee) 10:53 A.M. DEC. 16, 2013

The Environmental Protection Agency will hold a public hearing (http://www.epa.gov/region9/air/permit/otaymesa/2013-11-pio-pico-fact-sheet.pdf) Tuesday evening on revisions to a pollution permit application for a proposed power plant in unincorporated Otay Mesa.

The developer of the Pio Pico Energy Center has applied for a federal pollution permit used by regulators to ensure that natural gas turbines will not significantly degrade air quality in the area.
EPA officials will only be considering comments about an analysis of the plant’s potential emissions of fine particulate matter. Fine airborne particulates are a health concern because they can penetrate deep into lungs, contributing to various respiratory ailments.

Broader concerns about pollution from the plant were collected last year by the EPA, including comments from a public hearing. The agency’s Environmental Appeals Board ordered revisions to particulate matter calculations, based on a challenge by environmentalists.

EPA Hearing

Where: San Ysidro Middle School, Multi-Cultural Center
4345 Otay Mesa Road
San Ysidro, CA
When: 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., Dec. 17

Environmental groups planned to stage protests outside the hearing. They say Pio Pico would add to already significant pollution in the area from a busy cross-border trucking route and the adjacent Otay Mesa Energy Center (http://www.calpine.com/power/plant.asp?plant=247), an even larger gas-fired plant owned and operated by Houston-based Calpine.

The plant is located in an industrial zone, though not far from a juvenile detention center and residential neighborhoods in Mexico flanking the U.S. border.

Authorization to build Pio Pico under a $1.6 billion contract with San Diego Gas & Electric was rejected in March by the California Public Utilities Commission, which has the ultimate say on reliability and cost issues. Consumer advocates said approval would have undermined California’s clean energy goals and heaped unnecessary costs on utility customers.

But plans for Pio Pico were resurrected in June, days after the retirement of the San Onofre nuclear plant that once supplied 20 percent of San Diego’s electricity. SDG&E asserts that the Pio Pico, located near the border with Mexico, would be needed to make up for San Onofre. Opponents of the plant believe power supplies still far exceeded demands -- even after San Onofre plant went offline in January 2012.

SDG&E has lobbied for Pio Pico as a necessary tool for ensuring consistent power supplies as more and more solar and wind farms are tied into the grid.

Pio Pico Energy Center is controlled by the private equity Energy Investors Funds, or EIF, which bundles power plant projects for third-party investors.
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Real ENVIRONMENTALISTS aren't split. Pro-nuke environmentalism is an oxymoron.
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No Martha. Real environmentalists aren't afraid to learn the basics of radiation and they agree with consensus of National Academy of Sciences and World Health Organization. James Hansen is a real environmentalist. You do not define environmentalism.
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50 years ago today, President Lyndon B Johnson signed the Clean Air Act, the first federal law on air pollution control, into law.
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And CATC is now backing nuclear energy.
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Ok. 1/3 renewable by 2020 would be a great feat for California. That does leave 2/3 to other sources. Significantly. The reason James Hansen and now Armond Cohen are advocating Nuclear is because they see the developing world as unlikely to reject their own hydrocarbons. :) thanks for the link.
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