



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ALLIANCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Energy Company Seeks to Override Community Opposition to Dirty Power Plant *Communities Sick of Power Plants While California Leaders Negotiate Climate Policies in Paris*

San Francisco, CA | December 17, 2015 — Residents from the Central Coast arrived in San Francisco on Thursday morning to oppose a fourth proposed power plant in Oxnard, CA at the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). While California is being touted as a climate leader, praised by Pope Francis and President Obama at the recent United Nations Convention on Climate Change in Paris, California residents are demanding that the CPUC Commissioners consider the impact of power plants on low-income Latino and immigrant families who have borne the burden of pollution for too long.

Elma Del Aguila, an Oxnard youth leader from the [Central Coast Alliance for a Sustainable Economy](#) and junior at Channel Islands High School says, "Right now California is being praised for its historic climate bill, but my community's well-being is still being disregarded. Oxnard is here to say we've had enough."

Alongside widespread community support, the Oxnard City Council passed a moratorium to stop more dirty energy power plants. In response, NRG tried to threaten the city, saying they would abandon their two old power plants and let them rust on Oxnard's beaches, unless they're allowed to operate another power plant for decades to come. NRG is asking the California Public Utilities Commission to override the city's opposition and approve the power plant anyway.

"The people of Oxnard will no longer just accept further industrialization of our beautiful, but abused coast. We want the same economic, recreational and aesthetic opportunities that other California coastal cities enjoy," says Carmen Ramirez, Oxnard Mayor Pro Tem, who joined the bus of community members up to San Francisco. "Our future is at stake, and state agencies and private industry must respect the wishes of the people who do not want yet another power plant on Oxnard's shore."

The proposed power plant in Oxnard is part of a pattern of dumping the region's pollution in coastal regions. According to CalEnviroScreen 2.0, Oxnard is in the top 10% most highly impacted zip codes with some of the worst toxic air emissions in our state. Like other communities of immigrants and low-income families, Oxnard has been a target for hazards like dirty power plants and toxic waste sites. No other city in all of California has more coastal power plants than Oxnard, with already three dirty power plants that provide energy for cities from Simi Valley to Goleta.

"Every time we build another polluting power plant, we take a step away from the growing potential of renewable energy that can power up California," says Strela Cervas, Co-Director of the [California Environmental Justice Alliance](#). "California needs to stop plugging into dirty energy and power up our communities with clean renewable energy. Local renewable energy brings good jobs and economic investments into communities that need it the most. We urge the California Public Utilities Commission to stand with the community to oppose NRG's dirty power plant."

A new Oxnard power plant will continue California's path towards climate chaos. The proposed power plant will be built in an environmentally sensitive area that is highly vulnerable to flooding with current sea level rise projections. This risk of flooding could create a disaster and put the local power supply at risk. The plant will spew 600,000 tons of carbon dioxide every year. Natural gas plants are also known to emit large quantities of methane, which has over 20 times the global warming potential than carbon dioxide. The high levels of toxic air emissions leads directly to respiratory illnesses like asthma.

California just passed historic climate and energy bills. Combined, these bills set targets to increase renewable energy in California to 50 percent by 2030, lower greenhouse gases, and bring more renewable energy to low-income communities. If the CPUC approves NRG's proposed power plant, California will have difficulty meeting these targets. On the heels of the Paris climate negotiations, the CPUC should ensure California's targets are met and ensure communities most impacted from climate change benefit from California's climate and energy policies.

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California Environmental Justice Alliance is a statewide, community-led alliance that works to achieve environmental justice by advancing policy solutions. We unite the powerful local organizing of our members in the communities most impacted by environmental hazards – low-income communities and communities of color - to create comprehensive opportunities for change at a statewide level. We build the power of communities across California to create policies that will alleviate poverty and pollution. Together, we are growing the statewide movement for environmental health and social justice. www.caleja.org

Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy builds grassroots power to invoke social, economic, and environmental justice for the people of California's Central Coast region through policy research, leadership development, organizing, and advocacy. CAUSE defines the Central Coast region as the counties of Ventura, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Benito. www.causenow.org