

Desert Rock Action Alert

We are writing to you in response to the United States Environmental Protection Agency Region 9 request for public comment on revisions to its basis for issuing a Prevention of Significant Deterioration permit (AZP 04-01) authorizing construction of the Desert Rock Energy Facility (Desert Rock) 1,500 MW coal fired power plant on Navajo Nation land southwest of Farmington, New Mexico.

The League of Women Voters of La Plata County, CO, urges the EPA to include limitations on carbon dioxide emissions in the Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) permit for the proposed Desert Rock Energy Project, located some 100 miles from La Plata County. We believe that the Environmental Protection Agency has the authority to regulate greenhouse gases and should impose strict controls on the proposed Desert Rock emissions of 12.7 million tons per year of carbon dioxide. Please revise the entire Prevention of Significant Deterioration permit for Desert Rock to evaluate control technologies for carbon dioxide emissions. We are aware that E.P.A. Administrator Jackson has asked the agency to review the latest science and that a ruling by the agency in response to the directive of the Supreme Court is likely by April 2, the second anniversary of the Court's order.

Evidence has convinced a vast majority of scientists that carbon dioxide emissions from power plants are a major contributor to climate changes we are already experiencing. That this is no longer a matter of argument is gaining credibility on a daily basis. At some future point, emissions of greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, will be subject to regulation by a carbon tax, cap and trade or other system. The EPA must take up the mantle bestowed upon it by the Supreme Court nearly two years ago to regulate emissions of greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act and exert leadership now before we are stuck with a third coal-fired power plant in our area using unenlightened technology and releasing tons and tons of carbon dioxide gas annually.

Proponents have declared that the plant will be 'carbon-capture ready'. This is not sufficient since we do not know how long before carbon-capture technology will be commercially feasible at our altitude and where the funds to implement will come from when/if the technology becomes available.

The League of Women Voters of the United States is advocating a 10-year moratorium on coal-fired power plants. We support such a moratorium, but if you choose to issue the PSD for this plant, please be sure that you regulate its carbon dioxide emissions along with all the other emissions that affect the health of our residents and the beauty of our area.

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