CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION
1516 NINTH STREET
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814-5512

99-AFC-8C

DOCKET
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DATE MAY 17 2005
RECD. SEP - 8 2005

May 17, 2005

Charles Hull
Assistant City Manager/Blythe Airport Manager
235 North Broadway
Blythe, CA 92225

Subject: Request to Change Landing Pattern and Move ILS

Dear Mr. Hull:

As you know, we have received a number of complaints from pilots who claimed to have experienced turbulence over the Blythe Energy Project when attempting to land on Runway 26 at the Blythe Airport. We have been working with interested parties and responsible federal, state, and local agencies since last fall in an effort to gain a thorough understanding of the safety concerns, and to explore and implement corrective actions. In October 2004, staff held a public workshop in Blythe, California, attended by CalTrans, FAA, Riverside County, the City of Blythe, the Blythe Airport manager, Energy Commission consultants and staff, and Florida Power and Light (FPL). At that workshop pilots who experienced turbulence expressed their concerns and their specific experiences were discussed. Our consultant has verified that turbulence does result from operating the Blythe Energy Project, particularly under certain meteorological conditions, and that this turbulence can be a hazard to pilots.

The primary purpose of this letter is to recommend that the Blythe Airport remove or decommission the existing Instrument Landing System (ILS) on Runway 26, and install a new ILS on Runway 17, or another runway deemed appropriate, which is not impacted by thermal plumes from the Blythe Energy Project. These actions will substantially reduce flights directly above the thermal plume area of the power plant, and will build on the FAA Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) and warning in the FAA Airport Directory that were implemented in December 2004.

In addition to the ILS, early discussions with FAA about appending a warning about the power plant's thermal plumes to the Blythe Airport's radio transmission of the Airport Surface Observation System (ASOS) led us to believe doing so would be relatively easy to accomplish. Although this has proven not to be the case, we are still pursuing the matter. FAA is concerned however, about the unknown costs that may be associated with instituting and maintaining the warning. In the interim, an option to using the ASOS system has arisen, that of a privately owned and maintained radio transmission system. This option would require permitting from entities such as the FAA and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Preliminary and very rough cost estimates for the latter radio transmission system are approximately $2,000 for installation alone; permitting, maintenance and other costs are unknown. Should appending a warning to

cc: Les Nelson, City Manager
Austin Wiswell, CalTrans Division of Aeronautics