Environmental Health Coalition

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South Bay Officials Urge Deferral of Port Lease on Bayfront Power Plant: *Commit to Clean Energy Solutions*

(November 28, 2006) – J Street Park, Chula Vista. Environmental Health Coalition was joined by federal, state, and local elected officials and community residents to urge the Port of San Diego to postpone action on a key decision for building a new power plant in the South Bay. Standing on the shore of San Diego Bay against a backdrop of the South Bay Power Plant, *Congressman Bob Filner*, *Chula Vista City Councilmember Steve Castañeda*, and *Imperial Beach City Councilmember Patricia McCoy* called for deferral of a lease-option on a new South Bay power plant, community involvement in future energy decisions in the South Bay, and call for a comprehensive sustainable and renewable energy plan for the South San Diego region.

The officials in attendance supported a deferral until issues related to the current replacement power plant application can be resolved. Those issues include the "Reliability-Must-Run" (RMR) status, reductions in air pollution, alternatives to a bayfront power plant location, and inclusion of renewable energy in its final solution.

Congressman Bob Filner stated his concerns: "The Lease-Option does not require a new power plant to emit less pollution than the current plant and does not take steps toward renewable energy in the region. This is not fair to a community that has borne this environmental injustice for over 40 years." He pointed out that, although the new plant would be more efficient, it could emit as much or even more air pollution than the current power plant because, it is expected to run much more often. The current power plant runs at around 30% capacity and the new one could run at 80% or higher. The Lease-Option also allows a larger-sized power plant than the current plant—**up to 750 Megawatts**. Filner announced his intention to work with local and state leaders to hold a Clean Energy Summit in early 2007 in order to coordinate *federal*, *state*, and *local* efforts to develop clean, renewable energy and energy-efficiency actions as part of a sensible solution for meeting our regional energy demand.

Councilmember Steve Castañeda had stated, "With several energy options still in the air, it would make sense to see what other alternatives may become available to provide safe, clean and dependable energy to Chula Vista residents and businesses."

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Patricia McCoy, recently re-elected to the Imperial Beach City Council, noted that Imperial Beach is downwind of the power plant during Santa Ana winds and that Imperial Beach has recently initiated planning for a more desirable Bayfront for their city. "Another large polluting blight that we look at for the next 50 years will not improve the image of our City or of Chula Vista. We need to make sure we wait until we have the right information so we can make the right decision," she said. "As a region we also need to get very serious about energy sustainability and how we achieve it," she added.

Alice Cuevas, a 56-year resident of Chula Vista who lives downwind of the power plant stated: "I strongly urge officials to make sure that the final solution results in cleaner air for those of us living downwind. The hospitalization rates for childhood asthma are already 20% higher in our neighborhood than the County average. I support all of the South Bay elected officials here today and hope we can all work together for a solution that is best for our communities."

Laura Hunter, Environmental Health Coalition's Clean Bay Campaign Director, urged the Port Commission to table the action until such a time as the Commissioners have adequate information regarding the future energy situation of the region and are protective of public health. Hunter stated, "There is no reason for the Port to adopt the Lease Option before information is available from the California Energy Commission's (CEC) Final Staff Assessment and the hearings have been held on the in-basin energy solutions to the Sunrise Powerlink have been evaluated. To act in advance of this would significantly reduce the Port's options," she said. Relevant information from the California Public Utility Commission (CPUC) proceedings on the proposed Sunrise Powerlink and the CEC's permitting process for the replacement plant is expected in the first 4-6 months of 2007.

BACKGROUND HISTORY

In November, council members from Chula Vista and Imperial Beach and EHC asked the Port District to defer consideration of the Lease-Option for the South Bay Replacement Plant until more information about the lease conditions and their implications could be determined. Although he was unable to attend today's press conference due to work commitments, Chula Vista Deputy Mayor John McCann issued the following statement for immediate release:

> *I am very concerned about how we make sure that we remove this power plant, develop an innovative plan for our Bayfront, and get the best solution for our community. I have asked staff to schedule council/public workshops so that we get the information we need before any major actions are taken.*

Councilmember Steve Castañeda who is Chula Vista's representative on SANDAG's Energy Working Group stated that he wants to make sure that due diligence is done in advance of significant decisions by the Port. McCann and Castaneda announced the intention to sponsor workshops in January with agencies to ensure that a full vetting of all of the options for removing the current plant is done.

The current South Bay Power Plant is a 45-year old, inefficient, power plant located on the Chula Vista Bayfront. It pollutes the community, devastates the bay with its water cooling system, and is a blight on Bayfront development. There is widespread agreement

that the current plant should be retired and removed. However, it is less clear what is the best road for removal of the Reliability-Must-Run (RMR) designation from the plant by 2009 that would allow it to be removed.

LS Power, the current operator of the plant, has applied to the CEC for a new power plant license with the contention that a new plant would cause the removal of the old plant. However, an October 31, 2006 letter from the CEC to LS Power identified 98 data requests about the application. Several of the requests pointed to the fact that the construction of a new plant may not guarantee the removal of the current plant in a timely manner. The letter states, *"Thus, for a number of weeks, months, or years, it is likely that both the proposed project and the SBPP will simultaneously be operating..."* and *"the shut down of the existing SBPP facility is not entirely based on the decision of the applicant"*. "We need to understand the implication of these statements before the Port acts on this lease and our Council workshops will help us do that," Hunter stated.

SIGNIFICANT DATES FOR SOUTH BAY REPLACEMENT ENERGY FUTURE

Nov. 29, 2006 9:00 a.m. - Noon	**Energy Working Group Legislative Session with Senator Christine Kehoe** SANDAG Offices, 401 B Street, Suite 800, San Diego, California 92101
Dec. 11, 2006 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.	**California Energy Commission, Technical Workshop (10am-5pm) on Data requests other than Air Quality, Public Workshop (6-8pm)** Chula Vista City Council Chambers, 276 Fourth Avenue, Chula Vista, CA 91910
Dec. 14, 2006 Time: TBD	**State Lands Commission Meeting** San Diego Unified Port District Chambers, 3165 Pacific Highway San Diego, CA 92101
January 2007 Time: TBD	**Chula Vista City Workshop** Chula Vista City Council Chambers, 276 Fourth Avenue, Chula Vista, CA 91910
Jan. / Feb. 2007 TBD	**CEC Technical Workshop on Air Impacts**
March /Apr. 2007 TBD	**CEC Final Staff Assessment issued for the South Bay Replacement Plant**
Apr. / Aug. 2007 TBD	**Hearings on relevant issues related to the Sunrise Powerlink** as outlined by the CPUC, "SDG&E shall analyze and explain the cost and feasibility of the full range of alternatives that would satisfy one or more of these three purposes, including wires, non-wires, generation (including onsite generation), non-generation (including incremental energy efficiency and demand response efforts) and integrated wires/non-wires strategies. This analysis shall include all reasonable combination of strategies that would meet the need for the proposed project, consistent with the three vital purposes identified by SDG&E." - *CPUC Scoping Memo and Ruling, filed November 1, 2006, p. 14-15*

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